



TRAVANCORE DYNASTY

Maharajas of Kingdom of Travancore

Venad Kulasekhara Dynasty

1. **Anizham Tirunal Marthanda Varma** 1729–1758
2. **Karthika Thirunal Rama Varma (Dharma Raja)** 1758–1798
3. **BalaRama Varma** 1798–1810
4. **Gowri Lakshmi Bayi** 1810–1815 (Queen from 1810–1813 and Regent Queen from 1813–1815)
5. **Gowri Parvati Bayi (Regent)** 1815–1829
6. **Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma** 1829–1846
7. **Uthradom Thirunal Marthanda Varma** 1846–1860
8. **Ayilyam Thirunal Rama Varma** 1860–1880
9. **Visakham Thirunal Rama Varma** 1880–1885
10. **Sree Moolam Thirunal Rama Varma** 1885–1924
11. **Sethu Lakshmi Bayi (Regent)** 1924–1931
12. **Chithira Thirunal BalaRama Varma** 1931–1991
13. **Uthradom Thirunal Marthanda Varma** 1991–Present

1. Marthanda Varma



His Majesty Sri Padmanabha Dasa Vanchi Pala Anizham Thirunal Maharajah Marthanda Varma, King of Travancore (1706–1758)

Marthanda Varma (Anizham Thirunal) ([Malayalam](#): മാർത്താണ്ഡ വർമ്മ), (1706–1758) was the **Maharajah** of the **Indian princely state of Travancore** from 1729¹ till his death in 1758, having succeeded his maternal uncle [Rajah Rama Varma](#). He is credited as the "maker of modern Travancore".

Early life

Marthanda Varma was born in 1706^[2] as the son of the Junior Rani of Attingal (the queens of Travancore were styled as the Ranis of Attingal) whose entire family, including herself, a sister who died, and two brothers including the said Rajah Rama Varma had been adopted by Umayamma Rani of Venad on the failure of heirs in the Venad Royal house from Kolathunaad or Ezhimala Hill kingdom of North Kerala. Kolathiris founded the Attingal Matriarchal dynasty in 1314 AD replacing the southern Nair dynasty after the reign of Udayamarthandavarma, king of Venad. Travancore at this time was known as Venad and was a very small principality extending from Attingal in the north till Kanyakumari, the southern-most tip of the Indian sub continent. Within this small kingdom the power of the king was only nominal due to the power of the nobles known as Madampis, chief among them being the Ettuveetil Pillamar or the Lords of the Eight Houses. The powers of the ruler were also to a great extent curbed by the power of the Ettara Yogam, the Managing committee of the great Pagoda of Padmanabhaswamy in Trivandrum. The Ettuveetil Pillamar and Ettara Yogam play an important role in the history of Travancore and were responsible, as per legend, for the murder of Rajah Aditya Varma in the previous century, the murder of five sons of Rani Umayamma and other similar crimes, all committed in a bid to extirpate the Travancore Royal House. It was into these conditions, where the sovereign was powerless under the refractory nobles of the state that Marthanda Varma was born in 1706.

Coming to power

Marthanda Varma, from his formative years was an intelligent prince and it was on his advice in 1726 that Rajah Rama Varma signed a treaty with the Madurai Nayaks and secured a foreign force in the country to check the activities of the Ettuveetil Pillamar and other rebellious chieftains. Previously he had also signed a treaty with the English, styling himself as the "Prince of Neyatinkara" in 1723. This incurred the wrath of the Eight Lords and thus they bent upon murdering the prince. The result was that Marthanda Varma had to flee the capital for the safety of the northern states such as Kottarakara, Kayamkulam etc. where he lived in difficulty for many years, travelling from one place to another to escape his enemies.

