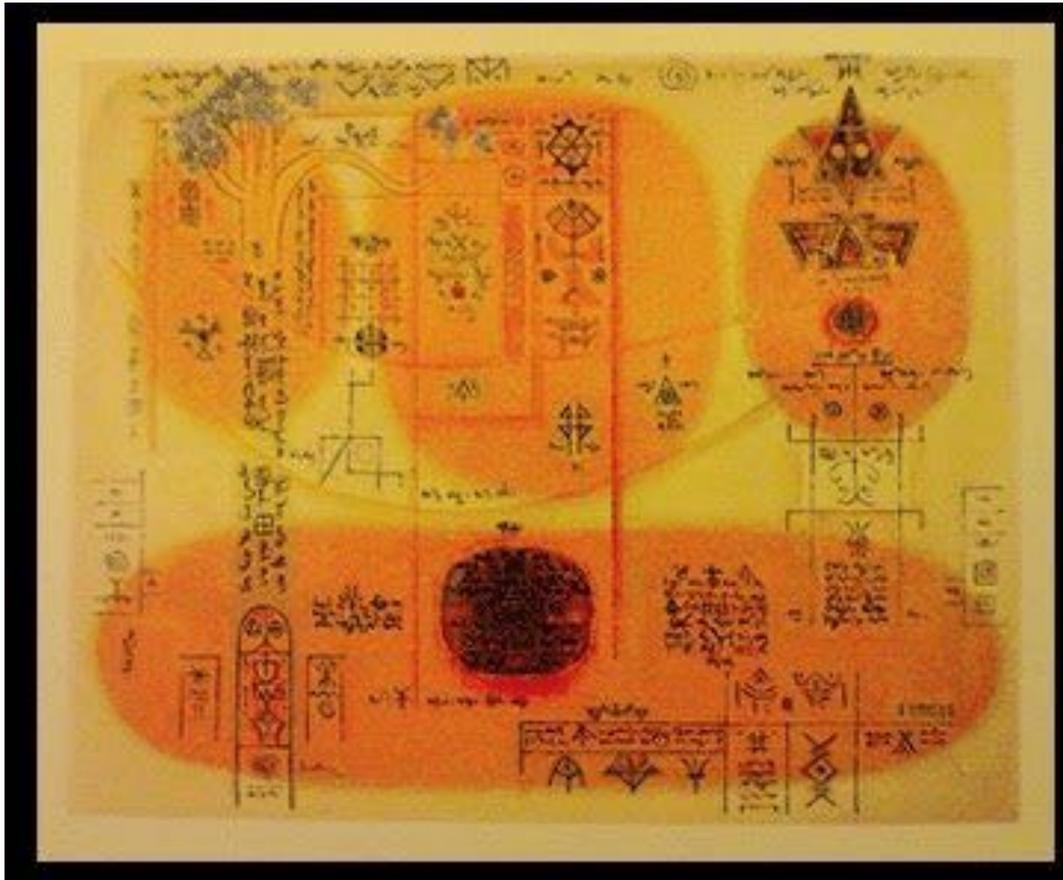


What is India?

What does it mean to be Indian?

**A Palli-k-Koodam
Honouring Bala Kailasam**

August 17th (2pm) - 20th (5pm), 2017



The million mutinies that have been latent in our nation are now simmering. There was a time, not too long ago, when these were identities and communities that lived in harmony. They even came together and responded to the call of Gandhiji in an unprecedented act of non-violent challenge to oppression. Does this spirit still exist?

There are many dialogues that were left incomplete at the turn of our Independence: Gandhiji and Nehru had an exchange of views for a few years leading up to the independence where they differed widely in their idea of India; Gandhiji and Ambedkar hardly had enough engagement with each other directly; Gandhiji and Aurobindo hardly met! Was there any attempt for a discussion between Gandhiji and Savarkar I do not know, but one of his followers definitely spoke through the gun! If there were tribal leaders of substance with whom there was any engagement, we don't seem to hear about it much. So the idea of India and the inspiration that led to the many sacrifices that the Indian masses made, and the idea of India that seems to hold sway today are very different.

