

CHAPTER- 4

FAMILY RELATIONS OF KOLASWAROOPAM WITH TRAVANCORE AND ARACKAL ROYAL FAMILIES

The kingdoms of Kolathunad and Venad had a long history of their own independent existence. In tenth century Kolathunad in the North and in twelfth century Venad in the South emerged as powerful states. Before its independence the country of Venad owed allegiance to the Chera emperors of Mahodayapuram.¹ At the zenith of their power, boundaries of Kolathunad and Venad were extended to the regions of Karnataka and Tamilnadu respectively. Though these kingdoms were located in both ends of Kerala, Venad tried to adopt princes and princesses from Kolathunad. The Travancore royal family was strongly connected with the Kolaswaroopam through their continuous adoptions.² Why did the kings of Venad choose their progenitors from such an extreme northern dynasty of Malabar for adoption? This chapter is an attempt to examine this issue of adoption. Besides, it will also discuss the lineage of the Arackal royal family from the Kolaswaroopam. It was the only Muslim royal family of Kerala. A number of theories have been propounded regarding the origin of the Ali Rajas as we shall see in the following discussions.

¹ S. Hemachandran, "The Role of Svarupams in the Formation of a State A History of the Social and Political Aspects of Travancore 1375 – 1770", Unpublished Doctoral Thesis Submitted to the University of Kerala in 2004.

² A. Galletti, *The Dutch in Malabar*, Madras, 1911, p. 53.

The Kingdom of Travancore had adopted princes and princesses from Kolathunad several times. The adoptees were settled at Attingal, the famous abode of the progenitors of Travancore.³ Being the abode of the royal family, the king developed Attingal to the status of a mini capital. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the dynasties of Malabar had followed matrilineal system of inheritance. Following their custom, after the demise of the king, the eldest male member of the royal family became next ruler.

First Adoption

The adoption by Ravi Varma Samgramadheera was the first recorded adoption. Ravi Varma Samgramadheera, the renowned king of Travancore ruled the country between 1299–1313 A. D., (474-488 M.E.).⁴ During the time of his administration the family suffered lack of heirs to the throne. Venad had several times adopted heirs from Madathinkooru *Swaroopam* in Mavelikkara.⁵ But during the time of Ravi Varma's rule there were no heirs for adoption.⁶ The

³ Gouri Lakshmi Bayi, *Thulasi Garland*, Mumbai, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1998, p. 147.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 146.

⁵ Vaikathu Pachu Moothathu, *Thiruvithamkoor Charithram*, Cochin, Prathibha Publications, 1986, p. 21.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Madathinkooru *Swaroopam*⁷ itself had amalgamated with Venad *Rajavamsam*. So the king sent emissaries to Kolathunad for adopting heirs.⁸

The circumstantial evidences shows that before twelfth century the Venad rulers might have been adopted heirs from Kolathunad. Because in fourteenth century, during the period of Ravi Varma Samgramadheera, economically Kolathunad was in a flourishing condition but the Kolathiri's position in respect of caste was Samanta not Kshatriya. In twelfth century there was a problem occurred between the Brahmins of Perumchellur and Kolathiri. They put forward many caste restrictions upon the Kolathiri. But Kolathiri overcome these restrictions by installing another group of Brahmins from Tulu country for performing *shodasha samskara* in his family circle that known in history as *Brahmaprathishta*. The caste restrictions of Brahmins never affected the economic prosperity of the country. Therefore the adoption by Samgramadheera was only a continuation of previous adoptions from Kolathunad. Further the economic prosperity of Kolathunad attracted him to adopt heirs from Kolathunad. Actually the adoption connected two prominent dynasties of extreme north and south. At first the then Kolathiri was not willing to give his nieces and nephews to Venad.⁹ Therefore, Samgramadheera sent his own heir apparent Aditya Varma to Kolathunad.¹⁰ Prince Aditya Varma went to

⁷ A *Swaroopam* meaning ruling dynasty.

⁸ R. P. Raja, "Thiruvithamkooor Rajavamsavum athinte Verukalum", in S. Gupthan Nair, ed., *Smaranika*, (Mal), Trivandrum, Thiruvananthapuram Sri Chithira Thirunal Grandhasala Platinum Jubilee Grandham, 1990, p. 171.

⁹ K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, Vol. II, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, p.191; T .K .Velupillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala Gazetteers Department, Vol. II, 1996, p. 121.

Kolathunad along with one male member of Thattari Kovilakam¹¹, from where the princesses of Kolaswaroopam usually married. The prince of Thattari Kovilakam had marriage alliance with *Patinjare Puthuppalli Kovilakam* branch of Kolaswaroopam.¹²

The two parties had engaged in a long discussion about this adoption, and finally with the mediation of the prince of Thattari Kovilakam, Kolathiri allowed and recognised the adoption from his dynasty.¹³ After a long discussion the Venad prince might have yielded before the demands of Kolathiri to settle the princesses from Kolaswaroopam with all honours and rights in a place befitting for queens.¹⁴ Attingal was a small place but it had a significant role in the history of Travancore. It was the abode of Travancore royal family. It was the independent seat of queens of the Travancore royal family from 1305 A.D (480 M.E.), when Samgramadheera adopted and made Attingal as the abode of new adoptees.¹⁵ Samgramadheera had given them the titles of *Attingal Mootha Thampuran*¹⁶ and *Attingal Ilaya Thampuran*¹⁷. The right to rule the province of

¹⁰ It is a controversial one that some historians have thought that Aditya Varma had adopted Princes and princesses from Kolathunad. The historians mostly accepted 1305 A. D. (480 M. E) as the date of first adoption. If we take the year 1305 A. D as the year of adoption, then Aditya Varma was only a junior prince. Then Travancore was ruled by Ravi Varma Samgramadheera, who sends Aditya Varma only as the royal emissary and his true representative.

