

Varma Kalai (**Tamil:** வர்மக்கலை) is a [martial art](#) and [esoteric healing](#) art originating from [ancient Tamil Nadu](#) in South [India](#). The name literally translates as "The Art of Vital Points". It is an element of the Tamil martial art [Kuttu varisai](#).

Special Varamakalai.

1. Narambadi
2. Varma adi
3. Varma Koothiram
4. Kurunthadi Varmam

History

Legend has it that [Lord Siva](#) taught this art form to his son [Lord Murugan](#) and [Lord Murugan](#) taught this art to the sage [Agastya](#), foremost of the [Siddhar's](#), during the times of [Sangam Literature](#).*[citation needed]* He transferred the knowledge of this art to other [Siddhar's](#) and he also wrote treatises on this art in [Tamil](#). The presence of shrines to Agathiar in [Courtallam](#) suggests that he researched the art there.

Though Varma Kalai has its own form of [katas](#) and procedures, it was closely associated with Silambam's component [Kuttu varisai](#) and Kalaripayattu. Knowledge of Varma Kalai was considered vital in both arts to become a Grand Master.*[citation needed]* The teachers were called as Aasan (Tamil: ஆசான்) and the grand masters were called as Periyaasan (Tamil: பெரியாசன்) or Iyan (Tamil: ஐயன்).

Historically, Varma Kalai has been one of the arts taught to those of royal blood.*[citation needed]* However, even royalty were required to pass the stringent requirements for discipleship. The schools received nivandhanams (donation with high respect) from the Kings of Tamil Kingdom ([Chera](#), [Chola](#), [Pandya](#) and [Pallava](#)). Aasan and Periyaasan of Varma Kalai were highly respected.*[citation needed]*

The art was taught only to selected individuals, but due to the strict requirements for new students it never gained large numbers of adherents. Due to its secretive nature, Varma Kalai remained largely unknown even in India until the release of the movie [Indian](#), in which [Kamal Haasan](#) played the role of a Varma Kalai expert. The film's popularity generated a resurgence of interest in the art.*[citation needed]*

Currently Varma Kalai is practised in [Tamil Nadu](#) and [Kerala](#), usually as part of [Kuttu varisai](#) and [Kalari](#) training.

Requirements for Training

Varma Kalai teachers are highly selective in their choice of students. Disciples must meet a number of criteria; beyond martial arts competence they are required to have an understanding of biology, mathematics, political science, astronomy, physics, chemistry, Saamuthriga Lakshanam, Yoga, military tactics, horsemanship, elephant riding, charioteering and Hindu philosophy ([Saiva](#), [Vaisnava](#), [Saktha](#), [Koumara](#), [Boutha](#), [Samana](#)) etc. The Varma Kalai martial artist is not allowed to teach the art to others until he receives [Deeksha](#) from his Aasan or Periyaasan as in recognition of him as an Aasan.

Hearsays are that the rules were followed sincerely without exception, everyone who wished to learn the art were not qualified to learn. It was taught only to selected individuals who qualified but again all who learned does not qualify to become an Aasan. Also the Aasans and Periyaasans did not pass on few techniques as they never met qualified disciple. It is being said that causes such led to the loss of many great techniques, few Aasans who spoke to media deny that thought. There is also a belief that the art was kept hidden for centuries for various reasons, it seems that Aasans agree to that but there is no sound record on what facts set the art hidden.

Techniques

Varma Kalai is classified into 4 types:

Thodu Varmam

96 Vital Points triggered by a touch. Not deadly, but will affect the victim by disabling the body, organ movements and function.

Padu Varmam

12 Vital Points that are fatal, causing immediate, severe effects upon the victim.

Thattu Varmam

Decisive Vital points that are used by the master. These are kept confidential until the master pass on the knowledge to the selected disciple

Nooku Varmam (also known as) **Meitheenda Kalai**

Triggering vital points by focusing/ concentrating on the target. It takes several years of practice for one to become an expert in Nooku Varmam.

