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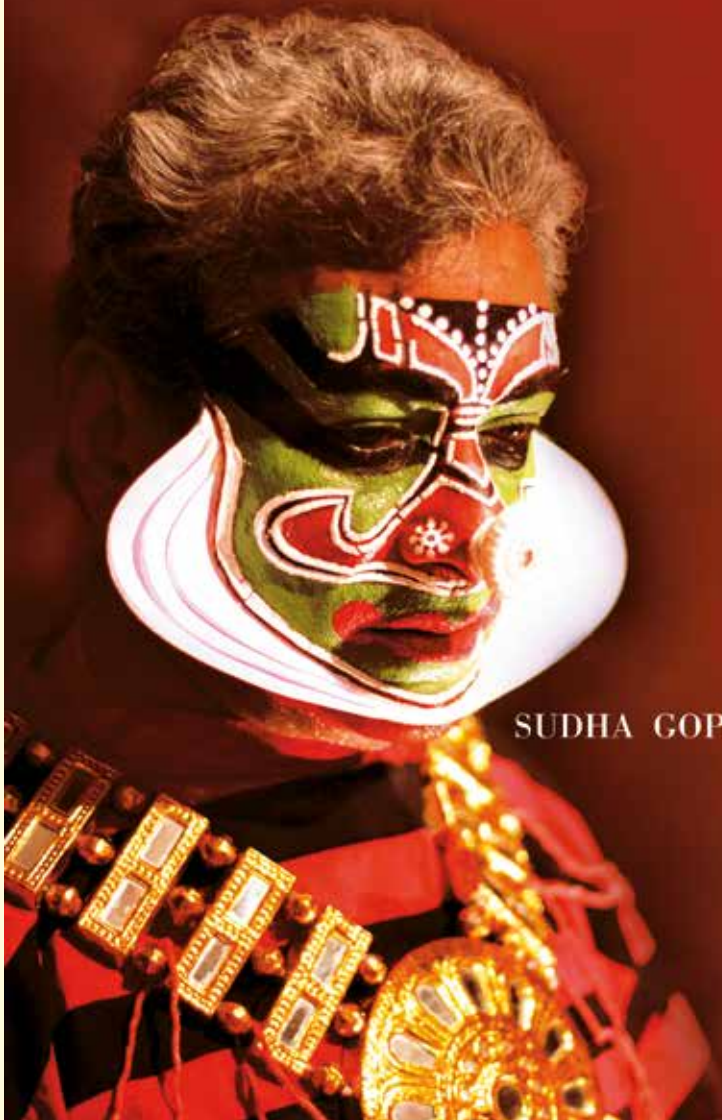
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# KUTTIYATTAM

THE HERITAGE THEATRE OF INDIA



SUDHA GOPALAKRISHNAN

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Title:

# KUTIYATTAM

THE HERITAGE THEATRE OF INDIA

Author: Sudha Gopalakrishnan

*Kutiyattam: The Heritage Theatre of India*, is the first major book on this vibrant theatre tradition that existed in India from the times of the *Natya Sastra*. It traces the history and evolution of Kutiyattam through different ages, its aesthetics and theatre grammar as well as the challenges in its transmission to a new generation of artists and viewers.

Kutiyattam is widely acknowledged as the only living link to India's ancient theatrical tradition. While its origins are hazy, it is said to have an unbroken history of around two thousand years, combining old Sankrit theatre with the regional forms of Kerala. It has its own distinctive theatrical conventions and improvisations, with highly sophisticated facial expressions and a fluent vocabulary of gestures. Kutiyattam elaborates action by extending the performance score to heights of imaginative fancy.

This book discusses the theory and practice of the art form and aims to introduce Kutiyattam to a larger readership. It includes the translation of the performance manual of 'Asokavanikanakam', from Saktibhadra's play *Ascharyachudamani*, as an illustrative example.

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## About the Author:

**Sudha Gopalakrishnan** has studied India's traditional arts forms for three decades, especially the performing arts of Kerala.

Sudha is President of the non-profit SAHA (Stirring Action on Heritage and the Arts). Currently she is working on an online repository on Indian knowledge systems.

*Choreographers across the world and within India started realising the potential of Kutiyattam to revitalise their own theatre grammar. With the recognition that traditional theatre can be effectively used to revitalise contemporary theatre, playwrights such as Kavalam Narayana Panikkar have attempted to explore indigenous traditions of theatre. This 'going back to the roots' to draw on the indigenous theatrical heritage has, in fact, become a movement in post-colonial Indian theatre that manifested itself as a desire to reject an overarching Western theatre idiom.*