¹¹ Thattari Kovilakam later came to be known as Kilimanur Palace.

¹² R. P. Raja, *Thiruvithamkoor Rajavamsavum...*, p. 171.

¹³ K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala...*, p.191

¹⁴ The Venad king made all facilities to the adoptees and gave them all honours because they would be the mothers of future kings of Travancore.

¹⁵ T . K . Veluppillai, *The Travancore State...*, p. 121.

Attingal was assigned to the eldest lady in the royal house of Travancore.¹⁸ This study indicates that since the date of this adoption the royal family of Travancore might have followed the customs of Kolaswaroopam.¹⁹ In fact, the Venad ruler established a miniature Kolaswaroopam in Attingal, north of Trivandrum.²⁰ Samgramadheera had settled the two princesses at Attingal. Before the princesses started their journey to Travancore the adoptees had taken the *Uthsava Vighraha*²¹ of Thiruvarkattukavu Bhagavathy (Madayikavu Bhagavathy), the tutelary deity of Kolaswaroopam, along with them.²² The king of Venad had constructed a temple for the deity in Attingal between 1305 – 1307 A. D., (480-482 M. E).²³

¹⁶ The eldest princess of the kingdom of Attingal. In Travancore the eldest Queen of Attingal was known as Attingal Mutha Thampuran. The term Thampuran is used for both princes and princesses.

¹⁷ The younger princess of the kingdom of Attingal.

¹⁸ These titles of Attingal Mootha Thampuran and Attingal Ilaya Thampuran are still continuously used by the ladies of Travancore royal family as their custom.

¹⁹ The system of *Ariyittuvazhcha* (Coronation Ceremony) practiced by the Kolathiris was adopted by the Venad rulers after their relation with the former through adoption. The kings of Kolaswaroopam had performed their coronation in Madayikavu Bhagavathy temple, the abode of their *Bharadevatha*. The Venad kings performed it in Thiruvarkattukavu temple at Attingal, the temple of their *Bharadevatha*. It was started after the date of first adoption from Kolathunad. Besides the Venad rulers adopted the matrilineal system from Kolathiris.

²⁰ Lakshmi Bayi, *Thulasi...*, p. 147.

²¹ See Glossary.

²² It can be proved that this is the only one temple in Travancore, where the Kattumatom Namboothiri's have *thantram* (power to consecrate the idol and manage the traditional rituals of the temple on some auspicious days related with a particular temple). The Kattumatom Namboothiris were the traditional *thantris* (the person who performed the thantram) of the Madayikavu Bhagavathy temple, the tutelary deity of Kolaswaroopam.

²³ Lakshmi Bayi, *Thulasi...*, p. 147.

The Kattumatom Namboothiri, the *thantri*²⁴ of the Madayikavu Bhagavathy temple in Cannanore had consecrated the idol of Bhagavathy on the Avittom Nakshathra day, in the month of mithunam month, in the year 1307 A. D. (482 M. E.).²⁵

***Thaivazhis* of Travancore Royal Family**

The Kingdom of Travancore included various principalities such as Attingal, Desinganad, Kottarakkara, Nedumangad, etc. They were collateral branches ruled over by the kings of Venad.²⁶ Travancore Royal Family had resided in various places in different periods and was commonly known by separate names such as Cherava *Swaroopam*, Thrippappur *Swaroopam*, Thrippadapuram *Swaroopam* and Kizhperur *Swaroopam*. All these Swaroopams were collectively styled as Travancore or Venad or Thrippappur and sovereignty was assumed under these three designations only.²⁷ When we take the history of Venad into consideration, it can be seen that one branch or *thaivazhi* called Ilayadathu *Swaroopam* had politically separated from the main stem of the Venad Royal Family and settled at Kottarakkara. This branch began to function as an independent administrative body. This family observed pollution when birth and death occurred either in the house of Thrippappur or Desinganad.²⁸

²⁴Power to consecrate the idol and manage the traditional rituals of the temple in some auspicious days relate with that particular temple.

²⁵ Lakshmi Bayi, *Thulasi...*, p. 147.

²⁶ *Kerala Society Papers*, Vol. I, p. 2: R. Vasudeva Poduval, *The Royal House of Travancore*, p. 54.

²⁷ Poduval, *The Royal House ...*, p.54.