Military career

Marthanda Varma was not only a shrewd tactician and king but an able general as well. In his military conquests he was ably assisted by Ramayyan Dalawa, later his Prime Minister. In 1731 Quilon of Kollam, which was ruled by a branch of the Venad family was defeated and the last King was made to sign a document allowing the annexation of his kingdom by Marthanda Varma after his death. Till then Quilon was to be a Venad tributary. Marthanda Varma next turned his attention towards Kayamkulam, another related family, which allying itself with the Quilon family tried to prevent the growth of Venad. In 1734, several battles were fought against Kayamkulam and Quilon without any decisive effect. In the final battle of that year the Rajah of Kayamkulam was killed and succeeded by his brother who soon sued for peace and hostilities were ended for the moment. Marthanda Varma then, in 1734, annexed the Elayadath Swaroopam or the Kottarakara kingdom, ruled by another related Queen who was pensioned off. In the same year, the Quilon Rajah died and Kayamkulam annexed the possessions of that king against the wishes of Marthanda Varma. The Kayamkulam Rajah had the support of the Rajah of Cochin and Dutch. The Dutch Governor of Ceylon, van Imhoff, asked the King to stop hostilities against Kayamkulam, to which Marthanda Varma remonstrated that the Governor need not interfere in affairs that did not concern him. In 1739 Van Imhoff arrived in Cochin and in 1740 espoused the cause of the Rani of Kottarakara and protested against the annexation of that kingdom by Marthanda Varma. On a subsequent interview with the Maharajah Marthanda Varma, the relations between the Dutch and Travancore became further strained. It is said that when the Dutch Governor threatened to invade the territories of Travancore the Maharaja gave an effective reply that he would invade Holland in case the Dutch misbehaved in Malabar. In 1741 the Dutch reinstated the Queen of Elayadath Swaroopam at Kottarakara against the wishes of Marthanda Varma who attacked the kingdom and completely routed the Dutch army and finally fully annexed Kottarakara to Travancore while the Queen fled to Cochin and received a pension from the Dutch.

Following this occurred the decisive Battle of Colachel, resulting in the complete eclipse of Dutch power in Kerala. Though the Battle of Colachel was fought in 1741 A.D. (10 to 14 August) peace with the Dutch was only concluded and ratified by the Batavian Government in October, 1753. More than twenty Dutch men were taken as prisoners in the Battle of Colachel. The prisoners were treated with kindness, so they were glad to take service under the Maharaja. Among them were Eustachius De Lannoy and Donadi, who attracted the maharaja's special notice. De Lannoy, commonly known in Travancore as the 'Valiya Kapithan' (Great Captain) was entrusted with the organization and drilling of a special Regiment, which he did to the entire satisfaction of the Maharaja. De Lannoy was raised to the rank of General and proved of considerable service to the Maharaja in the subsequent wars.

Following the expulsion of the Dutch, the Maharajah now turned his attention once again towards Kayamkulam which continued seeking help from the Dutch. In 1742, the Travancore forces attacked the Kayamkulam possessions at Quilon and fought the Kayamkulam army led by its commander Achuta Warrier. In this battle Travancore was defeated. But reinforced with cavalry brought in from Tirunelveli, Marthanda Varma mounted an attack on Kayamkulam and finally defeated the kingdom.

A treaty known as the Treaty of Mannar was signed, by which Kayamkulam became a tributary. However by 1746, the Kayamkulam Rajah once again started showing signs of rebellion and when his conspiracy with the kingdoms further north (such as Kottayam, Changanassery, Cochin and Ambalapuzha) came to the attention of Marthanda Varma, Kayamkulam was annexed by a final war in which the Rajah fled to the Kingdom of Cochin. Travancore now extended from Cape Comorin to Kayamkulam in the north. Following this, Ambalapuzha, Kottayam and Changanassery were also annexed to Travancore by 1753. The principality of Meenachil was also annexed. In 1753 the tributary states of Cochin collectively known as Karappuram and Alangad were ceded to Travancore. In 1755, the Zamorin of Calicut, the most powerful king in Northern Kerala was also defeated at a battle in Purakkad. He was supported by the armies of some other local kings also. This made almost all the Kings of Kerala prostrate before the power of Marthanda Varma.

Treaty of Mavelikkara



Dutch commander De Lannoy surrenders to Marthanda Varma at the Battle of Colachel. Depiction at Padmanabhapuram Palace

Treaty of Peace and friendship concluded between Marthandavarma and The Dutch. According to this treaty both the parties agreed to live in friendship and peace. The treaty was signed on 15 August 1753. The treaty was signed at Mavelikkara.

