



THANJAVUR K.P. KITTAPPA PILLAI  
Akademi Fellowship

*Born in 1913 in Pandanallur, Tamil Nadu, Guru K.P. Kittappa Pillai was the doyen of Bharatanatyam gurus belonging to the traditional community of artists. He was a fifth-generation descendant of the illustrious Thanjavur Quartet who are credited with the codification of adavus and the development of the Bharatanatyam format.*

*Shri Kittappa Pillai learnt music initially from Natesha Sastry and later from his father Sangita Kalanidhi K. Ponnayya Pillai. In dance his guru was his maternal grandfather Pandanallur Meenaksbi Sundaram Pillai. Shri Kittappa Pillai started his professional career by giving music concerts and later devoted himself to teaching Bharatanatyam. He taught dance in Madras, Bangalore, and Ahmedabad, and also served in the Annamalai University.*

*In addition to teaching and conducting programmes, Shri Kittappa Pillai choreographed and presented special items from the family repertoire like the Navasandhi Nritya, Panchamurthi Kavuthuam, Sarabhendra Bhoopala Kuravanji. He was recently engaged in editing the compositions of his forefathers preserved in manuscript form. For the past ten years he had been living in Thanjavur, in his ancestral home, imparting specialized training to students initially under the auspices of Tamil University and later under a programme sponsored by Sangeet Natak Akademi.*

*Shri Kittappa Pillai was the recipient of several honours from institutions including Tamil Isai Sangam, the Music Academy, the Sruti Foundation of Chennai, and the State Governments of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. He received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1974 and was conferred the Kalidas Samman of Madhya Pradesh in 1999.*

*For his contribution to Indian dance Shri Thanjavur K.P. Kittappa Pillai was elected a Fellow of Sangeet Natak Akademi. He passed away on 30 October 1999.*



Akademi Awards 1998