



The Ballad of the Warrior Girl

KUYILI

by Vanavil K.Ravi

The Ballad of the Warrior - Girl

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Vanavil K. Ravi



10/3, Venkatesh Nagar, Main Road,
Virugambakkam, Chennai - 600 092.

Cell: 89393 87276 / 89393 87296

E-mail : nivethithathippagam1999@gmail.com

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgement	4
Preface	7
Foreword- I	10
Foreword- II	13
The First Impressions	15
Prologue	19
1. Canto 1. Near that brook ...!	22
2. An interlude	25
3. Canto 2. In the woods	26
4. Canto 3. Murder in the Temple	29
5. Canto 4: Udayal, the Martyr	35
6. Canto 5. A Doha and The Diplomat	38
7. Canto 6. The Recruitment	41
8. Canto 7. The Pledge	46
9. Canto 8. The strategy	51
10. Canto 9. Major Bonjour	57
11. Canto 10. The Festival	60
12. Canto 11. The Plan	64
13. Canto 12. The Ego and the Destiny	68
14. Canto 13. The Majestic Ambience!	70
15. Canto 15: The Sacrifice Supreme!	77
16. Epilogue	80
17. A Prayer:	81

Acknowledgement

Just a few words wouldn't suffice to acknowledge the interest taken and the time spent by **Shobana^A** in reading this work, verse by verse, along with me and suggesting appropriate structural corrections wherever needed. She is responsible for making this ballad, more a ballad.

The seed in the form of an urge to write a longer poem was sown in my mind by the repeated persuasion of **Dr.Va.Ve.Su^B**. and that has now sprouted and come out as this work, maybe as a little plant though not as a big banyan tree.

I will not be able to thank enough, the nonagenarian, **Mr.B.S.Raghavan^C**, who pulled me out of my self-imposed exile and proclaimed loud to the entire world that my writings deserved to be noticed. I simply adore him.

Professor K.A.Rajaram^D, director, Tamil Cultural Research Centre, Palkkad, needs a special mention. I take the liberty of advertizing to his daily routine here. He speaks to me twice a day over phone, almost for 30 minutes; he speaks to four or five Professors daily to organise Seminars in their respective Universities or Colleges, on my works; he speaks daily to the three members of his Tamil Cultural Research Centre, who assist him in organising seminars, again, mostly on my works. Every day he reads and re-reads my works for an hour or so. Well, apart from these, I only hope that at this advanced age, he could find a little time at least to dine, rest and attend to his personal works! He constantly persuades, rather, instigates me to write more and more. He demolishes the wall of humility that I try to erect around myself every now and then. He wants my works to get all the awards meant for literature. And all this, for what? Absolutely nothing, nothing that is of any value in

empirical terms; yet, with an immense personal satisfaction. Should I thank him or Mrs.Rajaram, the kind lady who has almost leased out her life-partner to oversee my literary pursuit?

I thank Sri B.S.Raghavan and Dr.V.Kadambari for the excellent forewords given by them. The former being my mentor has blessed me with his patronizing yet prophetic foreword, while the latter has given a picturesque curtain-raiser through hers. I also thank my good friends and well-wishers, Mrs.Sivasankari, Mr.Maalan, Dr. Va.Ve.Su. and Isaikavi Ramanan for reading the work and offering their comments that are printed as 'The First Impressions' in this book. I am sure that such forewords and comments not only would enhance the value of the work but also would enlarge the reader-club for it.

I did gather some details for this ballad from the Book titled "Historical Record of The Honourable East India Company's **First Madras European Regiment**" by an unnamed Staff Officer, published by Smith, Elder and Co., London, 1843.

Of course, I thank everyone of you, the readers, who would be adding value to this work through your comments and criticism.

Vanavil K.Ravi

Footnotes

- A. Shobana Ravi, my life-partner, is a bilingual Poet like me and also a Novelist. Some of her English poems are available on Kindle. She has published a Novel in English, titled "The Auspicious" and a spiritual book of her personal experiences, titled, "The Catalyst".
- B. Dr.Va.Ve.Su. (Dr.V.V.Subramaniam), is a professor of botany who retired as the Principal of Vivekanada College, Chennai. He has been my friend for the past 47 years and was responsible to a great extent for shaping my lyrical prowess.
- C. Sri B.S Raghavan, IAS (retd.), an administrator, a social thinker, a columnist, a writer, a poet and formerly the Chancellor of Jharkhand ICFAI University, India, had been the Chief Secretary of three states and had worked in senior positions under four Prime Ministers. More than anything

else, he is an ardent lover of literature and has chosen, out of love and affection, to patronise me and my works with a fatherly care and concern.

- D. Prof.Dr.K.A.Rajaram is an erudite scholar and an educationist who has dedicated his life to the cause of spreading the glory of Tamil and Tamil Literature. He retired as the HOD, Tamil from the Government Victoria College, Palakkad, Kerala. He is now living in Palakkad and active as the Director of Tamil Cultural Research Centre, Palakkad conducting Seminars and Symposia, National and International, and also publishing books in a variety of fields.

Preface

The world celebrates every moment of historic significance. When such a moment is also heroic, it is preserved in memory, in the memory of mankind, however hazy it might tend to become with the passage of time. It does. Thus history, in due course, becomes a tale, sometimes, a legend.

I am writing this preface as a post-script, after completing this ballad. A ballad? Yes, yes! I know that scholars may raise their eyebrows. The verses here may not, in form, strictly conform to the traditional understanding of how a ballad should be. Yet, in spirit this is a ballad.

This ballad employs all the three kinds of Verses — rhyming, blank and free. Even where they tend to be free, one may find a hidden rhythm.

My experiments with poetry in my native tongue, Tamil, emboldened me to deviate in a few places from the traditional meters like Iambic Tetrameter and Iambic Trimeter, mainly employed in European and English Ballads. A stand-alone term or phrase, not widely used in English is a technique that I borrowed from Tamil, especially as it is used in the form of poetry called, “Sindhu”^a, popularised by Mahakavi Subrammaniya Bharati^b.

I always hesitate to punctuate my poems, as it might interfere with the freedom of the reader to assimilate the spirit of it. Reluctantly, yet, not so perfectly, I added punctuation marks in these verses, after writing them and while revisiting them, probably due to the respect I have for tradition. The reader is free to overlook them, wherever he or she chooses to do.

An annotation is given at the end of the work to explain certain unique, technical terms and names.

What made me or persuaded me to choose the story of a little-known warrior-girl for this ballad? I do not know. I did not choose this story. If I were to say that she, the dark-skinned, young and beau-

tiful warrior-girl was waiting all along and suddenly chose to manifest herself in poetry, through me, it might sound presumptuous; even preposterous! That's the price I must pay for being honest.

Suddenly, one day, about a fortnight ago, maybe on the 7th or 8th of January, 2022, verses started pouring in my mind, verses in English, that seemed to be a narration of the story of this warrior-girl. "A ballad!" – I exclaimed. That's it. If this sounds a little mystic or metaphysical, please be assured, it was not intended to be so, though it cannot but be so.

I had already heard of this warrior-girl. My knowledge was sketchy. I was surprised when verses were pouring out, one after another, as if I was an eye-witness to the historic events concerning her life and of the great Queen Velu Naachiar^c. Simultaneously, I checked all the relevant sites available on the net. My surprise was augmented by the discovery that my verses were proceeding in the right direction. After the first few verses were entered in my computer, the flow became an interplay, or still better, a fusion of intuition and knowledge.

Of course, imagination supplied the weaving fabric that connected the dots of the facts that I gathered from the public domain. I always trust imagination and I am sure, that is what has made me a poet.

Nothing said in this work is contrary to any known fact, though, many may not be known facts. I admit, I have not referred to some events mentioned in the articles available on social media, relating to the main story of this ballad. I have chosen only the facts that fitted into the scheme of this ballad without interrupting its flow as it occurred to me. I admit that some incidents in this ballad might be somewhat different from how some might have understood them. I assure them that my ignorance and my eagerness to follow the flight of poetic imagination are more responsible than any intention on my part for such deviations. I am not trying to be apologetic or defensive. I feel proud of being instrumental in bringing this story to the attention of the world.

The warrior-girl speaks very little in this ballad but she accomplishes a task of unimaginable magnitude which speaks volumes of her courage, valour and faith.

Some researchers say that the story of this ballad is wholly a figment of imagination and challenge the historicity of the protagonist here. They may be right. Still, I firmly believe that even the most fertile imagination cannot create such a character and such a story from out of nothing. Lack of adequate evidence may leave a fact “Not Proved”, but would never disprove it to be discarded as untrue. Fact or not, the story inspires and I want to believe that it happened thus.

Is she the first suicide bomber in the known history of mankind? Perhaps, she is. Is she not the only suicide-bomber who, in that act, did not kill any innocent person except herself? Certainly, YES! That is how her act is portrayed in this ballad, as an instance of supreme sacrifice and not as an event of terrorism.

This is a story of selfless victory, the victory of womanhood, as such. The greatness of women cannot be confined to the role assigned to them by tradition. It transcends that. That is the message of this ballad.

Adding more words here cannot add anything more to what the ballad says. So, I end this preface here and pray that we too put an end to all violent conflicts and make this a better world.

Vanavil K.Ravi
22-01-2022

- a. ‘Sindhu’ is a form of folk poem suitable for singing in easy tunes so that even common people not well-trained in classical music might sing them. There are different forms of Sindhu. Most of them have a common feature of having a stand-alone term between two lines, called, “Tani Chol” in Tamil.
- b. Please see annotation number 2, given at the end of this book.
- c. Velu Naachiar was the ruling Queen of Sivaganga from 1780 till 1790 CE. She is hailed as the first Indian woman freedom-fighter against the British Rule.