Other reforms

One military commander of the Travancore forces was Eustachius De Lannoy, a prisoner of war from the Battle of Colachel. He modernised the Travancore forces and made it superior to those of the other Kings of Kerala, thus playing a major part in the military acquisitions of Marthanda Varma. Besides these, under ponpandidevar reforms were brought about in the revenue system, budgetary system and public works etc., of the state. The Padmanabhaswamy temple was renovated and new state ceremonies such Murajapam, Bhadra Deepam etc. were introduced by Marthanda Varma. Marthanda Varma also instituted a new knighthood for his loyal Nair officers known as Chempakaraman Pillai. The Kingdom of Travancore was dedicated to the Lord Sri Padmanabhaswamy in 1750 January 3 and after that he called Sripadmanabha Vanchipala Marthandavarma Kulasekaraperumal and the Maharajah, taking the title of Padmanabha Dasa ruled the kingdom as the servant of that deity. Travancore as a whole thus became the property of Lord Sri Padmanabhaswamy, the deity of the Travancore Royal family or in other words "God's Own Country". Kayamkulam war Kayamkulam did not succumb with the fall of the king, the king's brother took over charge and morale of the Kayamkulam army was restored. As casualties on both sides mounted Marthandavarma had to retreat to Trivandrum. The failure of Varma was celebration to the mini kings of Kollam Kayamkulam Changanchery etc, As they viewed a rising monster in Marthandavarma. They formed an alliance with the king of Kochi. Mr. Ramayyan the chief who led the Varma's army, proceeded to Thirunelveli acquired reinforcements (both infantry and cavalry) under maaveeran Ponpandi Devar , then came back after negotiations a new strategy was formed. maaveeran Ponpandi Devar took over charge as chief of army and took on Kayamkulam with renewed vigour.

Marthanda Varma paid special attention to improving agriculture in the Kingdom. The southern-most district of present day Tamil Nadu Kanyakumari was the southern-most part of Travancore. The portions of land lying east of Nagercoil town called Nanjil Nadu was considered the granary of Kerala due to the extensive cultivation of paddy there. The fertility of this area was only due to the irrigation facilities introduced by Marthanda Varma. His Edicts on the subject of irrigation issued between 1729 and 1758 A.D fill several pages in the Travancore Land Revenue Manual by R. Mahadeva Iyer. Only due to the digging of new canals for irrigation during His reign, the single crop paddy fields of that area became double-crop fields, almost doubling their production. Pallikondan Dam, Sabari Dam, and Chozhanthitta Dam, all on the River Pazhayaru in the vicinity of Nagercoil, were constructed by him and are still operational. Near Bhoothappandy a dam was constructed and a new channel named Puthanaaru was dug from it to irrigate the Thovala areas. Puthan Dam built by him near Padmanabhapuram provided drinking water to that area.

Demise

The death of Ramayyan Dalawa in 1756 caused great pain to Marthanda Varma as the former was not only his minister but also his friend. The King's health started deteriorating since then till he died two years later in 1758 after a brilliant military career. He was succeeded by his nephew Maharajah Karthika Thirunal Rama Varma Dharma Raja in 1758 who consolidated the kingdom further. Before his death Marthanda Varma summoned his nephew and successor and gave his final instructions. The main instructions were concerning the maintenance of all the pujas, ceremonies etc. in the Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple without attempts to meddle with them and to maintain above all the friendship existing between that Honourable Association (the British) and Travancore and to repose in them full confidence. They had proved more trustworthy of all the foreign forces. Another main instruction was that the expenses of the State should never exceed its revenue. No infighting in the Royal family was to be ever allowed. Within a short time of these final instructions, the great king gave up his life.

Dharma Raja



[Dharma Raja](#)

[Karthika Thirunal Dharma Rajah](#)

Born 1724

Died 1798

Occupation [Maharajah of Travancore](#)

Religion [Hindu](#)

Dharma Raja Karthika Thirunal Rama Varma ('யർമ്മ രാജ' കാർത്തിക തിരുനാള് രാമവർമ്മ, 1724–1798) [1] was the Maharajah of Travancore from 1758 until his death in 1798. He succeeded his uncle Marthanda Varma, who is credited with the title of "maker of modern Travancore". During his reign Dharma Raja not only retained all the territories his predecessor had gained but administered the kingdom with success. He was addressed as Dharma Raja on account of his strict adherence to Dharma Sastra, the principles of justice by providing asylum to thousands of Hindus and Christians fleeing Malabar during the religious and military onslaught of Tipu Sultan.