Later when the Venad royal family resided at Kizhperur, the family became divided into two branches, and came to be known as Thrippappur *Swaroopam* and Desinganad *Swaroopam*. The latter settled at Western Kallada near Kollam.²⁹ There was one more branch of Venad Royal Family settled at Nedumangad called as Peraka *Thaivazhi*.³⁰ But only two *thaivazhis*, Desinganad and Thrippappur, were taken into consideration to confirm the seniority to elect the king and the position came to be known as *Cherava Muppu*. *Thrippappur Muppu* was a position for the purpose of management of the affairs of Sripadmanabha Swami Temple at Trivandrum. The eldest member of the *Cherava Swaroopam* appears to have ruled as sovereign but he got the right of participating in the management of the Sri Padmanabhaswami Temple in Trivandrum only after assuming the headship of *Thrippappur Mooppu*.³¹

Among these collateral Swaroopams the adoption of princes and princesses was a usual process. The adoptions were made only from the families of the same class or caste. All these Venad *thaivazhis* are kindred or branches of the same clan³² and these branches practised the system of *Marumakkathayam*.

²⁸ Interview with R. P. Raja on August 12, 2010.

²⁹ Hemachandran, *The Role of Svarupams...*, p. 27.

³⁰ It was a branch of Ilayidathu Swaroopam at Kottarakkara

³¹ *Kerala Society papers*, pp. 2-3. Thrippappur Mooppu, is a post within Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple, Usually held by a junior member of the Royal Family. Assumption of 'Thrippapur Mooppu' is carried out with elaborate rituals at 'Thrippadapuram Temple near Kariavatttom. It has nothing to do with the headship of a kingdom. Information collected from R. P. Raja, a member of Mavelikkara Kottaram.

³² *Ibid.* p. 113.

Marumakkathayam

This system was prevalent among the ruling families of Kerala. This system of succession was based mainly on the concept that the right to property devolves in the female line. It was based on joint family system in which all the descendents of the female line live together in a single house known as *Tharavatu*. The senior male member was the head of the family.³³ The formation of a *thaivazhi* was a natural and usual process under matrilineal system when there were more female members, a *thaivazhi* could be formed by a younger sister of a senior female member. That *thaivazhi* could be managed by that lady's eldest son by inheriting certain landed area allotted to the *thaivazhi*. In Venad separate seniority was considered for princes and princesses. The first branch of Venad was originated from Thrippadapuram.³⁴

First Adoption

The sources suggested that in 1579 A.D. (754 M.E) Marthanda Varma assumed the headship of the *Cherava Swaroopam* and four months after his accession princes Rama Varma and Aditya Varma were adopted into *Cherava Swaroopam*. In 1622 A.D (797 M.E.), a tripartite adoption was made between *Thrippappur Swaroopam*, *Cherava Swaroopam* and the *Peraka thaivazhi*. Ravi Varma was the then king of Venad.³⁵ From the nature of these adoptions we can

³³ Hemachandran, *The Role of Svarupams...*, pp. 23-24.

³⁴ T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Travancore Archaeological Series* (here after T A S), Vol. V, pp. 63-65.

³⁵ *Kerala Society Papers*, p. 114.

assume that all these adoptions were made more in view of political purposes than of family necessity. For instance, a number of male and female members were alive at the time of above mentioned adoptions. All these adoptions were made within the limits of Travancore. But in 1630 A.D (805 M.E) *Thrrippappur Swaroopam* adopted two children from Vellarappilli. It was the original home of Cochin Royal Family.³⁶ Again *Thrrippappur Swaroopam* adopted one Rama Koyil along with Rama Unni Pandarathil of Vellarappilli in 1672 A.D (847 M.E.). All these adoptions made from different royal families aroused differences amongst the *Swaroopams* of Travancore. However, Aswathy Thirunal Umayamma Rani, the Queen of Attingal adopted children from Kolaswaroopam and re-established the close lineage between Venad and Kolathunad.³⁷

Second Adoption

The royal family of Travancore continued up to 1675 A. D. (850 M. E), without any sufferings of extinction.³⁸ After the demise of King Aditya Varma of Venad in 1677 A. D. (852 M.E), Umayamma Rani came to the throne as a regent.³⁹ Seven years of her regency was a period of conflicts in Venad.⁴⁰ The

³⁶ *Ibid.* p.115

³⁷ M. Doc. CXXII, *Kshetrakaryam Churuna, Ola* No. 130-136, 848-860 M.E (1663-1685 A.D), Cited in the Appendix, *Travancore State Manual*, pp.91-100.

³⁸ Narayana Panikkar, *The History of...*, p. 65.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 61.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Pillamar and *Matambimar* of Venad⁴¹ had conspired against the royal family.⁴² The royal family itself was suffering from the lack of heirs to the throne.⁴³ During that time the kingdom had faced several external attacks. The most important onslaught among them was the attack of a Mughal commander locally known as *Mukilan*.⁴⁴ The Mughal commander attacked and captured the places in between Thovala and Edava.⁴⁵ He propagated the new religious ideas among the native people of Venad.⁴⁶ He changed the customs and practices of the people.⁴⁷

The neighbouring states had exploited the situation. One Vira Kerala Varma of *Peraka Thaivazhi* had conspired against Umayamma Rani.⁴⁸ In July 1677 A. D.(852 M.E), the combined forces of Vira Kerala Varma and *Ilayadathu Muttavar* attacked and occupied Kalkulam, the headquarters of *Thrippappur Swaroopam*,⁴⁹ one of the *thaivazhis* of the Venad.⁵⁰ In the war the *Pillamar* and

⁴¹ The *Matambimars* and *Pillamars* were the Nair chieftains of Travancore.