Foreword - 1

Mr.B.S. RAGHAVAN, IAS (RETIRED)

Former Policy Adviser to UN (FAO)

Former Chancellor of the Jharkhand ICFAI University

Vanavil K.Ravi's poetic sensibility and versatility were never in doubt. There's not an aspect of life or height of emotion that he has not touched in his poems, both in Tamil and English. To be so all-encompassingly alluring and still to scale the pinnacle of excellence is no easy achievement. That was why, I have always held that the corpus of his poems collectively, and several of his poems individually, deserve the Nobel Prize for Literature. Every Indian should feel proud and happy that the number of educational, literary and cultural organisations undertaking study and research, and organizing workshops and seminars, on his poems and their themes is now close to 100, with more in the line.

To my mind, the first quality of a poem is spontaneity. It should be natural, with nothing that seems contrived. Second, it must be irresistible in the sense that it must uncontrollably burst from within the inner most recesses of the poet's mind and spirit and take the reader along with it in its sweep. Once taken up to read, it must be unputdownable. Next, the flavour and fragrance of the words in which it finds expression must be lingering for long in one's mind.

In this his latest major offering, the Ballad of the Warrior Girl –KUYILI, Vanavil K.Ravi has excelled himself in all these respects. It is unique in blending the above three intangible features with historicity, authenticity and contemporary relevance. In my knowledge of literary writings in at least five languages, such a harmonious blending is rarely seen in the same creation. It approaches the proportions of

a feat when it is remembered that the ballad, with effortless ease, also succeeds in imparting a golden glow to the still to be recognized inspiring role played almost single-handed in the country's freedom movement in its very early stages by the courageous young queen of Sivaganga.

The ballad is of absorbing interest from the beginning to the end, reading like a thriller at places.

In his eloquently phrased preface, Vanavil K.Ravi explains the background to his ballad: How the little-known, dark-skinned, young and beautiful warrior-girl, Kuyili, was waiting all along and chose to manifest herself in poetry through him. "Suddenly", he says, "... verses started pouring out, one after another, as if I was an eye-witness to the historic events concerning her life and of the great Queen Velu Nachiar." This disclosure of his on how the ballad "poured out" is entirely in keeping with what poetry is all about. It is neither "presumptuous" nor "preposterous" as he fears it might be thought to be. That's what happens when an acutely sensitive poet is fired by events surrounding a great historic event and personality, its impact reaching down to the very core of his being.

I forbear from cherry-picking poetic passages from here and there, (I have many that have captivated me-one foremost among them the lines

"The woods were dark, wearing
The hood of the silent night..."

in Canto 13 The Majestic Ambience) as the ballad has to be read as a whole to capture and savour its full essence. And Queen VeluNaachiar of Sivaganga is entitled to all that honour and homage.

None going through the ballad can fail to be moved to his or her depths by Canto 15: The Sacrifice Supreme and the Epilogue, climaxed by A Prayer.

In conclusion, I too wish to express my appreciation, as Vanavil Ravi does, for "the interest taken and time spent" by his life partner, Shobana, "in reading this work, verse by verse....and suggesting appropriate structural corrections wherever needed" and "for "making this ballad, more a ballad".

May Vanavil K.Ravi live long, in good health, happiness and togetherness with his richly talented help meet and soulmate, Shobana Ravi, as also his loved ones, contributing to the greatness and glory of Tamil, Tamil Nadu and India - all the three of them of incomparable magnificence in terms of their culture and heritage.

18 March 2022
Chennai.

Foreword - II

Dr.V.Kadambari Ph.D

Associate Professor of English & Director CWC (Retd)

Ethiraj College for Women

Former Adjunct Professor and Head

Department of Gender Studies

RGNIYD

Translator

We knock on the doors of history - history which is nearly 300 years old as we enter the palace built in 1730 by Sasivarna Thevar, the first king of Sivaganga. A bronze statue of Velu Nachiyar is at the entrance surveying the partially restored ruins and silently proclaiming to the world the valour of an unsung heroine who fought against the British. In the open space within the compound is Gowri Vilasam which houses the royal temple, dedicated to Shri Rajarajeshwari, the family deity of the kings. All the functions of the royal household had been celebrated here. It remains intact, whispering the bravery of an all-women regiment and of the two women in particular - Velu Nachiyar and Kuyili. On every Vijayadasami day, an unbelievable tale would unfold in front of those who visit the premises as they listen to the local ballads sung to the accompaniment of traditional drums. Time stands suspended in liminal space then. This unique story that has been passed on for many generations in the region, is set to reach a universal audience now, through this English rendering.

Having lost her husband, Muthu Vaduganatha Thevar, the second king of Sivaganga, in the battle against the combined forces of the East India Company and the Arcot Nawab, the queen Velu Nachiyar was set on to wrench free the palace from their hold with the help of the Marudhu brothers. The palace walls till date sing about her bravery as lullabies to the children. The ballad on Veeramangai Velu Nachiyar has to be heard to be inspired and many legends and folk lores revolve around her in the region though very little is known

about her in the rest of India. The ballads are also dedicated to the brave Commander-in-Chief of her Udaiyyal (the all-women regiment), by name Kuyili, a Sambar/ Arunthathiyar maiden. She is recorded in the ballads as the first suicide bomber and a martyr. Though hardly ever recognised, Kuyili has played an important role in shaping the history of India.

Using the only day available to them to enter the Sivaganga fort, Velu Nachiyar and Kuyili take in their all-women army in the guise of worshipping Devi on the Vijayadasami day and vanquish the British in a brilliantly planned coup. And what happens during the coup is an unbelievable tale of strategic bravery. The year was 1780.

Folklore is oral history that is preserved by the people of a region. Ballad is a poem or song, narrating a story in many stanzas. It is one of the oldest and most loved forms of poetry. The languages of most of the ballads are usually simple to understand. The Indian ballads are commonly known as Folk Ballad/ Folktales. The main advantage of the folk ballad is to make people know about the untold stories of our culture, society and history, which might have been blurred by the passage of time.

The Ballad of the Warrior-Girl Kuyili composed in English by Vanavil K.Ravi has filled the long existing lacuna in the history of Indian Independence. Folk ballad being a combination of true events and imagination, this ballad too is filled with imageries ('Running like a fire ball', 'flowery eyes and leafy ears') and dramatic events. Vanavil K.Ravi has handled the form effectively. I congratulate him for the neat rendition.

“The First Impressions”

(All my close friends and well - wishers to whom I had circulated the final proof of this Ballad obliged me with not just a few sentences as blurbs but with full-fledged commentaries, throwing the challenge to me, “Well, how would you choose a few lines from this?”. In doing it, I know I am guilty of imperfection, yet, emboldened only due to what they have for me in abundance, their affection.)

Mrs.Sivasankari:

{A Writer and author of “Knit India Through Literature” apart from a number of Novels and Short Stories, all acclaimed by scholars and common readers.}

The Ballad of the Warrior-girl Kuyili is a moving story which speaks about the metamorphosis of Kuyili, an innocent little village girl into a human bomb, maybe the first suicide bomber in the history of mankind..... This is also the story of the brave women who formed the all-women army called ‘Udayal Regiment’ under the leadership of Velu Naachiar, their selfless victory and eventually the success of womanhood. Written in Sindhu form of folk art, the style is simple, lucid and gripping. The author needs to be congratulated for putting the focus light on Kuyili, an unknown heroine till date and making the society aware of her courageous act that speaks the glory of women.

Dr.V. V.Subramanian(Va.Ve.Su)

Former Principal, RKM Vivekananda College, Chennai

{Dr. V. V.Subramanian, known as Kavimamani Va.Ve.Su. is a poet and a Professor of Botany. He is an erudite scholar, proficient in Tamil and English.}

After finishing my first reading of the book in one sitting, I could not control the emotions that made my eyes misty. I was wondering whether it was the story or the rendition that made this happen but found later with second reading that there is no dichotomy; it is in fact an example of true poetry, where the poem communicates even before you understand it word by word.

.....

The “Udaiyal Regiment” was the first ever women force founded by VeluNachiyar, It was named after a valiant woman who sacrificed her life in captivity for not revealing the secrets about her Queen to her captors. The horrendous scene is unfolding thus in the Ballad :

**“They beheaded her at last
Chivalry would thus become
A thing of the past.**

**The trees around lamented and
Shed their leaves in respect.
The sky was dark, a single star
Like a little insect
Peeped out from above
To have a look at that
Ghastly scene, a blot on earth.”**

A great piece of poetry here ! “Trees shedding their leaves in respect” “ a star peeping out like a little insect”. More importantly when the poet says “a blot on earth”, it refers to both the physical blood stain from the slain body on earth and also the shame and ignominy of that act covering the entire world.

.....

I appreciate the author for selecting a worthy piece of event from the glorious history of Tamil warriors who fought untiringly to liberate our country from the clutches of the British Rule.

The Ballad of the warrior- girl will be a welcome addition to libraries of academic institutions and I do strongly recommend this book for students of schools, colleges and universities.

Mr.Maalan

{Maalan Narayanan is an eminent bilingual writer. He is a renowned writer of short stories in Tamil, some of which have been prescribed as texts for post graduate course in eminent Universities. He is a member of the Tamil Language Committee of the Sahitya Academy and he has several awards to his credit.}

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.”

These words of Marcel Proust, a French author who is considered by critics to be one of the most influential writers of the 20th century crossed my mind when I finished reading Kuyili by Vanavil K. Ravi.....

Ravi has chosen to write about a courageous women warrior, Kuyili, who sacrificed her life for her queen. Perhaps this may be the first ballad on a woman more so in English. Ravi indeed is blessed with new eyes!

Ravi joins these celebrated writers when he attempts to adopt a unique Tamil literary form - Sindhu- into English. Maybe because he has imbibed Subramania Bharathi considered by his contemporaries as the father of Sindhu.

What is interesting is this instinctive poetry is contemporary in style and diction.....