In human body there are 108 Varmam's (Vital points) they are:

Vital Points	Part of Human body
25	From head to neck
45	From neck to navel
9	From navel to arm
14	Arms
15	Legs

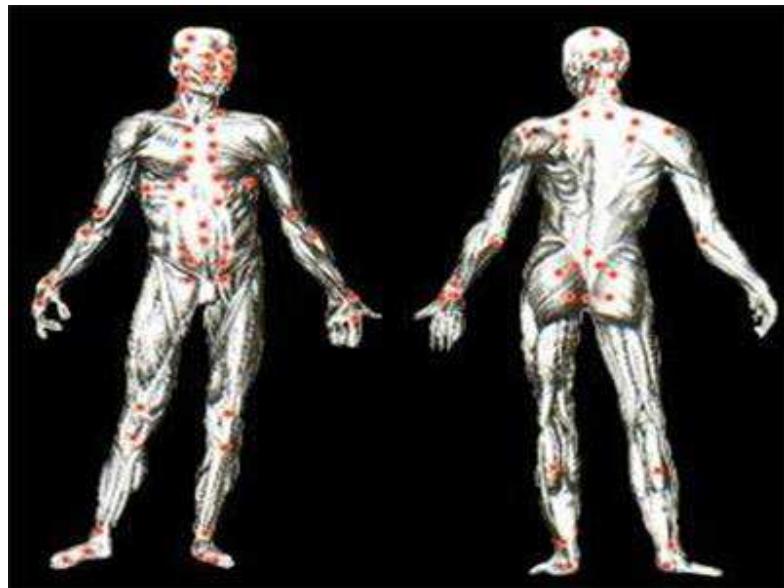
According to *Vaidhiya murai* (Healing therapy under Siddha medicine) the vital points are explained as:

Vital Points	Functions
64	Vadha Varmam
24	Pitha Varmam
6	Kaba Varmam

Pressure points in Varma Kalai

According to **Varma**

Kalai aasans our body has 350 therapeutic Varma points and 108 lethal varma points which can be attacked. These points are also called **Marma**. Application of pressure or insertion of needles on the Marma points which are on the body surface will affect the flow of vital energy or **Pranam** along our **Nadis**. An attack on these points can render the receiver immobile after the attack. Results can vary from person to person. It can also depend on the force and velocity used to strike.



Catagories of Marma points

- **Maasa Marma**
- **Asthi Marma**
- **Snayu Marma**
- **Dhamani Marma**
- **Sandhi Marma**
- **Shira Marma**

Maasa Marma deals with the pressure points on the skin , Asthi Marma at the bones , Snayu Marma at the nerves, Dhamani Marma at the arteries, Sandhi Marma at the joints, Shira Marma at the veins.

Number of Marma points in different parts of our body

- From Top of the Head till Neck which forms the first unit one has **25 Marma** or pressure points.
- From Neck till Naval Point which forms the second unit one has **45 Marma** or pressure points.
- From Naval Point till Anus which forms the third unit one has **9 Marma** or pressure points.
- Both Hands Anus which forms the fourth unit one has **14 Marma** or pressure points.

- Both Legs forming the fifth unit has **15 Marma** or pressure points.
If we total all these we will get 108 points.

Narambadi

Varmaadi

Varma adi or **Marma adi** ("hitting vital spots") is a part of the art of healing and harming *Varma Kalai*[Tamil: வர்மக்கலை, Malayalam: പർമക്കല](#)) *MarmaVidhya*, It is a component of *adi murai* "law of hitting" which is a [martial art](#) that teaches methods to attack [pressure points](#) of the human body. This system of *marmam* is part of *Siddha Vaidhyam*, attributed to the Tamil sage [Agastya](#) and his disciples. It is practiced in almost all parts of [Tamil Nadu](#) and in the [Travancore](#) region of [Kerala](#). It is supposedly derived from traditional [Siddha medicine](#).

Pressure Points

Varma adi recognizes 108 marmas, 12 Padu marmas (death marmas) and 96 Thodu marmas (touch marmas). There are also counter marmas to heal trauma to the marmas.

Varma Kotthuram

Kurunthadi Varmam

Varmam for treatment of Diseases

Varma Kalai has also been used to treat patients suffering from different problems. Diseases treated include **Asthma, Diabetes , Hair fall , kidney problems, obesity, paralysis, neuro problems** and many more.

Techniques applied to cure Ailments

- Marukaalam
- Thirumal Murai
- Adangal Murai
- Thiravukol Murai
- Thadaval Murai
- Marunthu Murai
- Vayu Nilai Amarthal
- Kattu Murai

Books on Varma Kalai

Few known books on Varma Kalai are listed below

- **Varma Suthram**
- **Varma Beerangi**

- **Naalu Maathirai**
- **Naramparai**
- **Narambu Suthram 100**
- **Narambu Suthram 400**
- **Varma Odivu Murivu Sara Suthram 1500**
- **Panchakarnapinnal**
- **Alavunool Piramaanam**
- **Varma Odivu Murivu Kandasaari 300**
- **Varma Thoondamani**
- **Aksakkural Venba 300**

Varma Kalai (the art of varmam) is considered to be very sacred. It is believed that Lord Siva taught this art form. It is one of the oldest form of South Indian martial art and healing system. The aim of Varma Kalai is to produce healthy individuals. The main purpose of this rare ancient art of varmam is to save the precious human lives. Varma Kalai is very popular in southern part of the country, more particularly in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu.