Early life

Rama Varma was born in 1724 AD as the son of the Senior Rani of Attingal [2] with her husband Prince Kerala Varma Koil Thampuran of the Kilimanoor palace. He had a brother Prince Makayiram Thirunal, grandfather of Irayimman Thampi, who pre-deceased him. His mother was adopted from the royal house of Kolathunad in 1718 by the then King of Venad [3] into the Travancore Royal Family. He was born into a time of political turmoil caused by the refractory Lords, the Ettuveetil Pillamar as also enemies of Venad such as the Rajah of Kayamkulam. When Karthika Thirunal was only four years of age, in 1728, his father died foiling an assassination bid by the Kayamkulam Rajah, when the prince along with his parents were traveling from Haripad to the domains of the Vanjipuzha Thampuran, a Brahmin chief, at Budhanur. [4] As he grew up, he took part actively in the military conquests of his uncle Maharajah Marthanda Varma and assisted him in establishing the modern state of Travancore by annexing kingdom after kingdom up to the Cochin to Venad.

Succession and initial career

With the death of his uncle Marthanda Varma in 1758, Karthika Thirunal Rama Varma succeeded to the Travancore musnud. With the able services of the Dalawa Ayyapan Marthanda Pillai, Karthika Thirunal began his reign. Under his uncle's reign, Travancore had gained the reputation of being the most powerful state in Kerala and hence, many of the neighboring chiefs wished to execute friendship treaties with the Maharajah. The fortunes of the

Cochin royal family were at the lowest ebb. A very small portion of their original territory alone remained in the Cochin Raja's possession. From 1755 AD, the Zamorin of Calicut Kingdom, was in possession of the major portions of Cochin. Although Marthanda Varma had promised help against the Zamorin by signing a treaty of alliance in 1756 with Cochin, he took no steps to help. Most of the barons of Kochi had sided with the enemy. The Dutch were the permanent friends and protectors of Cochin, but they withdrew their contingents from the field when the Zamorin promised to give back to them 'Chetwai' which he had conquered from them, on his way to Cochin. The Raja of Cochin deputed his nephew to ask for prompt assistance from Rama Varma. The recollections of the past shady dealings and breach of faith on the part of the Cochin rulers naturally had raised apprehensions in the Maharaja that his neighbour might not adhere to his promise when he felt his position secure. The same feeling might have prevented Marthanda Varma, his uncle, from rendering assistance immediately. Months passed. At last the Raja of Cochin met with Rama Varma to press his request. He strengthened his promises with the sanction of religion.

On the 25th of the month Adi of 937 M.E, [clarification needed] the Raja of Cochin read the terms of their treaty and solemnly swore to abide by its terms, in the presence of the Deity Sthanumoorthy of Suchindrum Temple near Cape Commorin, the ministers of the two kingdoms and the spiritual authorities also being present and the signed document was delivered to the representative of the Maharaja of Travancore. In pursuance of the treaty, the Travancore Maharaja commanded his Minister Dalawa Ayyappan Marthanda Pillai and his Dutch General D'Lannoy to proceed to the north at the head of a large army to liberate Cochin kingdom from the clutches of Zamorin of Calicut kingdom. The account of this campaign is best given in the words of late Mr. C. Achyutha Menon, a native of Cochin, whose acquaintance with the records of the Cochin government, to which he was secretary for a long time, enabled him to speak with unassailable authority.