To cite an example:

**“Kuyil, Kuyil, bring him back”
Kuyili pleads with folded hands
A flower is dropped by a tree
And on her palm it lands.
Does it make a statement
Of love, loud and clear?
A rifle-shot, somewhere near
Brings her back to now and here!**

The imagery of a flower dropping on a pleading folded hand is essentially Indian.

And another one:

She read his mind, of her vow
She wanted him to know
So soulfully recited
A Doha of Amir Kushro
“Kushro darya prem ka, ulli wa ki dhaar,
Joutra so doob gaya, jo dooba so paar”
‘O Kushro, the River of Love
That runs in strange directions
The one who dives would drown in it
The one who drowns would reach
The shore, opposite.

It would be next to impossible for non-Indian poets to use appropriately Khusrau who is one of the first recorded Indian personages with a true multicultural or pluralistic identity.

Mr. Isaikavi Ramanan

{A popular poet, lyricist and speaker who was originally a Regional Manager in English Daily, “The Hindu” and then became a freelance writer/speaker. His devotional poems and scintillating folk songs have earned him a great fan-following throughout the world among Tamil-speaking people. Many of his fans, including the author of this Ballad, see an explicit shade of Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharati in him.}

I would straightaway recommend that this book should be spread among children. I am not saying that it should become a part of their curriculum. Anything that is included in the syllabus loses its lustre as it becomes a burden and hence resented even. These verses could be enacted as a play by school children. Some of them can be set to music and sung.

Inspiration is a fount in the heart and a torch in hand. One sustains the other. Ravi who has always stayed inspired, has lit a new torch of Tamil through English that sings the tale of a valorous woman.

★ ★ ★

The Ballad Of The Warrior-Girl Kuyili

Prologue

1. The world is full of music,
If we listen quietly
We would hear some songs like
Songs of love and war,
Songs that bring us stories too
From lands, near and far.
Happy themes, yet sometimes
With a touch of melancholy.

2. I pray to thee Lord Ganesha¹
Bless me with the strength
To write about the warrior girl
To sing her praise at length.
Never before in history have I
Come across someone - as
Bold and bright as she was
Shining like the sun.

3. I salute the cosmic poet
Subramania Bharati²,
All the gifted sons and daughters
Of the Goddess Saraswathi³,
All the poets who wrote ballads
Before me in English,
I salute all who fought against
Oppression and injustice.
4. The setting is Sivaganga⁴
And its surroundings,
The land of loyal warriors,
The land of great musings,
The land of Tamil, the sweetest of
All the languages,
A part of Bharat, India,
The land of Rishis⁵ and Sages.
5. Seventeen hundred and eighty!
The month? I am not sure.
Before the festival, Navarathiri⁶,
Maybe some weeks before!
The events of this ballad
Not chronicled precisely – let's
Travel back in time to see
The warrior-girl, Kuyili



Prefatory Remark

6. Near a Brook, under a tree
 A girl sitting alone!
 As an introduction, this Scene
 as such is shown,
 Though it happened long ago,
 In the present tense.
 As we proceed my camera would
 Adjust its lens.



Canto 1. Near that brook ...!

7. Ku Koo! Ku Koo! Ku Koo!
 Sings an unseen bird,
 A lark or a cuckoo
 Pouring out, word by word
 Its Agony and Ecstasy,
 A blend of Love and Fantasy,
 Fills the woods and in between
 A stream plays some percussion;
 Wind, the bee, the distant thunder,
 All in perfect unison.
8. ‘What a grand orchestra!’
 Wonders the little girl.
 Beats her heart, the same rhythm,
 Her eyes, a graceful swirl!
 Young and pretty, in her teens, or
 Just above that age,
 The open Book of Nature, she’s
 Reading page by page
9. Her mind starts a conversation
 With the unseen bird:
 “Kuyil”, they call you and my name,

Kuyili; have'nt you heard?
Both of us are dark in skin
But have a spark within!
When you sing my heart sings!
Carry me upon your wings."

10. "Did you notice, the other day,
Near that brook what happened?
A gentle wind passed by me
Stole my stole⁸, I had to bend
And hide with hands my heaving breasts
When suddenly in the brook
I saw him, nay, his image!
In his hands he took
My stole and gave it back to me
At him, I tried to look;"

11. "Wasn't there, he wasn't there,
I searched around in vain
I saw a shooting star, that
Reflected my pain.
How he came, where he went
Will I see him again?
A cloud exploded at that time
I was drenched in rain."

12. The shooting star laughed at me! –or
Was it teasing me? – I
Understood what it meant

It defined my destiny.
It gave a hint of what would be,
Or, what I should be.
I felt that star landed straight
Upon my head but gently!”

13. “Kuyil, Kuyil, bring him back”
Kuyili pleads with folded hands
A flower is dropped by a tree
And on her palm it lands.
Does it make a statement
Of love, loud and clear?
A rifle-shot, somewhere near
Brings her back to now and here!



An interlude

14. “The scene is mystic, would you show the
 Events that followed?”
 Asked a reader, my thoughts at once
 Flowed and overflowed
 Like a river! I told the reader
 “Let me tell the story
 Not in prose but as a ballad
 In the form of poetry.”



Canto 2. In the woods

15. The little girl was perplexed; from
 Where did come that sound?
 She searched and searched all around
 Nothing at all was found.
 She farther went inside the woods
 And saw some commotion;
 She saw a group of soldiers there,
 An army in session.
16. Kuyili saw the shooting squad;
 Its leader was the same lad
 Whose face alone the other day
 in the brook she had
 Seen, but not aware of the
 Secret that would make her sad.
 Yes, he was a woman though
 In man's attire clad.
 Under his command she saw
 A hundred army men,
 Without knowing that they were
 All, in fact, women!
 Kuyili wasn't aware of
 'The Udayal Regiment' then.

17. Kuyili was enchanted, sure,
By that lad's command
With perfect stance he seemed to be
The leader of the land.
"Victory to Sivaganga"
He shouted full-throated
"Victory to Velu Naachiar"
The soldiers responded.
18. Something struck her unusual!
The voices were not gruff,
A little sweet, a little shrill
Made of a lighter stuff!
She had heard that name before, the
Name was of her queen!
But seen her not, to the palace
She had never been.
19. More than beauty, her valour was
The talk of the land.
She rode upon a horse, with a
Spear in her hand.
Kuyili knew that the British
Killed her king-husband,
After which the queen had fled
And had never returned.
So immersed in her thoughts - she
Made some noise, a fault
Enough to bring the drill to an
Immediate halt.

20. The soldiers dispersed suddenly on
Hearing that sound.
Within a second none was there
Just the empty ground.
Kuyili was all alone,
No bird even for company.
A darkness enveloped her mind
And she felt dizzy!



Canto 3. Murder in the Temple

21. “Victory to the Queen,” saying so
Entered a couple of men,
Taller, stronger, tougher than
All the armed women.
The same woods where Kuyili swooned and
Went reeling down.
It was near Sivaganga
A kingdom of renown.
22. A while ago, Kuyili had been
Brought before the queen.
Kuyili was unconscious, sometimes
Moaning in between.
The queen was shocked at first; but on
Seeing Kuyili’s face,
Her mind became bright again with
Hope’s glimmering rays.
While waiting for the young girl to
Wake up from her swoon,
Her thoughts were racing back and forth,
‘Will life be better soon?’

23. Once a princess, then a queen
Had she lost all her sheen?
In forts, caves and forests,
Disguised as a man.
Must redeem the lost kingdom
'twas her only plan.
Reaching out to loyal subjects,
Raising an army,
Sleepless nights and shifting abodes;
Nothing made her gloomy.
24. Down the memory lane,
She saw her past again.
As a kid of eight or nine,
Inside the palace walls,
She roamed about like a deer,
Learnt the martial arts,
Mastered several languages,
French, English, Urdu too,
Rode a horse and as an archer
'Focus', her virtue!
With ease she handled all weapons – way
Better than men would do.
25. Chellamuthu was the king of
Ramanathapuram⁹,
Just below Sivaganga, yet
A larger piece of kingdom.
To him and his wife Muthathal
Velu was the only child.
Though a girl, she grew up like

A little buck in the wild.
Her father had a long title
Vijaya Ragunatha Sethupathy.
He ruled Ramanathapuram
With absolute dignity.

26. At age sixteen got married to the
King of Sivaganga,
Muthuvaduganatha Thevar and
Became the Queen, in law.
Both were living happily.
A daughter too was born.
Suddenly they faced a threat.
Their peace of mind was gone.
Arcot Nawab Muhammad Ali
Started demanding
Tax from all the states around,
Sivaganga including.
Only Thevar defied him
As a Bold and rightful king.
27. Nawab had the support of
The British Company.¹⁰
In return he offered them
Lots of gold and money.
He bullied all the chieftains of the
Surrounding locality.
They yielded to the demand and paid
Tax to Nawab Ali.

28. Thevar was the only king
Who resisted the demand.
He stood firm, asserting:
Sivaganga was his land.
Nawab couldn't tolerate
This wilful defiant act.
But Thevar was invincible, Nawab
Very well knew this fact.
29. Thevar was a pious man,
Worshipped Lord Shiva¹¹.
His devotion was impeccable and
Faith, unshakeable.
Never carried arms with him
When visiting any temple.
That was enough, Nawab thought,
'The matter is so simple!'
30. A spy one day informed Nawab
Of Thevar's plan to be
In Kaalayar Koil¹² Temple
With just a meagre company.
Nawab saw a chance to kill
Thevar and his retinue.
Such cunningness had always been his
Habit, nothing new.
31. On that fateful night,
When the guard was lean and light
Nawab's army stormed the Temple.
Thevar and his team
Put up a brave fight - but

English cannons proved their might.
Thevar and his soldiers were
Killed in the battle.
Not a battle but a murder
Inside the Temple!