The term varmam appears in the Rigveda where Indra hits Vritra in a varmam with his vajra. This system of varmam is part of *Sidha Vaidhyam*, whose origin is attributed to mythical sage Agastya and his disciples.

“தேறவே சிவன் உடைக்குச் சொன்ன போதம்
ஆறாமல் நான் அறிந்து இந்துங்கள் சொன்னேன்”
(ஒடிமுறிவு சர்குத்திரம் 1500. பா.833)

According to the above versus, Lord Siva taught varmam to his wife Parvathi; later Parvathi taught varmam to their son Lord Murugan. Lord Murugan then taught Siddha Agasthiyar. Agasthiyar later gave a written form that reached the masses. But the original texts, directly written by siddhas, are not available now. Saints who have grasped the meaning of the siddhas sayings have given a poetic form, which is used in modern day learning. So far, around 50,000 songs are available.

Varmam has grown under three independent schools of thoughts, mainly governed by three ancient siddha's namely Akasthiyar, Bohar and Rama Devar, The narrated history has been mentioned in the 41st prose of " Kai Mathirai Thiravukol " as follows:

“பண்பாக அகத்தியனார். ராமயீதவர்
பணிவாக போகமுனிவர் தானும்
பருவமாய் மனிதர்கள் பிழைக்கவென்று
பாங்காகச் சொன்னெதாரு நூல்கள் கண்டு
பார்த்திடவே சுருக்கமாய் பிரித்துச் சொன்னேன்”

One of the current available texts ‘Sarasuthram’ gives the criteria for teaching varmam to eligible students.

“எவ்வு தான் யாருக்கென்றால்
சிவயோகிக்கு தான்” (பா. 4)

It says that a varmam teacher should teach varmam only to a ‘sivayogi’. Sivayogi means devotee of Siva. Knowledge of Varma Kalai is passed through generation after generation. People who have mastered the art are called asaans (masters). Varma asaans are also known as varmaanis. In order to learn this Art, it is necessary to work with an Asaan for a minimum period of 12 years.

Classifications of Varmam

Human body is divided into five areas in which varma points are discussed. They are:

Unit Area	Number of Points
I From Top of the Head till Neck	25
II From Neck till Naval Point	45
III From Naval Point till Anus	9
IV Both Hands	14
V Both Legs	15
Total	108

Varma Therapy

Studies about each varmam’s (pressure points) characteristics like location of the varmam, depth and width of varmam, the pressure with which the varmam has to be tuned to cure diseases constitutes the mainstream study in varma therapy.

The various techniques that can be applied to cure varmam related injuries are:

1. Marukaalam
2. Thirumal Murai
3. Adangal Murai
4. Thiravukol Murai
5. Thadaval Murai [Applying massage techniques]
6. Marunthu Murai [Applying medicines]

7. Vayu Nilai Amarthal
8. Kattu Murai

Techniques like Marukaalam and Thiravukol Murai are used for instant relief. Techniques like Thadaval Murai and Thirumal Murai should be done at least for three consecutive days to give relief from varmam related injuries

Disorders that can be cured by Varma Therapy

Various other disorders that can be cured with the help of varma therapy are:

- Nerves weakness
- Body shivering
- Disk prolapse
- Dehydration
- Cervical spondylosis
- Head ache
- Sciatic Problems
- Eye problems
- ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) problems
- Bone joints and arthritics
- Gland disorders (like Diabetes, etc.)

Varma Sastra

Although most of the vital Varma Sastra texts in palm leaf have been lost, presently more than 100 are traced out. Each book consists of 100 to 1000 verses. These Sastras were not available to common men until the recently. Some of the books which are available are given below.

- 1.Brahma Nila Sutram
2. Vahada Nidanam
3. ‘Marma Nidanam
4. Kadikaram’ (Kannadi)
5. Marma Sutram
6. Marma Sutra Thiravukol
7. Agastiya Thiravukol
8. Marma Thiravukol
9. Marma Aani Thiravukol
10. Marma Kandi
11. Marma Bheerangi

12. Marma Bheerangi Thiravukol
13. Marma Narambarai
14. Ulpathi Narambarai
15. Odi Muri Chari
16. Kettu Mura Chari
17. Odivu Murivu Kettu Suttiram
18. Murivu Kettu Thiravukol
19. Narambarai Suttiram
20. Kaivallyam
21. Marma Alavu Nool
22. Naalu Mani Mathirai
23. Marma Kuru Naadi Sasthram
24. Kuru Naadi Sasthram