⁴² Hemachandran, *The Role of Svarupams...*, pp. 163 – 173.

⁴³ Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, p. 232.

⁴⁴ Thiruvithamkur Government Publication, *Thiruvithamkur Charithram*, pp. 52 – 53.

⁴⁵ Narayana Panikkar, *The History of...*, p. 62.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 63.

⁴⁸ Hemachandran, *The Role of Svarupams...*, p. 164

⁴⁹ *Thrippappur Swaroopam* is one of the *Thaivazhis* of Venad dynasties.

⁵⁰ Hemachandran, *The Role of Svarupams...*, p. 165.

Matambimar assisted Vira Kerala Vama.⁵¹ This was the beginning of the interference of the local chieftains in the politics of Venad.⁵² In this situation Umayamma Rani met one prince of Kottayam (Northern Kottayam) royal family named Kerala Varma,⁵³ who was a good warrior and intelligent person.⁵⁴ With his thorough understanding of the situation and good intellect he defeated anti royal chieftains and established peace in Venad.⁵⁵ Kalkulam was restored.⁵⁶ Umayamma Rani appointed him as her regent in Travancore.⁵⁷ He helped the Queen in the day to day administration. First of all he organised a good standing army in Venad and trained them.⁵⁸ His progressive administrative measures created jealousy in the minds of the local chieftains.⁵⁹ They conspired against him and murdered him.⁶⁰ Umayamma Rani had no female children. She had only a male child called Ravi Varma. After the demise of Kerala Varma the

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Kerala Varma was a renowned poet. He has written the famous *Ramayanam Kilippattu*.

⁵⁴ C. P. Govinda Pillai, *Thiruvithamkur Charithra Kathakal*, (Mal), Kerala Varma Book Depot, 1913, p. 22.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Hemachandran, *The Role of Svarupams...*, pp. 170 – 71.

⁵⁷ Pachu Moothathu, *Thiruvithamkoor ...*, p. 31.

⁵⁸ Hemachandran, *The Role of Svarupams...*, p. 171.

⁵⁹ Kerala Varma was murdered on 1696 A. D. (871 M.E.). M. Raja Raja Varma, *Some Dynastic Records*, Series 3, Document - H, in Kerala Society Papers (K S P), Vol. I & II, p. 133.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Venad royal family again faced number of atrocities from the chieftains.⁶¹ So the Queen decided to adopt children from Kolaswaroopam. In 1688 A.D (853 M.E) she had adopted two princesses from Kolaswaroopam.⁶² She settled the two princesses in Attingal⁶³ as *Attingal Mootha Thampuran* and *Attingal Ilaya Thampuran*⁶⁴ with all honours.⁶⁵

Third Adoption

When Ravi Varma, the junior prince attained majority, Umayamma Rani placed him as the ruler of Venad in 1685 A.D (860 M.E). He was an able ruler and got sufficient training in administration from Umayamma Rani. Even after the transfer of power Umayamma Rani involved herself in the administration of the country and advised Ravi Varma on important administrative matters. Ravi Varma had introduced many administrative reforms in Travancore. One of the important earliest acts of Ravi Varma was the adoption of two princesses and two princes Unni Kerala Varma and Rama Varma in 863 from Kolathunad with the blessings of Umayamma Rani. *Mathilakam* records point out that he adopted five children from Kolaswaroopam.⁶⁶ In *Mathilakam* records there is only

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Mathilakam* Record, Doc. CXII, Kshetrakaryam Churuna, Ola No. 130-136, 848-860 M.E, Cit. *Travancore State Manual*, Appendix. pp. 91-95; S. Subrahmanyam, *Thiruvithamkur Charithram*, Shanmukhavilasam Press, Trivandrum, p. 26.

⁶³ Hemachandran, *The Role of Svarupams...*, p. 173.

⁶⁴ The later king Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma, the maker of the modern Travancore was the son of this Ilaya Thampuran of Attingal. Mark de Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore – History of State Formation in Travancore from 1671 – 1758*, p. 17, Cited in Hemachandran, *The Role of Svarupams...*, p.173.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Churuna* No. 26000, *Ola* No. 9, 863-6-9 M.E (1688 A.D), Vol. 50, p, 209.

mention about the four adoptees. We could get the names of only two of them from other literary sources. So it is not known what happened to the fifth adoptee. However, the two adopted princes Unni Kerala Varma and Rama Varma had later adorned the throne of Travancore. The senior Rani of Attingal, one of the adoptees died due to pregnancy related problems. After that the junior Rani became the senior one and gave birth to Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma, the maker of modern Travancore.