32. On hearing this, Velu Naachiar
Mounted on her steed
And drew her sword to wreak vengeance
With a tremendous speed.
“A sword against a cannon?”
Asked her advisors,
Two of them close to her
Known as ‘Marudhu Brothers’.
33. Chinna Marudhu, Peria Marudhu,
Yes, the Marudhu Brothers,
Loyal to Sivaganga,
Were like two feathers
Upon Thevar’ s crown,
As warriors of great renown.
They counselled the queen
To escape with her daughter
And then return later
Gathering a stronger force
To win back the kingdom.
Velu Naachiar had
Immense faith in them
34. Grief to pain, pain to anger
Anger to reason!
Step by step, settled down

The burning emotion.
Pleaded the brothers – and
Heeded the queen – then
Cooled down and thought:
‘The courage with what
Thevar had fought!
Was it not set at naught
By the English cannons?’
She agreed to escape at once
Along with her daughter - and
Vowed to return later
After gathering
An army to avenge the
Murder of the king.



Canto 4: Udayal, the Martyr

35. Angry was Nawab because
 The queen was left alive.
 The people loved her so much that
 Revolts might arise.
 He asked his men to find her out
 “Go, run and chase!
 Bring her soon, alive or dead
 But I must see her face”.
 It was not that easy to
 Capture Naachiar
 Here a day and there a night
 Now near, then away far!
 In a fort, or a village,
 Even a hermitage!
 Years and years rolled by; but
 Nothing quenched her rage.
36. The English took the palace from
 Nawab Mohamad Ali.
 They thought it was pivotal to their
 Colonial strategy.
 With force and threat, collecting tax
 From every poor village,
 Yet they allowed Nawab’s men
 To ransack and pillage.

37. In the course of eight years
The queen was very active,
Assembled a secret army,
Recruited women,
Trained them as in Dahomey,¹³
In stick, sword and gun.
'Udayal Regiment', it was named,
An Army of women!
Since men might not accept as their
Leader, a woman.
38. Udayal was a cowherd
In a nearby village.
How bold and loyal she was
At that tender age!
When the queen escaped
She received her on the way.
What they discussed, no one knew;
The queen then went away.
39. The soldiers who were chasing her
Wanted to know
The direction in which the queen had
Chosen to go – they
Caught hold of Udayal and
Tortured her utmost:
"Where and how the queen had fled?
North, South, East or West?"
40. Udayal did not yield – but
Kept her lips sealed tight.
The angry soldiers unleashed

Brutality with all their might.
She stood her ground firmly.
They beheaded her at last.
Chivalry would thus become
A thing of the past!

41. The trees around lamented and
Shed their leaves in respect.
The sky was dark, a single star,
Like a little insect,
Peeped out from up above
To have a look at that
Ghastly scene, a blot on earth,
A shame on everyone!
The News reached much later
Velu Naachiar on the run.

42. On hearing of this tragedy,
The queen came again
To that village where the brave
Udayal was slain.
She paid her obeisance - and
As a mark of reverence
Had a temple¹⁴ built there
In Udayal's remembrance.
She named her army of women
'Udayal Regiment'.
Restored the pride of womanhood
At that very moment!



Canto 5. A Doha and The Diplomat

43. The queen knew she needed more
To meet the British army.
With Hyder Ali of Mysore¹⁵
She shared a common enemy.
To seek his help she went herself
To meet him in person.
With all the strength that she possessed
Thanks to her erudition.
44. Knowledge, Poetry, Music, Logic
And the Science of warfare,
Astute diplomacy with
An unflinching dare!
Everything helped her
But something helped her more
To seek and get an audience with
Hyder of Mysore.
45. She had learnt the verses in
Tamil of Sangam age.¹⁶
Also poems from outside
Especially in one language;
The language spoken by many
Muslims of India.

Urdu, we call it now;
The language of Love!

46. Urdu¹⁷ as a language in that
Name was still unknown.
But the language Hindavi was
Evolving on its own.
In Dohas of Amir Khusro¹⁸
Its sparkling seeds were sown.
Later in Mirza Ghalib¹⁹
It became full-blown.
47. “Give me men, rifles, bullets
Give me cannons generously
The British are our common enemy
Let us crush them unitedly.”
Hyder was astonished that
A woman could speak of war!
Doubts lingered in his mind:
‘This woman could go how far?’
48. She read his mind, of her vow
She wanted him to know
So soulfully recited
A Doha of Amir Kushro
“Kushro darya prem ka, ulli wa ki dhaar,
Joutra so doob gaya, jo dooba so paar”
‘O Kushro, the River of Love
That runs in strange directions
The one who dives would drown in it
The one who drowns would reach
The shore, opposite.’

49. Hyder understood
 Her solid determination.
 She was not ordinary
 But born to rule a Nation.



Canto 6. The Recruitment

50. The queen's thoughts were disrupted
 As Marudhu brothers barged in
 Unannounced but hailing
 "Victory to the queen"
 "Success, success", both repeated,
 "Hyder has agreed – to
 Send us soldiers and weapons,
 Also cannons that we need"
51. The queen felt elated.
 She nodded silently.
 All others were standing there
 Watching quietly.
 Marudhu Brothers were baffled by
 The silence and the stress - they
 Saw the girl on the ground
 Lying unconscious.
52. An aged person in the army
 Sprinkled water on her face
 Kuyili opened up her eyes

Slowly at a gentle pace
Finally she stood up, for
That she needed help – then
Someone gave a glass of water
Which she swallowed in a gulp.
She was surprised when she saw
The lad whose reflection
She had seen in the brook;
The same face, the same look!
She felt she was somehow safe – on
Looking at his noble face
Still she was confused:
'Why some unknown men
Had made me swoon and brought me here
Hours before? Or when?'

53. Asked the queen, softly:
"Who are you, belle?
Why were you in the woods?
Watching our drill?"
Kuyili replied softly:
" I am from a nearby village
I hang out in the woods;
Yes, the same place
Where we met some days ago,
Though not face to face."

54. The queen was caught off guard - but
In her heart of hearts
Liked the peasant's courage.
She asked her name and village.

Then the queen decreed that
Kuyili stay with them
Till she proved her innocence
And dismissed her at once.

55. Why should I obey this lad,
Handsome yet rude?
Kuyili thought but didn't speak
She sensed the army's mood.
At the sunset all of them
Went inside the woods.
Soon she felt embarrassed,
When without pretense,
The soldiers started changing clothes,
Ignoring her presence!

56. Then she realized, all of them were
Women in men's disguise!
What about their leader? 'No.'
She shook her head thrice.
Then came the queen, as
A lady with the same face
Of the lad she had seen:
The lad, the leader, now the queen!

57. Startled by the discovery
Kuyili made a sound.
All the women warriors
immediately turned around.
Taking her aside, the queen
Explained all that happened - she

Beseeched her to take a pledge and
Join the Udayal Regiment.

58. "Your father was a farmer
Loyal to the king
I trust you and if you wish
Enlist you in this ring
Will you take the pledge that
All of us have taken?"
Asked the queen and Kuyili was
Visibly shaken
59. Alone she was after her
Father passed away – Kuyili
Lost her mother long before
Had none with her to stay.
She herself tilled her land
With the help of neighbours.
All the odds she faced alone
In circumstances, adverse.
60. She saw the fire of truth in Velu
Naachiar's eyes:
'Is she not on purpose now
Roaming in disguise?
Is she not my destiny, my
Queen Majesty?
Is this not the moment for me to
Prove my loyalty?'
She asked herself such questions and
Pondered over them.

“Yes” came the answer,
Without her knowing wherefrom.

61. The queen narrated to Kuyili
All the events of her life,
As a kid, as a princess,
Then the king’s wife.
She told her something more that was
More a private thought!
Kuyili was convinced; she
Consented at last – to
Take the pledge of loyalty
Ceremonially;
She accepted the role given
whole-heartedly.



Canto 7. The Pledge

62. The next day, not yet so,
 The night refused to go!
 The sun was lurking still in dark
 Suddenly there were sparks
 Flying from a pot, that was
 Fiery and hot
 Carried by two women
 Armoured like men
 They placed it on a rock - all
 Stood around the pot
 A little away from it, none
 Ventured to talk.
 The moon was watching all of this
 Not so bright but pale!
 Like a child, avidly
 Watching a fairy tale!

63. Then came, Kuyili!
 With sword, shield and armour!
 Bowed before the queen,
 Solemn was her demeanour
 She had been instructed
 Of the ritual thoroughly
 She carried out every step

Meticulously.
Some of those standing there
Started singing loudly – all
Clapped their hands,
closed their eyes,
And sank into a reverie!
The song was an Anthem in
Tamil, the native tongue.
For several years in Sivaganga, that
Song had been sung.

64. The spirit of the Anthem
Reverberated in the sky.
They saluted the flag that was
Hoisted high;
In the middle of the flag
A Hanuman²⁰ figure
Blessed them all and gave to them
Strength and vigour.
65. “Sparks of fire! Sparks of fire – in
Everyone’s heart.
The anger of the oppressed will
Explode at last.
By the grace and will of God
Freedom to all.
Our flag will soon be flying high
On the palace wall.
Freedom to all! Freedom to all!
Freedom to one and all!”

66. "Once it was the flag of
Arjuna²¹.
Now this is the flag of
Sivaganga.
Our flag will soon be flying high
On the palace wall.
Freedom to all! Freedom to all!
Freedom to one and all!"
67. Singing the anthem, all
Saluted the flag
Kuyili then approached the pot.
A flame arose from it
In the form of a palm
Like a blessing arm - declaring:
"I will do no harm."
She raised her sword and pricked her palm.
Drops of blood trickled.
She thrust her hand inside the pot
That was Burning hot!
Yet she didn't budge,
But recited the pledge:
68. "I shall be loyal to my motherland
With an unwavering devotion.
I shall give my life to the freedom of this land
And to this Nation.
Freedom to all, freedom to all
Freedom to one and all
Freedom to all, freedom to all
It is a divine call!"

