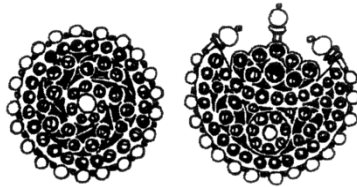


## *DASI ATTAM - dance of the Devadasis*

*an integral course of music, dance and poetry from temples and royal courts in Tamilnadu*



*offered by : Paramparai Foundation, Hungary / India*  
[www.paramparai.eu](http://www.paramparai.eu) - Dr. Saskia Kersenboom  
*certified by: International Dance Council CID-UNESCO*  
[www.cid-portal.org](http://www.cid-portal.org)

*DASI ATTAM refers to the Cultural Heritage of devadasis - ritual specialists and performing artists of yesteryear. Longstanding apprenticeship with their community yielded an acute awareness of their cultural expertise and refinement.*

*SASKIA KERSENBOOM studied with Smt. Nandini Ramani the courtly heritage of Smt. Tanjavur Balasaraswati, and with Smt. P. Ranganayaki the devadasi ritual heritage at Tiruttani temple.*

*As a result, she integrates training in music, dance and poetry as basic professional requirements.*

*Moreover, Paramparai Foundation sees this HERITAGE as 'alive': its (in) tangible traces survive in Hindu temples and sophisticated contemporary culture.*

*PARAMPARAI Foundation proposes a graded, intensive course of 'DEVADASI HERITAGE' to passionate students of South Indian dance. What was its hereditary, Devadasi antecedent? Who were the Devadasis, what did their dance look like? How does their repertoire differ from contemporary transformations?*

*These and similar questions will be addressed in rigorous practical training where Music, Dance and Poetry merge together into a creative SYNERGY.*

*Theoretical issues on the function and form of Devadasi Heritage are discussed on the basis of reading and of historical audio visual recordings. Paramparai houses an extensive library of secondary literature as well as Indian texts and multimedia.*

*RESIDENCIES called GURUKULAVASA - 'living in the home of one's teacher' - take place during summer months in the village of LEGEND, a hilly countryside not far from Budapest, Hungary. An outdoor dance-floor under the plum trees and an indoor studio accommodate all classes.*

*The separate guesthouse with its own vegetable garden and kitchen offers a well deserved rest.*

*RESIDENCY during winter is set in TIRUPUGALUR, along the Kaveri delta. Here, the past merges with a living continuity of Devadasi arts. YATRA - 'travel' to historic sites, to former colleagues like priests, singers and musicians - enables cultural encounters, workshops and eventually joint artistic creation.*

## *COURSE DESCRIPTION: Grade I, II and III*

*see : Marapu Curriculum [www.paramparai.eu/flash/flash.htm](http://www.paramparai.eu/flash/flash.htm)*

*Grade I: 'BASICS' - 150 hrs., Legend, Hungary*

*Gurukulavasa: Summer Residencies - [info@paramparai.eu](mailto:info@paramparai.eu)*

*Music :* **Excercises:** *Karnatic melody and rhythm - vocal or vina (lute)*

End terms: all *svara varicai*, two *tala alankaram* in two tempi

**Composition:** *gitam*

*Dance:* **Coordination** of feet, arms and hands, recitation, memorisation

End terms: all *atavu* groups in three tempi (courtly tradition)

**Composition:** *alarippu, jatisvaram, shabdam*

*Poetry :* **Tamil** alphabet **memorisation** : *eluttu* - reading, writing

**Grammar:** *col* - noun and verb

End terms: **reading** aloud and comprehension of sentences

**Literature:** Tamil among Sanskrit and Telugu in temple and court

*Theory:* **Devadasi Heritage:** read \* *Nityasumangali, Devadasi Tradition in*

*South India*, by Saskia Kersenboom, 1984, 1987>>, Delhi: Motilal

Banarsidass, 4th edition 2011

\**Bharata Natyam*, 1955 (Tamil),1958 (Telugu) Dr. V.Raghavan,

Smt. T.Balasaraswati; 2010, English Translation by Smt. Nandini

Ramani, Chennai: Dr.V.Raghavan Centre for Performing Arts

*End Exam: CID Certificate 'Dasi Attam Basics'*

## *Grade II: 'REPERTOIRE' - 150hrs., Legénd (HU)*

*Gurukulavasa: Summer Residencies - [info@paramparai.eu](mailto:info@paramparai.eu)*