Fourth Adoption

Unfortunately, the two princesses, adopted from Kolathunad, could not give birth to girl child. So the royal family of Travancore again faced extinction. The then king of Venad, Unni Kerala Varma adopted one princess called Karthika Thirunal Parvathy Bayi from *Patinjare Puthiya Palli Kovilakam* branch of Kolaswaroopam in 1718 A. D (893 M. E).⁶⁷ Later she gave birth to Karthika Thirunal Rama Varma alias “Dharma Raja”, who succeeded Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma to the throne of Travancore in 1798 A. D.⁶⁸

Fifth Adoption

During the time of Marthanda Varma, he adopted four princesses from Kolathunad in 1747 - 1748 A. D., (923 M. E).⁶⁹ The *Mathilakam* sources suggest

⁶⁷ Princess Gouri Lakshmi Bai, *Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple*, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1995, p. 101.

⁶⁸ Pachu Moothathu, *Thiruvithamkoor ...*, p. 34.

that Marthanda Varma had adopted four princesses from Kolathunad, but we have no further details about their marriage, death, etc. Anyway the adopted princesses were also unable to give birth to a girl child. Therefore, the royal family decided to repeat the adoption from Kolathunad.

Sixth Adoption

At the time of invasions of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan the whole family of Kolaswaroopam had come to Travancore.⁷⁰ Dharma Raja, a descendant from Kolaswaroopam heartily welcomed his maternal family members to Travancore.⁷¹ He made all arrangements for their comfortable stay for their day to day life.⁷² After the onslaughts in Malabar all branches of Kolathiri except Chirackal Chenga Kovilakam returned to Malabar. From the earlier times onwards Mavelikkara was an administrative centre of Travancore Rajas, in the central Travancore area.⁷³ Dharma Raja selected that place for the construction

⁶⁹“Papers Re adoption and Marriage in the Travancore Ruling Family”, Unpublished Travancore Government order from Palace Collection, Superintendent Government Press, Trivandrum, 1932, p. 1.

⁷⁰ C. A. Innes, *Malabar Gazetteer*, Madras, Government Press, p. 68.

⁷¹ *Chenga Kovilakam* (Malayalam), MSS, M.E. 27 – 11 – 961, Vol. 83, p. 105, Central Archives Trivandrum (here after CAT).

⁷² *Kolathunad* (Malayalam), MSS, M.E. 960, Vol. 3, CAT, p. 80.

⁷³ Onattukara was the ancient name of Mavelikkara. It was ruled by *Madathumkur Swaroopam*, an independent dynasty. But when the family faced extinction, they amalgamated with Venad. So, later Mavelikkara, far from Venad kingdom, became an independent province of Venad in Central Travancore area. After the accession of Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma, the maker of modern Travancore, the status of Mavelikkara again rose up. Besides during the time of Tipu’s invasion the then King Dharma Raja built palaces for the refugees from *Kolaswaroopam* and settled them at Mavelikkara.

of the palace for his mother's family members.⁷⁴ He built a palace called *Aarattukatavu Koyikkal* on the banks of the river Achankovil in Mavelikkara.⁷⁵ The whole family of the *Chenga Kovilakam* was settled there. Along with them a lot of native people of Kolathunad with their wealth and cattle migrated to Travancore.⁷⁶

The settlement of a branch of Kolaswaroopam in the provinces of Travancore would help the King to choose the adoptees very easily without much strain. When the royal family of Travancore again faced extinction Dharma Raja adopted two princesses Bharani Thirunal *Thampuran* and Uthram Thirunal *Thampuran* from *Aarattukatavu Koyikkal*⁷⁷ in Mavelikkara in 1788 A. D (thirteenth *Thulam*, 964 M. E.).⁷⁸ Later the Chenga Kovilakam became divided into three branches viz., Ennakkad *Kottaram*, Mavelikkara *Kottaram*, and Prayikkara *Kottaram*.⁷⁹ These three branches had settled in places around Mavelikkara.⁸⁰

Seventh Adoption

⁷⁴ *Chenga Kovilakam...*

⁷⁵ Interview with R. P. Raja on 26th April 2009.

⁷⁶ *Churuna* No. 1039, *Ola* No. 989-1012, 942-12-23 M.E. (1767 A.D), Vol. 14, CAT, p. 38.

⁷⁷ *Chenga Kovilakam* branch of *Kolaswaroopam*.

⁷⁸ *Churuna* No. 1044, *Ola* No. 550-51, 964-3-12 M.E. (1788A.D), Vol. 2, p.105; T. K. Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, CAT, p. 399.

⁷⁹ *Churuna* No. 1136, *Ola* No. 52-58, 966-3-4 M.E (1790 A.D), Vol. 48, CAT, p.25.

⁸⁰ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, p. 346.

The adoption in the royal family of Travancore from Kolaswaroopam had continued during the reign of Uthram Thirunal and Sri Moolam Thirunal. Uthram Thirunal at the time of his rule adopted princesses Bharani Thirunal Lakshmi Bayi and Bharani Thirunal Parvathy Bayi from Mavelikkara Kottaram.⁸¹ Bharani Thirunal Lakshmi Bayi married Kerala Varma Valiyakoyi Thampuram (Kerala Kalidasa) of Ananthapuram Kottaram.⁸² But she conceived no children. The younger sister also had no female children. So the royal family again faced extinction.