69. All the women-warriors
Repeated these words,
Singing, dancing, swearing – and,
Raising their swords.
Soon they sat quietly to
Watch a simple ballet.
Some of them were getting ready to
Enact a scene, a play – with
Flowery eyes and leafy ears
The trees were also eager to watch – a
Glow-worm was their torch!
70. Upon a gesture made by the queen
Some started enacting a scene:
One Lifted her hand
Holding an anklet!
A king and a queen, both
Fell down dead!
An entire town was
Set on fire!
The culprit, a goldsmith, the
Greedy liar.
71. The ballet thus enacted did
Inspire them
The story of Kannagi²²
A humble woman, whose husband was killed,
Condemned a thief and despite her grief
She went to the court with an
Angry face - and
Broke her anklet to

Prove her case.
– In brief,
She exposed the real thief.
– The errant king,
Died at once in repentance,
– Pronouncing
His own death sentence!
The queen followed the king in death.
It was their destiny.
The god of fire appeared before and
Appeased Kannagi;
Burnt the town and brought down her rage.
This Scene, a golden page
From the Epic written by
Ilango, a poet, a sage.



Canto 8. The strategy

72. Within a week all understood
 That Kuyili was a real asset,
 Resourceful and helpful too.
 Soon she earned their trust.
 But the mystery remained;
 And no one knew and had no clue
 Who that Kuyili was!
 A few days later, under a tree
 Pondering over the quandary – were
 Marudhu brothers immersed in thoughts
 With questions they didn't ask:
 "Who is Kuyili? Trustworthy?
 Can she be the queen's deputy?"
 The queen
 Read their minds and explained
 That God himself had so ordained
73. The queen spoke with conviction – words
 Flowed like a stream.
 Her eyes were closed as if she was
 Speaking in a dream:
 "I knew her father long ago
 Since the time I married the king.

As a farmer, and a subject – her
Father was unassuming.
The farmer role, a cover up!
'twas a mere façade;
But in fact, he was a spy,
To him the king was god!
I heard this from the king's mouth.
His loyalty was beyond doubt.
This apart, I'll share with you
Something from my heart,
A secret from the past.

74. "I had a dream, a dream? No,
It was a true vision!
On that fateful night
When the king was killed
I saw a bright light
Descending from the sky,
Or maybe even above!
In its midst, a girl was there
Sweet and full of love.
I could see her face clearly
Dark, yet bright, like the moon
She spoke to me, silently:
"You would meet me soon
On the banks of a brook
When you see a shooting star.
Also know that with my help
You will win the war! – yes,
You will win the war!"

75. "Often I went to the nearby brook
Hoping to see her again.
Every time my expectation
Turned out to be in vain;
But
A few days ago
A few days ago"
76. Whatev'r the queen was about to say
Was interrupted by a horse's neigh.
A horseman was seen approaching them
Asking for the way – To the
Palace of Sivaganga, where
He had something to convey.
The Udayal army nabbed him,
Chained him and brought him near
Their queen in disguise and he was
Trembling with mortal fear.
77. Surrounded by soldiers,
The horseman was quizzed.
Afraid of torture
He confessed the truth
The soldiers extracted the
Message that was
Meant for Major
Bonjour²³, his boss.
It spoke of a meeting that
Hyder Ali
Had with a lady,

Secretly.
Beyond that he had
Nothing to say.
Still it was night, so they
Waited for the day.

78. Before the daybreak they assembled again
Reported the events between
The dusk and the dawn to the queen.
The soldiers' report
Made it clear
Their enemy was also
Living in fear.
'Should we kill the spy? but
He is not guilty.
Why should then he die?
Shouldn't we set him free?'
Such questions arose
In everyone's mind.
All looked out for Kuyili
Whom no one could find.

79. Someone approached and
Spoke to the queen.
She nodded and approved
The plan that had been
Hatched in a moment by
Kuyili herself.
It appeared to be a
Professional stuff!

80. The scene got shifted
 To the side of the brook
 Where there were trees,
 Rosewood and oak.
 Tied to a tree,
 Kuyili was seen,
 A girl as young as
 Just nineteen,
 Screaming for help and
 In between
 Sobbing and shouting
 With fear and pain.
81. The horseman heard the cry and felt
 Sorry for that woman.
 Was he not tortured throughout the night - by
 Several unknown men?
 Was he not released then
 Only with a threat
 Not to speak to anyone of
 Whatever happened thereat:
 “If you choose to disobey – you
 Would be killed the very next day.”
82. He saw Kuyili, tied to the tree - it
 Evoked his sympathy.
 He knew the pain of torture – so
 Felt an empathy.
 He untied her and saw the bandage
 On her bleeding palms - he
 Asked her who the culprits were

She replied without qualms:
“A gang of thieves, or maybe - a
Revolutionary army,
Planning against the British
Something uncanny”
She sounded true and trusted he,
The spy of the British Company!

83. The more he listened, the more she said
And him with lies she fed.
Thanked him for his timely help
And said:
“But for you I’d be dead.”
After that, away he sped.
She knew in turn he would feed
The British with her lies – that
Was the plan hatched by her,
A strategic device!



Canto 9. Major Bonjour

84. 'Bonjour' means 'good morning'
As they greet in French;
But to Major Bonjour
That morning wasn't good
A spy had brought an information - which
Disturbed his mood:
'The queen in exile, Velu Naachi
Had met Hyder Ali'.
That was enough, Bonjour was
Upset mentally.
85. The spy had also spoken of
A gang that he had met
In the woods, who nabbed him
But soon had lost interest— and
After a while released him
With just a verbal threat.
He refrained from saying
What happened after that.
86. He further reported of a plan
To attack some temple near
Sivaganga and capture that
To avenge the king's death.
The attack would be after the

Ensuing festival
And Hyder had promised to help
Queen Naachiar, the rebel.

87. Bonjour was quite upset, though
He was bothered more
By the order of Colonel Smith²⁴,
Its content and tenor:
“Send maximum troops with all your cannons
At once to Dindigul²⁵, act swift”
He was reluctant but wanted no rift
Between Smith and himself - his
Thoughts went adrift:
“If I obey this order - then
How can I meet the joint force - near
Kaalayar Koil border?”

88. After some confusion – he
Arrived at a conclusion
Not the best, he conceded,
Though workable instead:
“Half the troops to Kaalayar Koil,
Less than that to Dindigul.
Of the cannons five I have
Will send four to Smith,
Keeping one in Sivaganga
To protect the Palace with!”
Something did not augur well;
What disaster this could spell?

89. As Bonjour was lost in thoughts
His coffee turned cold.
“Bring another,” through the peon
The Orderly was told.
His reply too was cold:
“No milk in the pantry.
A can has been routed to the
Use of the factory”
90. Bonjour remembered, recently
The company had erected
A Warehouse where all the weapons
Could be stored undetected
It was called a ‘factory’
Only as a ruse
To guard the secret of its real
Purpose and use
Can secrets remain secrets? Never!
From ear to ear,
They flow like a river!



Canto 10. The Festival

91. Kaalayar Koil, the temple town
 Was very busy that morning.
 The Festival had just begun
 With flags and banners adorning
 The walls, the houses and the streets!
 Hanging rows of mango leaves!
 People walking here and there
 A fiesta, a fanfare!
92. Devotees thronged the Temple, dressed
 Colourfully and singing
 Hymns in praise of deities, carrying
 Fruits for offering.
 Kids enjoyed their shopping
 Dolls, toys and sweet.
 Despite the joy apparent,
 Something else, albeit,
 Was seen on every street.
93. English soldiers everywhere
 Paraded with guns,
 At the hint of any trouble
 Ready to shoot at once.
 An atmosphere of mixed feelings

Prevailed in the town.
– Yet,
Devotion was predominant
For which the land was known

94. Kaleeswarar, Swarnambikai
Someswarar, Soundara Nayaki,
Sundareswarar, Meenakshi
The six presiding deities!
People had a burdened heart,
Yearning for freedom,
Freedom from the British,
Freedom from serfdom!
95. A group of devotees with sickles
Were stopped by the soldiers.
They tried to explain that it was a
Part of the rituals;
But they were not understood
The soldiers paid no heed.
A learned person intervened and
Explained the need
In broken English, after that
The soldiers let the group proceed.
96. In a corner of the street
A rustic girl was standing
That no one paid attention to,
Her looks were not demanding.
Her eyes and ears were receptive to
Every move and sound.
She saved them all in memory

Walking round and round;
Ostensibly shopping, but
Nothing did she spend.
None knew her name or that
She was Kuyili's friend.

97. A few words heard by her
Were highly technical:
'Factory', 'Warehouse', 'Arsenal',
Sounded abnormal!
The very next day, she
reported
To Kuyili what she heard;
Kuyili, in turn, narrated to
Velu Naachiar, word by word.
98. Strategies were chalked out
And maps were drawn on earth.
For ideas and suggestions
There seemed to be no dearth.
The Udayal camp was busy,
Speaking in whispers.
The trees inhaled the fiery breath
Exhaled by those soldiers!
99. A battle on the anvil,
A sense of sacrifice!
The thrill and joy of freedom!
The faith that fortifies
Every act of humans - in
Every walk of life;
In peace and war,

In love and sports,
In amity and strife!
The spirit of war, an earnestness,
Pervaded the camp.
In that darkest night,
Hope was the only lamp!



Canto 11. The Plan

100. The Queen was restless in her thoughts
‘How many lives to forego
In the battle to be fought,
Just to sate my ego?’
The hope of freedom, of course,
Pulled aside the curtain.
—‘But,
Is the victory so certain?
Suppose we lost the battle?’
Such thoughts her mind did rattle.
Chinna Marudhu, at his best
Spoke to set her thoughts to rest.
101. “Aren’t we warriors? Don’t we fight?
Fight to protect the Nation?
Shouldn’t we do our duty? Why
All this trepidation?
Life itself a battlefield,
A constant struggle for peace.
We die and take birth again
Every time a fresh lease.
It is so when death is caused by
Causes natural – but
When we die for a cause

We become immortal – have
Trust in what you fight for.
Nothing lost in love and war.”