Experiential Exploration

The *Koodam* is an old Indian institution where the members of a community drop all differences of age, status and power to enquire into matters of vital importance to the community. An experiential exploration works on the premise that introspection and sharing of ones own processes of meaning-making and choice-making can be examined. The depth of the sharing and the ability to listen without judgment and prejudice form the basis for floating hypotheses about oneself and the system. Learning about the inner and the outer are two sides of the same coin. The proposed “*Pallik-k-Koodam*” will be based on a few of the films made by Bala Kailasam.

- Can we understand the many narratives that profoundly influence our identity as Indians?
- Can we reimagine an India that we will be encouraged to shape, and stand up for?
- Can we create a microcosm of the India we would like to see?
- One that allows us to bring ourselves in as we are?
- That allows us to offer ourselves for enquiry and offer our resources to each other in shaping the space?
- That heals old and festering wounds?
- That honours the heritage of a living civilization?

Workshop Contribution & Registration

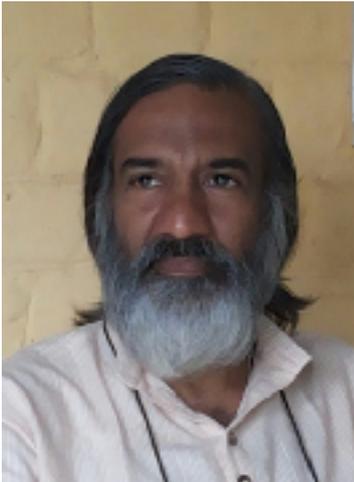
The Ashram runs on donations, please contact us for details.



Honouring Bala Kailasam

Bala Kailasam in his short but impactful life as a film-maker and a shaper of Tamil Television enquired deeply into this question. His films and those that he inspired are a great context against which we can dialogue and introspect on our identity as Indians. His exploration covers many aspects of India from the rural to the architectural, from the Dalit narratives to the modern, from the artistic exploration of the land to an examination of a developmental initiative. These films will provide the canvas on which we paint our collage.

Faculty



Raghu Ananthanarayanan will anchor the process. Raghu is a post graduate from IIT Madras who has focused on human behaviour. He brings together his Yoga Sadhana and understanding of technological systems to bear on his central quest: how can each of us be the best that we can be? He uses Theatre and Puranas to enable people to realise their deepest aspiration. He is now engaged in creating a Coaching Academy "Awakening Arjuna".

www.raghuananthananarayanan.com



Sashikanth Anathachari graduated from FTII, Pune, and went on to work as a cinematographer in several award winning feature films and documentaries. In the '90's when the Indian art cinema movement began to lose its steam, he started traveling all across the land, to understand the indigenous story telling traditions, which contrary to all popular opinion, he still found to be alive and vibrant.

Currently he is in the process of completing a trilogy of films on the epic narrative traditions in his films "Kelai Draupadai" [Listen Draupadi], "Ninaivin Nagaram" [Landscape and Memory] and " Kalpavaasi" [Textures of Time]

His film Kelai has won international acclaim and is being used by several international universities as a primer for students to understand Indian traditions of the Mahabharata.

He is also in the process of completing a book "Mahabharata of the mind", a travelogue of sorts where he travels both through narratives and landscapes, recording the diverse narrative traditions of the epic.

He is also a prolific writer and his writing can be accessed on his blog 'Kelai Draupadai' on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/KelaiDraupadai/>



Venue

Ritambhara Ashram,
Kanuhatty, Kothagiri
www.ritambhara.org.in

For more information
write to :

Sashikala Ananth at
ashram@ritambhara.org.in

The Ritambhara Ashram is a registered Trust (not for profit) located in Kotagiri in the Nilgiris. The program will be conducted in a space surrounding by shola forests and graced by many beings of the wild. The main purposes of the Ashram is to help foster contemplative conversations, inspire authentic inner work and a reverence for the Earth. It provides a much needed retreat from the hustle-bustle of modern life, and a nurturant context for rest and regeneration.

Accommodation is simple and comfortable. Food is vegetarian.