Eighth Adoption

The last and eighth adoption was done by Sri Moolam Thirunal, the then Maharaja of Travancore in 1900 A. D.⁸³ At the time of the last adoption Sri Moolam Thirunal had arranged wide interviews with the princesses of different palaces in Travancore for getting best heirs to the royal family⁸⁴ and finally

⁸¹ *Churuna* No. 2652, *Ola* No. 550-51, 1033-5-8 (1857 A.D), Vol. 19, CAT, p. 154.

⁸² R. P. Raja, *Thiruvithamkoor Rajavamsavum...*, p. 182.

⁸³ A letter of Dewan K. Krishnaswami Row, in Papers adoption and Marriage in the Travancore Ruling Family, 11 – 12 - 1899, From the private collections of R. P. Raja, p. 6.

⁸⁴ It is said that Mulam Thirunal had a close affection with the then *Achamma* (Eldest female member of the whole branches of Kolaswaroopam), who belonged to Ennakkad Kottaram, one branch of Chirakkal Chenga Kovilakam. Owing to his close affection with *Achamma*, Mulam Thirunal decided to choose princesses from Ennakkad Kottaram at the time of extinction in the Royal family of Travancore. He intended to select two princesses Rohinithirunal Amma Raja and Bharathy Amma Raja from Ennakkad Kottaram.⁸⁴ But due to some internal pressure from the royal family of Travancore itself and other relative families, the king changed his decision and finally selected two princesses Puradam Thirunal Sethu Lakshmi Bayi and Mulam Thirunal Sethu Parvathy Bayi from Mavelikkara Kottaram. These informations are on the basis of the discussions of the present author with Karumarathu Naryanan Namboothiri (the chief priest of *Kolaswaroopam*) with the

adopted two princesses Puradam Thirunal Sethu Lakshmi Bayi and Moolam Thirunal Sethu Parvathy Bayi from Mavelikkara Kottaram.⁸⁵

The traditional Indian concept of *Duth* or adoption is that when a child is adopted, he is bound to follow the customs and manners of the new family.⁸⁶ But in the case of the adoptions from Kolaswaroopam to Travancore these traditional practices were not observed. In the case of first adoption from Kolathunad, the Venad ruler Samgramadheera had not tried to change the customs and practises of the adopted princes; instead he installed a miniature Kolaswaroopam in Travancore.⁸⁷ The rulers of Travancore had received the custom of *Ariyittuvazhcha* from Kolaswaroopam. Besides, the system of *Marumakkathayam* originated in Travancore by the coming of the adoptees from Kolathunad.⁸⁸ The special rights and privileges secured by the Attingal princesses, the progenitors of the Venad kings, was a custom they had adopted from Kolaswaroopam.⁸⁹

presence of Ravindra Varma, a member of Chirakkal palace on 29th December 2004. He stated that his grandfather was also present at Mavelikkara Kottaram at the time of the adoption. Moreover the present author has interviewed Pooyamnal Umadevi Thampuratty, daughter of Rohinithirunal Amma Raja, the one proposed candidate of adoption from Ennakkad Kottaram on 29th June 2009, Anizhamnal Santhanavally Thampuratty (Ennakkad Kottaram) on 29th June 2009, Rugmini Thampuratty of Gramam Palace (wife of late Thrikkettanal Udaya Varma Raja of Ennakkad Kottaram) on 10 – 05 - 2009.

⁸⁵Royal Order of the Maharaja of Travancore Sri Moolam Thirunal, Travancore Government Gazette Extraordinary, 01 08 -1900.

⁸⁶ Interview with late Karumarathu Narayanan Namboothiri, the chief priest of Koaswaroopam, on 29th December 2004.

⁸⁷ Princess Gouri Lakshmi Bayi, *Sree Padmanabha...*, p. 101.

⁸⁸ In Venad the system of succession might have a patrilineal one before the adoption from Kolathunad.

⁸⁹ In Kolathunad the king had given particular rights to the senior most female member of the royal family. She was known as *Achamma* and enjoyed all rights on

Through these repeated adoptions the Travancore Royal family became closely related with Kolaswaroopam. The Travancore kings, who ruled the kingdom for about six hundred years, were the sons of the princesses from Kolaswaroopam. Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma, the maker of modern Travancore, Karthika Thirunal Rama Varma alias Dharma Raja, Regents Gouri Lakshmi Bayi (mother of Swathi Thirunal) and Parvathy Bayi, Chithira Thirunal Bala Rama Varma, the last ruler of Travancore etc., are certain eminent rulers, who were the direct offspring of the adopted princesses from Kolaswaroopam. The contributions made by them for the development of Travancore are still recognised by the people. These adoptions from Kolaswaroopam politically strengthened both Travancore Royal Family and Kolaswaroopam. Otherwise the country of Travancore came under the control of feudal lords like Etuveetil Pillamar, who were eager to overthrow the Travancore royal family. Besides, during the time of Haider's invasion the members of Kolaswaroopam took political asylum in Travancore. Thus one may conclude that the history of the Royal family of Travancore is incomplete without the history of the Kolaswaroopam.

Relation with the Arackal Family

the property of temples. She had managed the temple administration. Similarly the senior most female member of the Travancore royal family had some special rights on the management of the temple properties. She was known as *Attingal Mootha Thampuran*. The female members of both families, who were the progenitors of the rulers, had enjoyed supreme rights in their country.