102. These words gave her confidence and
Dispelled her worries – what
God Himself had spoken before
Several centuries²⁶
In a battlefield,
As a charioteer!
–‘Yes!’
Acknowledged
A sudden breeze!

103. “That’s fine”, spoke the queen
“we need to strategize.
The British army even now is
large enough in size.
Cannons we have none – and
They have at least one.
Can we face that brutal power
With a rifle or a gun?
Our weaponry is limited – their
Warehouse is full.
How to win the battle
What strings can we pull?”

104. “No sign of Hyder’s army yet!
Is it wise to expect
His soldiers and cannons for
Winning this battle?

Can we fight alone the British?
Would it not be fatal?
Questions, such questions,
Arise in my mind.
We need not be afraid, but a
Way, we must find”

105. Having been a silent witness
To this conversation
Kuyili stood up, spoke some words
That shocked everyone – such
Words of courage, sacrifice,
Seldom had been spoken.
Marudhu brothers and the queen
Stood completely shaken!
106. “A cannon can destroy
A large crowd, agreed.
If we stand dispersed, it can
Do no harm indeed.
Will they use the cannon to
Destroy the palace walls?
Will they lose the palace itself
By firing cannonballs?
The cannon and the weapons are all
Inside the warehouse – I
Have a plan to destroy it
The plan I myself chose.”
107. Kuyili then explained her plan,
Filled up every detail.
With confidence she declared that

The plan would never fail.
All around were shocked – they
Rejected it outright.
Kuyili was persistent
And claimed it as her right:
“Blessed by my father
And ancestors before him.
It would be my privilege
And not a mere whim”

108. The plan was something unthinkable
To anyone in his senses.
It was hard to accept
Or arrive at a consensus.
Several hours passed by
In arguments and noise.
Finally, with hesitation, all
Agreed in one voice – a
Bold and a painful choice!

109. Kuyili sang the Anthem - all
Joined her call
Freedom means nothing if
It is not for all.
“Freedom to all, freedom to all
Freedom to one and all
Freedom to all, freedom to all
It is a divine call!”



Canto 12. The Ego and the Destiny

110. Bonjour was resting in a
Couch that afternoon
Counting every day from the
Day of the New Moon
Eight nights had gone by,
'twas the ninth day.
The tenth day was supposed to be
The grand finale
To him the festival
Was just a fashion show
The spirit of it he failed to see
Because of his ego.

111. 'After tomorrow,
We should be on alert.
No information on
Hyder Ali yet
No movement of soldiers
In the vicinity' – Bonjour
Exclaimed loudly:
"Woman, thy name is fraility!"

112. 'Nawab might have changed
The mind of Hyder Ali
The latter has his own problems'
Thought Bonjour wishfully
He started playing chess
Single-handedly
A pawn and the queen!
Moved the destiny



Canto 13. The Majestic Ambience!

113. The woods were dark, wearing
The hood of the silent night.
The brook was overflowing.
The moon was not so bright:
In size, a mere half;
In shape, a rugby ball,
Glowing like an ember!
The month maybe September!
Now and then it emitted
Just a thin ray,
Helping some traveller
Who had lost his way.
The clouds seemed stubborn,
Not to pour or go away.
114. She was dark, covered with
The hood of contemplation.
From beneath her thoughts, a ray of
Hope, an inspiration!
Was it not her guiding light,
'Garuda'²⁷, the kite?
Her father had once told her:
"He's the vehicle of the Lord,

Not just a metaphor.
He will be with you forever
As a guide and protector.
When you fight for the right
Look for Him, in your sight
He will appear as a bird.
All your prayers will be heard.
Fight for justice, fight for freedom,
He will come and lead you,
Holding you by hand
To save your Motherland.”

115. Was it just a speech? No,
A promise, an assurance.
Now the time has come for her
To take a bold step – and
Seek His divine help.
She looked up for guidance – Oh!
There He was, she saw:
“What a majestic ambience!” – she
Exclaimed with awe!

116. Every grain of sand to her
Was a living being,
Breathing in and breathing out
The spirit of everything,
Everything that was on it
And all that walked on it.
That’s how she looked at it
As her mother and worshipped it!

117. The sky above, the earth below
All the five elements
Gave her hope and guided her
In those critical moments.
She followed her intuition and
Heeded its advice.
The will to live was transcended
By the will to sacrifice.

118. Ideas that culminate
In a lofty dream
Might become ideals
In the course of time.
What is now a stream
Would have been
Little drops of rain,
And again,
A tree, a little seed!
The way of the world is
That indeed.
'A penny for your thoughts!'
Quipped the little brook.
It was like her sister!
She asked her playfully:
"Won't you wish me?" She did
– But
With a touch of melancholy!



Canto 14. Enter the Dragon's Den

119. The Festival of the Goddess
Celebrating femininity,
Called by different names – as
Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswathi!
Valour, Wealth and Wisdom!
The three-fold Divinity;
The most important festival
In that vicinity;
Hails the victory of the good
And the pride of Womanhood.
The Spirit of freedom pervaded
The entire neighbourhood.
120. After the Nine Holy Nights
The Tenth Day would mark
The victory of the goddess over
Evil forces dark.
Mainly a Season for the
Hindu women folk,
For the oppressed and the humble
A Festival bespoke!

121. Nine nights had gone
'twas the tenth dawn
Nothing seemed unusual
All quiet and casual– then
Bonjour got an Order – from
Colonel Smith, his boss:
“Hyder’s troops are moving from
The fort of Dindigul,
Marching towards Madurai
I cautioned you, didn’t I?
The information from your spy
Was a deceptive lie
To distract us from the plan of
Hyder to take
Madurai through its western border
Like an easy cake – Velu
Naachiar is nowhere, Just
a hallucination!
Bonjour, you must send every
Soldier from your garrison.
Do not delay, act forthwith.
It’s a Command– Colonel Smith”

122. Not able to agree with
The order of his boss
Bonjour sensed a foul play
Not sure of what it was
He decided to send the troops
In two or three tranches, so that
Some at least would remain there to
Protect Kaalayar Koil

He did not want that queen back
Anywhere on that soil

123. A soldier rushed inside and
Disrupted his thoughts.
A problem near the gate,
He reported to his boss:
“Several women seek entry
To visit the Temple complex
Where the female deity
Raja Rajeswari²⁸
Is worshipped every year
On the tenth day
Of the Festival,
As usual
Just a ritual.
– They’re now
Banging the gate,
Flouting the order – and
Shouting like hell!”
124. Bonjour wasn’t in a mood
To interfere in women’s affairs:
“Open the gate” he ordered without
Knowing their number, ‘Who cares!’
Hundreds of women entered the palace
Like a swarm of bees;
Swords, sickles and rifles hidden
Wrapped inside their sarees.
Within minutes, the palace ground was

Full of soldier-women.
The Udayal Army had successfully
Entered the dragon's den!

125. One of them rang the bell
At the temple entrance.
Others drew their weapons, and
Attacked the British at once.
Bonjour heard the sound of bell
Came out and saw the pell-mell:
“Open the warehouse, open the doors,
Bring the cannon out – kill
All these wretched women!”
Everyone heard him shout.

126. The cannon and the cannonballs
Were inside the Warehouse
– Keys
Hanging on the shoulders
Of the three soldiers
Guarding its doors – when
Bonjour shouted, “Open the doors”
They complied with it, perforce.
Something happened that moment – as
Never before in history!
Words would fail to recount – Oh!
What an act of bravery!



Canto 15: The Sacrifice Supreme!

127. A dark-skinned girl was seen by all
Running towards the Warehouse.
She poured oil hurriedly
On her saree and her blouse.
Lit herself at once and started
Running like a fireball.
The guards were shocked and stunned
Motionless stood all.
Immediately the Udayal army
Gunned down the guards.
128. Kuyili, the dark-skinned girl,
Entered the Warehouse.
Was it not the culmination
Of a thousand vows?
In that confusion - all
Heard an explosion.
The warehouse collapsed and
fell down
Like a pack of cards,
Witnessed by Angels in heaven,
Singing her praise like bards.

129. By her act of sacrifice, Kuyili
Destroyed the arsenal.
For a moment, Time stood still
In History, no parallel!
The Udayal army, within minutes
Killed the British soldiers.
The queen fought with valour - and
Beheaded the Major.
130. "Victory to Kali, Victory to Durga,
Victory to Sivaganga!
Freedom to all, freedom to all,
Freedom to one and all!
By the grace of God, we've
Broken the British wall!"
Shouted the women and echoed the sky.
Everything happened in the wink of an eye!
131. Flames arose high in air,
Frenzied was the crowd.
The figure of Kuyili arose then
Wrapped up in a shroud!
As she ascended - the
Angels descended
To welcome her to their abode!
"Kuyili, Kuyili" murmured all.
They heard a cuckoo's call.
A Kite was seen circling above
The place where the warehouse was
Suddenly there was rain,
To douse the fire or bless the lass?

132. The British army was routed.
The Udayal Regiment shouted:
“Kuyili is Durga,
The Patron Saint of Sivaganga”
Velu Naachiar mounted a horse,
Raised her sword and saluted.
Dripping from it was the blood
Of Bonjour, she had beheaded.
Udayal blessed her from heaven,
Also ‘The Great Rishis Seven’⁵!
133. With a roar, the British flag was
Pulled down from the mast.
The Hanuman flag was hoisted,
The Palace redeemed at last.
With soaring spirit, the people cried:
“This Motherland is our pride!”
Once again in the sky
The Hanuman flag was flying high!



