

International Training Program (ITP)

**On-Site Education of Practical Language for Area Studies
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Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies

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On my Research Theme and Language Training

My research topic is folk entertainment in the state of Maharashtra in India. It's called *Tamāśā*. *Tamāśā* is a Persian word meaning fun, play, and entertainment. This word traveled via Moghul armies to Maharashtra and Deccan. In these new lands, *tamāśā* came to refer to the popular Maharashtrian folk theatre, a tradition that remains fairly strong and popular in rural areas, although it has often been viewed as crass by urban dwellers.

In the past, *tamāśā* performances commonly involved dramatic sketch comedy, love stories, and profane satire. Traditionally, *tamāśā* was performed at the edge of a village to peasant audience. Troupe members consisted of *Kolhātī* (the "other backward class"), *Mahār* and *Māng* (*Dalit*/untouchables), and Muslim. Many of the actresses worked as prostitutes. As a theatre performance by and for the common people, *tamāśā* has played a major role in rural culture. However, upper-class urbanites have tended to dismiss *tamāśā* as a vulgar or churlish performing art. Recently, however, *tamāśā* has been reevaluated. The rise of India's middle class since the 1990s and economic liberalization have increasingly linked rural and urban areas. *Tamāśā* has also changed, with its plays and staging configurations becoming more elegant. With these changes, *tamāśā* now holds a place in the cultural identity of the new-middle class.

I attempt to identify transformation of *tamāśā* in relation to urbanization, censorship and administrative law. As *tamāśā* is related to sexual or gender issues. The actresses often don't speak about the related topics to Indian outsiders. So, I need to research *tamāśā* without assistant and translator.

Marathi is the official language of Maharashtra. It is said that 70,000,000 people using Marathi. I got private lessons by Ms. Meena Skuthankar 5times in week in her house. Usually, I have a 2 hour lesson. But, if I do not understand, she continues to teach me kindly for longer time. In the private lesson, we used many books and materials. Sometime, we read articles on *tamāśā*'s magazines and newspaper. Also, we discussed about those articles in Marathi. In addition, I went to a class about a Marathi poet in *Fergusson collage* every Monday to Wednesday. I was learning about rural Marathi poet in this class. I will continue learning and make more efforts to study Marathi in Japan until next fieldwork.