The Arackal royal family came into prominence as an independent political authority by the middle of the sixteenth century.⁹⁰ The rulers of this royal house came to be known as Ali Rajas. They had followed matrilineal system of inheritance, the system that prevailed in Malabar in those times. In the beginning they were the governors of Kolathiri. Eventually they established their political power in Cannanore area and assumed the title Ali Raja. Their trade and commercial contacts with the Arabian countries made them economically very powerful sovereigns of Cannanore. They rendered their services in the trading activities of Cannanore. A number of views were prevalent about the origin of Arackal royal family.

According to Galletti the royal family of Ali Raja was of Kolathiri extraction. 'A certain Princess of this dynasty on account of having had to do with a person of lower standing, had lost her caste or nobility and in order to some extent to cover up the disgrace, she was given in wedlock to a rich Arabian Moor, on whom was conferred the title of Prince and the general name of Ali Raja.⁹¹

It is said that the last Cheraman Perumal had sufficient influence on the Kolathiri. He induced the Kolathiri to grant a site for a mosque at Madayi. He encouraged merchants and invited Jonaka Mappilas to the country. He invited a Muhammadan and his wife to come from his native land of Aryapuram and

⁹⁰ K. K. N. Kurup, *The Ali Rajas of Cannanore*, Calicut, Publication Division University of Calicut, 2002, p. 15.

⁹¹ Galletti, *The Dutch...*, p. 147.

installed them at Cannanore. The Muhammadan was called by the name Ali Raja that is lord of the Sea.⁹²

It is said that when the last Cheraman Perumal left for Mecca, he entrusted the duty of managing all royal affairs to his nephew Mabali until his return.⁹³ After his conversion to Islam, Mabali received a new name of Muhammad Ali and founded a new Muslim *Swaroopam* in Malabar.⁹⁴

Another story tells us the conversion of Arayankulangara Nair, a minister of Kolathiri, to Islam.⁹⁵ Even after his conversion, the Kolathiri allowed him to continue his duty as the royal minister.⁹⁶ Later the Arayankulangara Nair's family continued in that post. It is said that Arayankulangara Nair married a princess from Kolaswaroopam.⁹⁷ Subsequently, a territory was granted to him by the Kolathiri. It marked the beginning of Arakkal family.

The story prevailing among the royal families is that two princesses from Kolaswaroopam went to take bath in the Ezhimala River, where, the elder sister got into a whirlpool and one Muslim man saved her from that trap.⁹⁸ The then Kolathiri married his niece to that Muslim young man and gave the territory

⁹² William Logan, *Malabar ...*, p. 236.

⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 2.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, Vol. I, 1982, p. 333.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Interview with Ravindra Varma, a member of Chirakkal royal family, on 28-12-2008.

around Cannanore to her. Besides, he gave her and her ancestors the title of Adi Raja.⁹⁹

If the story is right, it might have occurred in the eleventh century, when the royal family of Kolathiri was residing at Ramanthaly in Ezhimala. The members of the Arakkal house did not marry from Kolathunad, because they considered the people of this country as their *prajas*.¹⁰⁰

In *Keralolpathy*, it is stated that the Kolathiri invited the *Jonakas*¹⁰¹ to manage the trading activities of eighteen ports of the country. The *Jonakas* sent a man and woman to Kolathunad for the purpose. The Kolathiri settled them at Aryapadikkal¹⁰², a royal residence near his palace. The king had given special names *Azhiraja* and *Umma* to this *Jonaka* man and woman respectively, who settled at Aryapadikkal. He gave special rights to their family in Cannanore. William Logan in his *Malabar Manual* expressed the view that most of these stories are tolerably unanimous.¹⁰³ Galletti in his *The Dutch in Malabar* also observes that the Arakkal royal family is Kolathiri extraction.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Interview with Arackal Adi Raja Zemir Aliyas Hameed Hussain Koyamma, a member of the Arackal Palace, on 29 – 12 – 2004.

¹⁰⁰ The term *Praja* means a subject or a citizen of the nation. Interview with late Sultana Ayisha Muthu Bebi, the then eldest member of the Arackal Palace, on 29 – 12 – 2004.

¹⁰¹ The term *Jonaka* means Muslim.

¹⁰² The word *Aryappady* has been synonymously used to indicate the house of native chieftain or *thampuran*. K. K. Musthafa, “Political Significance of Arakkal Muslim Swaroopam in Cannanore” in K. S. Mathew & Joy Varkey, ed., *Winds of Spices Essays on Political Establishments in Medieval India with Special References to Cannanore*, Tellicherry, IRISH, 2006, pp. 178-79.

¹⁰³ Logan, *Malabar...*, p. 359.