Epilogue

134. Kuyili is an epitome of
Supreme sacrifice.
For the Nation's freedom – she
Gave her life as the price.
A beacon light, an inspiration
For every woman to rise,
To rise against oppression,
Against malevolence,
To rise above the transient,
Mortal existence!
135. Among all the stories told
In the book of History,
One would remain etched in gold
The story of Kuyili.
Joan of Arc²⁹ and Abbakka³⁰
Were her forerunners.
Lakshmi Bai³¹ to Laksmi Seghal³²
Several after her.
In that hall of fame, Kuyili
And Velu Naachiar – will
Shine forever brilliantly – like
Two bright stars!
This ballad never will end, but
Let us put an end to wars.



A Prayer:

136. I beseech all my readers
And plead with folded hands - please
Carry forward this ballad – to
All the distant lands.
Speak the glory of women
Each and every one – let
Peace prevail on this earth – and
Angels bless from heaven!



Annotations

1. **Lord Ganesa:** Ganesa is a divine form of God in which He has the head of an elephant. It is a matter of faith in India that anyone venturing into any act or task should, at the outset, invoke the blessings of Ganesa for the successful fulfilment of it.
2. **Subramaniya Bharati** (1882-1921), the Mahakavi, was a revolutionary Tamil poet who has been the source of inspiration to almost all the poets who wrote in Tamil after him. The author of the present work takes pride in declaring that he is an ardent devotee of Subramaniya Bharathi.
3. **Saraswati** is the goddess of knowledge, music, art, speech, wisdom, and learning, worshipped mainly in India. She is a part of the trinity of Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswathi, representing the aspects of Valour, Wealth and Wisdom.
4. **Sivaganga** is a town and headquarters of the Sivaganga district in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The town is located at a distance of 48 km (30 mi) from Madurai and 449 km (279 mi) from the state capital Chennai. During the period portrayed in this ballad, it was a small, independent, princely state ruled by a Monarch/Chieftain.
5. **Rishis** are immortal seers who had a cosmic vision and having access to all the planes of existence and enormous spiritual power. The principal Rishis are seven, corresponding to the 7 stars of the Big Dipper portion of the Ursa Major Constellation.
6. **Navarathiri** is the Festival of Nine Nights celebrated by the Hindus, differently in different parts of India. The tenth day is invariably celebrated as the Day of Victory of the Divine over the Evil.
7. **Kuyil** is the Tamil name of a bird, bluish-black in colour, which is supposed to make 'kukoo' sound in a sweet voice and is called

‘koel’ in Hindi and ‘Kokila’ in Sanskrit. It is a member of the Cuckoo order of birds, as known in English. In terms of literary references, it corresponds to a skylark or a nightingale.

8. **Stole** is a mantle or a long piece of cloth that is worn by women on their chest, called ‘Dupatta’ in Hindi.
9. **Ramanathapuram** is now a district in Tamilnadu, India. It is just below the Southern border of Sivaganga District. During the period portrayed in this ballad, it was a small, independent, princely state ruled by a Monarch/Chieftain.
10. **The British Company** refers to the East India Company that colonized, captured and ruled a vast portion of India for more than 100 years before the British Empire took over from it under the Proclamation of Queen Victoria.
11. **Lord Shiva** is one of the three principal Deities in the Hindu religion, along with Brahma and Vishnu. He is the Supreme God for the Saivites, a major sect of Hindus.
12. **Kalayaar Koil** is a temple town near Sivaganga at a distance of about 20 kms.
13. **Dahomey** was a West African Kingdom, having been in existence from 1600 to 1900. It had a unique all-female military unit called the Dahomey Amazons by European observers. There is no consensus on the period when this all-women army was established. It could have been a few years before or after the formation of a similar all-women army by Queen Velu Naachiar as narrated in this ballad.
14. **Udayal Temple** is now known as Vettudayar Temple. It is situated in a village called Kollangudi, in Sivaganga District.
15. **Hyder Ali** (c. 1720 – 7 December 1782) was the Sultan and de facto ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore in southern India. Born as Hyder Ali Khan, he distinguished himself as a soldier, eventually became the ruler of Mysore.
16. **Tamil Sangam** was spread over three periods. The first Sangam is said to have been in existence from 6500 BCE to 3000 BCE, the second from 3000 BCE to 1500 BCE and the last one from 400

BCE to 200 CE. A Sangam is an Academy. The three Tamil Sangams were Royal Academies patronized by the rulers of South Tamil-nadu called 'Pandyas'. They were Academies of Tamil Literature.

17. **Urdu** is an Indo-Aryan language spoken chiefly in South Asia. It is the official national language and lingua franca of Pakistan. In India, Urdu is an Eighth Schedule language whose status, function, and cultural heritage is recognized by the Constitution of India; Urdu is described as Persianised standard register of the Hindustani language. Urdu and Hindi share a common Sanskrit and Prakrit derived vocabulary base, phonology, syntax as well as grammar, making them mutually intelligible in colloquial speech. Urdu was chosen as the language of East India Company rule across northern India in 1837 when the Company chose it to replace Persian, the court language of the Indo-Islamic empires. Urdu became a literary language in the 18th century.
18. **Abu'l Hasan Yamīn-ud-Dīn Khusrau** (1253–1325 AD), better known as Amīr Khusrau was an Indo-Persian[1] Sufi singer, musician, poet and scholar who lived under the Delhi Sultanate. He is an iconic figure in the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent. He was a mystic and a spiritual disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi, India. He wrote poetry primarily in Persian, but also in Hindavi. He wrote couplets that are known as Dohas.
19. **Mirza Ghalib** (Mirza Asadullah Baig Khan, 27 December 1797– 15 February 1869) was an Indian poet. He wrote in both Urdu and Persian. Although his Persian Divan is at least five times longer than his Urdu Divan, his fame rests on his poetry in Urdu.
20. **Hanuman** is a character in the epic Ramayana, seen as a great devotee and ambassador of Sri Rama, an Avtar or Incarnation of God. It is believed that Hanuman himself was a potent incarnation of the divine power of God who took birth to be of great help to Sri Rama. Many devotees pray to Hanuman for strength and active assistance in the midst of any crisis.
21. **Arjuna** was one of the principal protagonists in the Epic, Mahabharat. He was a great archer and Lord Krishna himself was his charioteer in the great war that he fought against his cousins. His chariot sported a flag with Hanuman figure painted on it.

22. **Kannagi** is the chief character in the Tamil Epic, titled, 'Silapadhikaram', written by poet Ilango nearly 1900 years ago.
23. **Major Bonjour** was the Principal British Officer who was in charge of the army of the East India Company in and around Sivaganga, reporting only to his immediate boss, Colonel Smith.
24. **Colonel Smith**, also known as Joseph Smith. was the Commanding Officer of the troops of the East India Company in South India and fought several battles against Hyder Ali.
25. **Dindigul** is a town near Madurai, in the South Western part of Tamil Nadu, India. It is said that in the fort at Dindigul, Velu Naachiar, while in exile, was given asylum by the chieftain Gopal Naicker and she spent the most part of the eight years in hiding there, before she recaptured her kingdom of Sivaganga.
26. This is a reference to the Divine Work 'Bhagavat Gita' that is believed to contain the very words spoken by God, Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the battlefield, during the Great War of Mahabharata.
27. **Garuda** is identified as the bird Brahminy Kite and it is believed to be the celestial vehicle of God, Lord Vishnu.
28. **Raja Rajeswari** is the Supreme Form in the worship of female Goddesses and is considered the source of the three aspects, Durga, Lakshmi and Sarawathi – or, Valour, Wealth and Wisdom.
29. **Joan of Arc** was a French Girl who hailed from a family of peasants and engaged herself in the war against British to release France from the British domination and was helped and guided by some visiting Angels. After her great success in the war, she was betrayed by her own countrymen who captured and handed her over to the English. She was declared guilty of heresy and burnt at stake. Later the Church realized the grave error and in turn canonized her as a Saint.
30. **Abbakka Chowta** was the first Tuluva Queen of Ullal who fought the Portuguese in the later half of the 16th century. She belonged to the Chowta dynasty who ruled over parts of coastal Karnataka, India. Their capital was Puttige. The port town of Ullal served as their subsidiary capital. The Portuguese made several attempts to capture Ullal as it was strategically placed. But Abbakka repulsed

each of their attacks for over four decades. For her bravery, she came to be known as Abhaya Rani (The fearless queen).

31. **Lakshmibai**, the Rani of Jhansi, (19 November 1828 — 18 June 1858), was an Indian queen of the princely state of Jhansi from 1843 to 1853 as the wife of Maharaja Gangadhar Rao. She was one of the leading figures of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and became a symbol of resistance to the British Raj for Indian nationalists.
32. **Lakshmi Sahgal** (born Lakshmi Swaminathan; 24 October 1914–23 July 2012) was a revolutionary of the Indian independence movement, an officer of the Indian National Army, and the Minister of Women's Affairs in the Azad Hind government. Lakshmi is commonly referred to in India as Captain Lakshmi, a reference to her rank when she was taken prisoner in Burma during the Second World War.

A Brief note on the Poet, Vanavil K.Ravi

Vanavil K.Ravi, is a practising Lawyer in Madras High Court, Tamilnadu, India. He started writing poems from his early school days and has written hundreds of poems in Tamil and English.

He is an ardent admirer of the Great Revolutionary Tamil Poet, Subramanya Bharati and has published several significant, path-breaking essays and books on the works of Bharati, well received and appreciated by Tamil Scholars. A list of his published works is given below.

Recently he has completed writing ‘The Ballad of the Warrior-Girl KUYILI’ and has almost completed ‘Prahalad’, another epic in English verses.

He is also a composer and singer in both the languages and has released several albums of songs and a few singles too.

