

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR KUTIYATTAM, TRIPUNITHURA

Organisation

Type of Institution: Public Trust formed under Indian Trust Act.

Year of Establishment: 1995

Brief History: The International Centre for Kutiyattam was established with the objective of promoting traditional arts of Kerala especially Kutiyattam, Chakyar Kuthu and Nangiar Kuthu.

The centre has its genesis in the national seminar on ancient theatre organised by the Government Sanskrit College, Tripunithura in November 1994 where in eminent theatre persons including Krzysztof Byrski, Govardhan Panchal, K.K. Raja, S.S. Janaki, S. Ramanujan, K.P. Narayana Pisharodi had participated. It was the activities of this College which had provided a fertile ground for Kutiyattam to flourish.

Appreciating Kutiyattam requires a sense of absorbing interest and some insight into the methods of acting and the survival of the art relies on the existence of such discerning art lovers. It is on the basis of this understanding that the Centre was founded with a view to coordinate efforts in fostering a new generation of Kutiyattam lovers.

The activities of the Centre are as varied as the organisation of performances,

foundation courses, workshops and seminars, development of pedagogical materials, support to the research, publication and production of Kutiyattam plays. Since its inception, the Centre has been regularly organising performances of Kutiyattam, Nangiar Kuthu and Chakyar Kuthu with the participation of all the artistes, professional troupes in the realm of Kutiyattam including Ammannur Gurukulam, Kalamandalam, Margi etc. The Centre has also organised over hundred of foundation courses and workshops in different states and abroad, attracting a good number of participants of varied background and age groups. Eminent artistes and resource persons from various disciplines conducted the demonstration-cum-lectures. More than 20 seminars were conducted, in which fruitful discussions were held regarding the various aspects of Kutiyattam.

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Funding Source

- Admission fee from the members (authors) and associates of the Trust
- Donation from Public
- Non-recurring grants from Department of Culture, Govt. of Kerala, Govt. of

India and non voluntary organizations
- Income from the sales proceeds of its publications.

Premises and Equipment

The Head office functions in the building
No. XVIII/311, Sivam Pulpra, Thripunithura.

Training Faculty

Subject Experts:

Dr. K.G. Paulose
Dr. N.K. Geetha
Dr. E.M. Narayanan
Prof. Chandradasan
Ramesh Varma

Artistes:

Margi Madhu
Indu G. Nair
Kalamandalam Krishnakumar

All of them offer voluntary services. The services of other senior artistes and scholars are obtained as guest faculty where ever needed. The Centre does not provide the actual training in Kutiyattam but academic courses in the history and theory of Kutiyattam as follows:

Foundation Courses and Camps: The Centre offers the following courses
- One day appreciation course
- Three day workshop (camp)
- Seven day foundation course.

The Centre has prescribed the content for each course, both for lecture and demonstration. More over, the participants are given printed notes introducing the art form. The Centre's publications are also made available to them.

Venue and frequency: The courses are conducted in selected centers in association with the libraries, educational institutions and public organizations. In

most cases the venue and local hospitality are arranged by the organizers. The lecture demonstrations every day will be followed by performance of Kutiyattam.

Participants: Participants for each course are selected by the organizers. Normally 25 candidates are admitted for a course. They are given study materials and related publications free of cost. The Centre meets local hospitality, including food and refreshments. Course certificates are awarded to the participants on successful completion.

The Centre has conducted around 200 courses during the past twelve years and could initiate hundreds to the subtleties of Kutiyattam by these interactions to the new audience.

Research programme: This is not recognized, for technical reasons, as a centre for research, but the Centre promotes research activities and get the scholars registered in the Govt. Sanskrit College affiliated to the Mahatma Gandhi University.

Performance Repertory

The Centre does not have its own group of actors but has brought to the stage a new Kutiyattam - Kanchukeeyam (an episode from the Misravishkambha of Act II of Subhadradhananjayam). After much detailed research and discussion the Attaprakaram - the stage manual - was prepared with the help and guidance of the prominent artistes. The play was presented in Tripunithura, then in Thiruvananthapuram and other centres.

Major Publications

The centre has published a lot of monographs as study materials and introductory notes for each performance to facilitate better understanding.

There are other seven major publications by the centre.

- Introduction to Kutiyattam - English
- Kutiyattam: Abhinayathinte Thutarchayum Valarchayum - Malayalam
- Attathinte Vazhiyatayalangal - Malayalam
- Improvisations in Ancient Theatre - English
- Kutiyattathinte Puthiya Mukham - Malayalam
- Kutiyattapravesika - Malayalam
- Kutiyattam Theatre - The Earliest Living Tradition - English

Apart from that following monumental works on Kutiyattam were published by the Govt. Sanskrit College at the initiative of the Managing Trustee before the centre was officially registered. They are:

- Arts of Keralakshetra Dr. (Mrs.)

Kapila Vatsyayan

- Natankusa - A critique of Dramaturgy
Dr. K.G. Paulose
- Natyasastra and National Unity -
Dr. (Ms.) Padma Subrahmaniam

The Centre is doing a lot to create an awareness of Kutiyattam among the new audience.

Other Information

Audiovisual materials: Video Cassette and CDs on the Lecture-cum Demonstration classes and the performances of Kutiyattam, Nangiarkuthu and Chakyar Kuthu have been produced by the Centre as part of its documentation programme. Audio cassettes on the ragas used in Kutiyattam are also available.