According to Arakkal records the Arakkal royal family was established by Sultan Mahomed Ali Raja in Heigera 64 (643 A.D) and all his successors were styled as Ali Raja.¹⁰⁵ On the basis of Arakkal records and from most of the traditional oral sources it cannot be denied that the Arakkal royal family had originated from a Hindu tradition. In a letter to the then Ali Raja, on the occasion of the demise of his uncle or brother, the emperor of Constantinople accepted the sovereignty of Ali Raja, who succeeded immediately after the death of his predecessor. The emperor pointed out the fact that the system of matrilineal succession was really against the rules of *Shariat* but in his letter he accepted the rules of the land.¹⁰⁶

At the time of the advent of Islam a number of *Mukkavas* (fishermen) and *Tiya* communities embraced Islam and their women got married to Arabian merchants.¹⁰⁷ Their Mappila offsprings engaged in trade activities with Arabia, Ormuz, Eden, and Cambay. The progress of trade activities enriched their economy and status.¹⁰⁸ However, they could not get the status of a royal family in Malabar. If we check the history of Kunjali Marakkars, the Muslim noble family of the neighbouring state of Kolathunad we can see that they never got the

¹⁰⁴ Galletti, *The Dutch...*, p. 147.

¹⁰⁵ Letter of Sultan Ali Raja to W. Denison, Governor in Council, Related to the Origin and Affairs of the Arackal Dynasty, Regional Archives Calicut (here after RAC), p.1

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* RAC, pp.3-4.

¹⁰⁷ Kumaran M.P, *Kolathu pazhama*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, 1998, pp. 124-125.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

status of a sovereign in Calicut. They never adopted the system of *Marumakkathayam* as against the rules of *Shariat* and they continued as the commanders of Zamorins naval force. In the case of Arakkal royal family, unlike other Muslims, from the very beginning itself they strictly practised matrilineal system. In Kolathunad the Muslims generally acquired immense wealth through their trade activities but Kolathiri entrusted the power of administration around Cannanore and the Laccadive Islands to the Arakkal royal house. Moreover, we cannot deny the authenticity of *Vadakkan pattukl* or northern ballads. Mostly it is the mixture of imaginations, exaggerations, fiction and facts. Among the common people *Vdakkan pattukal* were a medium of information about the past. One of them tells us the story of the origin of Arackal house from a princess of Kolaswaroopam.¹⁰⁹ Besides even now the Arackal family keeping an ever-burning lamp in their old Mosque in memory of the first converted mother Sridevi Thampuratty of Kolaswaroopam.¹¹⁰ Some of these peculiar features of the Arakkal royal family throw light on the fact that it was of Kolathiri extraction as Galletti suggested.

Ibn Batuta the fourteenth century traveler did not mentions a Muslim royal family in Kolathunad and a port of Cannanore. There is certain references to Ali Moosa, the fifth ruler who had conquered Maldive Islands by 1183-84.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ M. V. Vishnunamboodiri, *Vadakkan Pattukal-Oru Padanam*, Kottayam, Current Books, 1995, pp. 121-122.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Arakkal Aady Raja Zemir Aliyas Hameed Hussain Koyamma on December 12, 2004.

¹¹¹ K. K. N. Kurup, *Ali Rajas...*, p. 16.

The Laccadive Islands once belonged to Kolathiri, who was responsible for the colonisation of Islands.¹¹² Later Kolathiri bestowed the territories on the mainland and Laccadive Islands on condition of paying 12,000 *panams* to Ali Raja as *Jagir*.¹¹³ In this way this Muslim royal family was placed in a high position and enjoyed great influence on the affairs of the kingdom of Kolathiri. The *Jagir* of these Islands and the right to rule the territories around Cannanore, made the royal family of Arakkal more powerful than Kolathiri. The administrative skill of the Ali Raja could earn good reputation to Kolathunad.

Arakkal house paid the tribute of the land and Islands for several years but later they broke off the allegiance to Kolathiri. They became semi-independent from the sovereign. The suzerainty of Kolathiri lasted till the advent of the Portuguese.

Thus from the above discussions, it is clear that there was close relationship between the Kolaswaroopam and Arakkal royal family. In the festival seasons like *Onam*, the members of the Arakkal family strictly practised vegetarian style of cuisine, until the end of that season. For the feast they used the leaf of banana plants for serving the food, especially rice. The Arakkal royal family followed matrilineal system of succession. It has a striking similarity with the Hindu ruling families of Malabar. The ruler was succeeded by the eldest male or female member of the family. If the ruler was a prince, he came to be

¹¹² Mushika Vamsa, *Sargam* – IV.

¹¹³ Arakkal Papers, List-I, Sl. No. 9239, RAC, p. 3.

known as *Sultan Arakkal Ady Raja* and if it was a princess, she came to be known as *Sultana Arakkal Ady Raja Beebi*.¹¹⁴ Gradually the Arakkal family became an independent power, which controlled all affairs of its territory, even of the Hindu as well as the Muslim subjects.

Conclusion

In short, the Kolaswaroopam was intimately connected with Travancore and Arakkal royal families. The Travancore royal family could get eminent kings by their adoption from the Kolaswaroopam. The Arakkal family, which was intimately connected with Kolathiri, could earn royal power as a result of its blood relationship with Kolaswaroopam. These two families, despite the erosion of all royal powers, even now recognise each other and agree on the origin of Arackal house from the Kolathiri extraction.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Arakkal Aady Raja Zemir Aliyas Hameed Hussain Koyamma on December 12, 2004.