He founded a literary society named “Vanavil Cultural Centre” in 1994. Since then, among other literary and cultural activities, the said Centre has been celebrating the birthday of Bharati in a grand manner as an art and literary festival for 3 or 4 days in December, every year. Great Luminaries like Dr.A.P.J.AbdulKalam, the former President of India, Shri Venkayya Naidu, the Hon’ble Vice President of India, the music legend Dr.M.S.Subbulaksmi, Justice V.R.Krishnalyer had graced this festival with their presence. In December, 2020, this was celebrated as a ten-day International Festival and it was inaugurated by Shri Narendra Modi, the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India and the valedictory Speech was delivered by Mrs.Nirmala Sitaraman, the Hon’ble Union Finance Minister of India.

More than 88 Seminars have been conducted till date by several Universities and Colleges exclusively on his works.

On 24th January, 2021 an International Conference on his works was conducted and was attended by some Vice Chancellors and several Professors of Tamil and English not only from Tamilnadu, but also from other States and other Countries. In the concluding Session of that Conference a Resolution was unanimously passed appealing that Vanavil K.Ravi be awarded the highest prizes for Literature, including the Nobel Prize. A copy of the Resolution is given below.

Recently he received Vallathol Bharati Award from the Vice Chancellor of Malayalam University, Kerala, India

The List of the Published works of Vanavil K.Ravi

1. **Justice Versus Natural Justice** (First Edition, Sun Publishers, Madras, 1996; Second Edition, Niveditha Publishers, Chennai.)
2. **Law, Logic and Liberty** (Vanavil Cultural Centre, Chennai, 1998.)
3. **Verses of Wisdom** (AnandJothi, Chennai, 2002.)
4. **Namakku Tozhil Kavithai**, (நமக்குத் தொழில் கவிதை ... Poetry is My Calling) (Vanavil Cultural Centre, Chennai 1996.)
5. **Unnodu Naan**, (உன்னோடு நான் - With You, I am) (Trisakthi Publications, Chennai, 2009.)
6. **Minnar Chuvai**, (மின்னற் சுவை - The Taste of Lightning) (LKM Publication, Chennai, 2007.)
7. **Sorkalukkul Erikol** (சொற்களுக்குள் ஏறிக்கொள் - Board My Words), (Trisakthi Publications, Chennai, 2009.)
8. **Valluvarin Vayilil** (வள்ளுவரின் வாயிலில் - At the Threshold of Thiruvalluvar) (Girikuja Publications, Chennai, 2011.)
9. **Irubatham Nootraandu Iyalbiyal Varalaaru** (The History of the Twentieth Century Physics) (Vanavil Cultural Centre, Chennai, 2002.)
10. **Kaattru Vaanga Ponaen** (காற்று வாங்கப் போனேன் - A stroll with the wind) (Niveditha Publications, Chennai, 2019.)
11. **A Spark, A Petal..... !** (A collection of Poems in English) - Niveditha Publications, Chennai, 2020.

12. **Sonnadhuma Solaadhadhuma** (சொன்னதும் சொல்லாததும் - The Told and the Untold) Niveditha Publications, Chennai, 2020.
13. **Anaiyaadha Sudar Ettruven** (அணையாத சுடரேற்றுவேன் - I Shall Light an Undying Flame) Niveditha Publications, Chennai, 2021.
14. **Makkal Paadum Paatu** (மக்கள் பாடும் பாட்டு - Songs that People Sing) Niveditha Publications, Chennai, 2021.
15. **The Sound of Silence** (A collection of Poems in English) - Niveditha Publications, Chennai, 2021.
16. **Seamithu Vaitha Nizhalgal** (சேமித்து வைத்த நிழல்கள்) Niveditha Publications, Chennai, 2021.

The Resolution passed in the International Conference held on 24th January, 2021

Prof.Dr.K.A.Rajaram
Director
Tamil Cultural Research Center
President, Arignar Peravai, Chennai

Mobile: 94477 35539

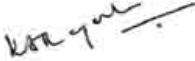
The Resolutions

The following Resolutions were unanimously passed in the Conference of the One-day, Online International Seminar conducted today, the 24th January, 2021, under the auspices of the Tamil Cultural Research Center, Palakad, Kerala:

1. Since Vanavil K.Ravi's works in Tamil and English are highly commendable and richly deserve all the prizes for literature, including the Nobel Prize, this Conference appeals to the various organisations like Sahitya Academy and Gnana Peet in India and the Swedish Academy in Stockholm to consider and bestow the honour on Vanavil K.Ravi.
2. This Conference also appeals to the Text-book Committees of the Government of India and the Government of Tamilnadu to prescribe the various books of Vanavil K.Ravi or portions thereof as a part of curriculum for students at appropriate levels.



B.S.Raghavan I.A.S. (Retd.)
Formerly the Chancellor of Jharkhand IFCAI University.
(The Chairman of the Conference)



Dr.K.A.Rajaram
Director,
Tamil Cultural Research Center, Palakad.
(The Organising President of the Conference)

P.S.G.Mansion, Ambikapuram Cut Road, Palakkad - 678 011, Kerala

**Excerpts from Commentaries of Scholars on the earlier works of
Vanavil K.Ravi**

His poems, in Tamil and in English, stand out, not only in the pleasing order of sound, finely balanced in music and rhythm, but also in content and structure. His content, while resting on the firm bedrock of grammar, does not hesitate to explore the lanes and by-lanes of poetic fancy. His structure-discipline, which is extraordinary, does not confine his poesy; rather it weaves out an excellent fabric, for him to paint his word-pictures upon. In this he is assisted by his mastery of a vast repertoire of words which, to him, are live and potent, carrying and conveying messages on several intellectual and emotional planes and touching on several social dimensions. His empathy and earnestness keep him close to the travails of the down-trodden and his verses reflect his deep commitment to the removal of social maladies.

Mr.B.S. RAGHAVAN,
Former chancellor of Jharkhand ICFAI University,
India, writer, author and columnist.



The contribution that an individual or a group can make towards the development of a language may take two forms:

1. In the form of prose.
2. In the form of poetry

The contribution of Mr k Ravi is in both these forms.

Dr.V.C.Kulandaisami
Vice Chancellor (Retd.) of Indira Gandhi National Open
University, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi, India.



As in Tamil, in English too his erudition is manifestly clear. He developed in himself the qualities of leading a bold life and taking decisions after clear deliberation due to his deep understanding of Bharati's life and writings.

Dr.Avvai Natarajan
Former Vice Chancellor,
The Tamil University, Thanjavoor, Tamilnadu.



“The readers of Ravi’s writings on literature will easily understand that his literary approach is guided by Science and Spiritualism.”

Dr.Arunachalam Shanmugas

Professor of Tamil Language and Literature, retired from University of Jafna, Srilanka, a prolific writer who has more than 30 books and 100 articles to his credit, honoured with the title, “Sahitya Rathna” by the government of Srilanka in 2008.



“To any spiritual idea there must be a Mahavakya (A Great Statement/ an Underlying Maxim)..... The Mahavakya of Ravi is *‘If there is light in the heart, there would be light in the words uttered.’*”

Dr.T.N.Ganapathy

Professor of Philosophy Retd.,

(It was under him that Vanavil K.Ravi pursued his course for the degrees of B.A., M.A., and M.Phil. in philosophy. He has several notable books on the philosophy of Tamil Siddhas to his credit.)



“When Ravi says that poetry is not in the figurative embellishments or imagination, but it is in the union of the three faculties of Emotion, Intellect and Will and that it is an experience akin to meditation that shrinks the expansive spread of time into a tiny vial, he reminds us of the statement of Ezra Pound: ‘imagery is that which by enabling us to intuit instantaneously the complex of the intellect and the emotion gives us the feeling of liberty.’

To Ravi, the creator and the critic, poetry is not just his calling but it is his life, his inner light.”

Dr.K.Chelappan,

Professor of English, Retired as the Head of the Department of English Language, Presidency College, Chennai, India, a respected literary critic and Speaker.



Letter from Hon'ble Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer on this author's book,
"Law, Logic and Liberty"

V. R. Krishna Iyer

Former Judge, Supreme Court

Phone: 0484 - 370000

"SATGAMAYA"
M.G. ROAD, ERNAKULAM
KOCCHI - 682 011
E mail : krishna@rediffmail.com

August 25, 2000

Dear Sri. Ravi,

I am grateful to you for the copy of the book. A fine book is a cherished asset. Your book falls within this category and I treasure it because of the valuable thoughts you have incorporated. It will be a reference book on my table. I thank you once again.

Yours sincerely,

V R Krishna Iyer
(V.R. KRISHNA IYER)

To,

Sri. K. Ravi,
Advocate,
III Floor, YMCA Buildings
No 223, NSC Bose Road
Chennai-600 001



Vanavil K Ravi

On this ballad....

- The ballad is of absorbing interest from the beginning to the end, reading like a thriller at places... That's what happens when an acutely sensitive poet is fired by events surrounding a great historic event and personality, its impact reaching down to the very core of his being.

Mr. B.S. RAGHAVAN, IAS (Retd.)

Former Policy Adviser to UN (FAO) Former Chancellor of the Jharkhand ICFAL University

- Written in Sindhu form of folk art, the style is simple, lucid and gripping. The author needs to be congratulated for putting the focus light on Kuyili, an unknown heroine till date and making the society aware of her courageous act that speaks the glory of women.

Mrs.Sivasankari, Writer

- The Ballad of the warrior-girl will be a welcome addition to libraries of academic institutions and I do strongly recommend this book for students of schools, colleges and universities.

Kavimamani Dr.Va.Ve.Su

- Ravi has chosen to write about a courageous women warrior, Kuyili, who sacrificed her life for her queen. Perhaps this may be the first ballad on a woman more so in English. Ravi indeed is blessed with new eyes!

Mr. Maalan, Writer

- Inspiration is a fount in the heart and a torch in hand. One sustains the other. Ravi who has always stayed inspired, has lit a new torch of Tamil through English that sings the tale of a valorous woman.

Isaikavi Ramanan, Poet

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