**Music:** **Excercises:** *Karnatic* melody and rhythm - vocal or *vina* (lute)

End terms: all *svara varicai*, all *tala alankaram* in two tempi

**Composition:** *kirtana*

**Dance:** **Composition:** *varnam-a.* (court), *puspanjali* (temple)

**Analysis** and by-heart memorisation of repertoire learnt so far

**Comparison:** *devadasi/rajadasi:* temple and court repertoire

**Poetry:** **Texts:** from ancient, *Cankam* Tamil poetry to *devadasi* lyrics

**Grammar:** *col & porul* - analysis, translation of such texts

**Comparison:** *Muttamil* - synergy of poetry, song and dance

**Texts:** *course materials* for music, dance and poetry will be supplied

**Theory:** **Tamil Verbal Arts:** read \* *Word, Sound, Image, the Life of the Tamil*

*Text*, by Saskia Kersenboom, 1995, Oxford/ Washington: Berg

Publishers, with *interactive CD 'Bhairavi Varnam'*, Philips Media

\* *Music in South India, Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*, 2004,

T.Viswanathan, Matthew Harp Allen, New York, Oxford, Oxford

University Press, with *audio CD*

**End Exam:** *CID Certificate 'Dasí Attam Repertoire'*

*Grade III: 'CONCERT' - 150 hrs., Legénd (HU)*  
*Gurukulavasa: Summer Residencies - [info@paramparai.eu](mailto:info@paramparai.eu)*

**Music:** **Excercises:** *Karnatic* melody and rhythm – vocal or *vina* (lute)

End terms: all *svara varicai*, all *tala alankaram* in three tempi

**Composition:** *varnam*

**Dance:** **Composition:** *varnam-b., padam, javali, tillana* (court concert);

*prabandhams*: songs/ dances for daily and festival temple ritual

**Analysis:** use of *raga* (melody) and *tala* (rhythm) in compositions for individual, solo dance concert; by-heart choreographies

**Comparison:** court and temple *Margam* 'dance concert format'

**Poetry:** **Composition:** recitation of *shabdam, varnam, padam, javali* texts

**Grammar:** *col & porul* – interpretation in their cultural contexts

**Analysis:** application to *abhinaya* 'improvisatory mime'

**Texts:** *course materials* for music, dance and poetry will be supplied

**Theory:** **Recent History:** read *Bharata Natyam, A Reader*, ed. Davesh

Soneji, 2010, New Delhi: Oxford University Press

*End Exam: GAJJAI PUJA 'Worship of the Dance Anklets'  
-Solo Performance of a full „MARGAM” Dance Concert  
to recorded music for an invited audience -*

*CID Certificate 'Dasi Attam Concert'*

*YATRA - Winter Residency and travel in Tamilnadu based in Tirupugalur ( [www.manqalaheritagehome.in](http://www.manqalaheritagehome.in) ) 150 hrs., four weeks; contact: [info@paramparai.eu](mailto:info@paramparai.eu)*

*Intensive workshop:* music and dance training with (guest) teacher(s)

*Rehearsals:* with musicians from both court and temple traditions

*Travel: (In) tangible Cultural Heritage 'DASI ATTAM'*

. *arcana* - daily rituals in Tirupugalur and Tiruvarur

. *bani* - famous music and dance lineages (a.o. Tiruvarur, Pandanallur, Valuvur, Kumbhakonam). Excursion: 4 x 1 day

. *triloka* - the 'triple world' of major temples, royal court and village shrines: Tanjavur temple & palace, Tiruvaiyaru and the Kaveri river. Excursion: 3 days, 2x overnight in Tanjavur

. *ananda* - Ananda Tandava: 'Shiva's Dance of Bliss'

Excursion: 2 days, 1 x overnight in Chidambaram

*Theory:* **Social History:** read *Unfinished Gestures, Devadasis, Memory and Modernity in South India*, 2012, by Davesh Soneji, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

**Intangible Cultural Heritage:** visit [www.unesco.org/culture/ich](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich)

*Conclusive, public Performance in Tiruvarur temple*  
[www.vimeo.com/28490607](http://www.vimeo.com/28490607)

*CID Certificate 'Dasi Attam Heritage'*