"Early in March, the combined army marched in two divisions to attack the Zamorin's forces stationed in Parur and Alangad. But the latter abandoned these districts without striking a blow and retreated to Cranganur and Mapranam. The division under Marthanda Pillai fell upon the Zamorin's men in Mapranam and pursued them to Trichur where they were attacked in the front by the Travancoreans and in the rear by a body of men from Kavalapara and Perattuvithi, the best fighters in Cochin at the time. The Calicut forces suffered heavily in the fight at Trichur and fled precipitately to their fortified stations in Kunnamkulam and Chelakara. In the meantime, the division under D'Lannoy dislodged the Zamorin's men from Cranganore and pursued them beyond the Chetwa river and marching to Trichur by way of Enamakal, found the place already in the occupation of Dalawa Marthanda Pillai. The combined army then advanced to Chelakara and after a severe engagement, drove the

Zamorin's men beyond the northern frontier of Cochin. From Chelakara they marched to Kunnamkulam, whereupon the Calicut forces stationed there retreated to Ponnani. General D'Lannoy now proposed to carry the war into the enemy's territory, but the Zamorin, becoming alarmed for the safety of his country, sued for peace".

The Zamorin sent an express messenger to Trivandrum to beg the Maharaja to stay the hands of his General. Just as his uncle Marthanda Varma had ordered him and Dalawa Ramayyan to desist from the conquest of Cochin, when they were about to do so in 929 M.E., Rama Varma Maharaja now ordered his Dalawa to advance no further. In 1759 A.D, the Rajah of Cochin sent his nephew to sign a treaty with Travancore. In the same year, a few months later, the Rajah himself visited Travancore along with his minister Paliath Achan and signed a treaty with Travancore and secured aid to free his territories from the control of the Zamorin of Calicut. The Zamorin's request to forgive him was complied with in 1763 and in the next year the Zamorin visited Padmanabhapuram, capital of Venad and signed a treaty of friendship and reimbursed to Travancore the expenses of the war amounting to Rs 1,50,000. The little kingdoms of Parur and Alangad were also annexed to Travancore after pensioning off the ruling families.

In 932 M.E, Marthanda Varma had projected the construction of a line of fortifications on the northern frontier, but his death the following year prevented anything substantial being done. The experience gained in the course of the war with the Zamorin convinced the Dewan and the General, of the necessity of continuing and strengthening the lines which would not only protect Cochin in some measure from any possible aggression by the Zamorin, but would also be serviceable to Travancore in the event of an invasion from Mysore. The scheme was then taken up.

The Raja of Cochin was in entire agreement with the proposal. The line of fortifications was taken from the sea near the island of Vaipen right up to the ghats covering a distance of nearly 40 kilometres (25 mi). The Raja of Cochin agreed to bear a portion of the costs in addition to permitting the construction of the many portions passing through the Cochin territory. In fact the Dutch records stated that Maharajah Marthanda Varma deliberately refrained from annexing Cochin on an earlier occasion so as to maintain a buffer-state between his kingdom and Mysore of Hyder Ali. The famous Nedum Kotta or 'the Northern Defense-Line of Travancore' subsequently became a major obstacle in Tipu Sultan's attempt to conquer Travancore; he called it "the contemptible wall".

Certain territorial disputes arose between Travancore and the Nawab of Arcot which were eventually settled, though the Maharajah had to part with large sums of money and some territories mainly because the British East India

Company's officers had compelled him, as the Nawab was a familiar figure at Madras and his propensities for perpetual borrowing at extra hazardous rates of interest enlisted their sympathies. The Maharaja obtained in return, lands in Shencottah and the temple at Cape Comorin, which were at the time not part of Travancore but were desired by the Maharajah to round off his dominions. [5]

Dharma Raja and Hyder Ali



Hyder Ali

Hyder Ali had usurped the throne of Mysore and was keen to invade and bring the smaller coastal kingdoms of Malabar and Travancore under his sway. As early as 1756, he had invaded Malabar at the instance of the ruler of Palghat to help him regain his territories captured by the Zamorin of Calicut. The Zamorin was driven away and saved his kingdom by agreeing to pay the princely sum of Rs.12 Lakhs to Hyder Ali. In 1766, Hyder invaded Malabar a second time. The Rajah of Kolathunad fled to Travancore, while the Zamorin, after hastening his family's departure to Travancore, committed suicide in his own palace. Hyder Ali also started treaty negotiations with the Dutch who, since their defeat in the Battle of Colachel had been in awe of Travancore, kept the Maharajah of Travancore informed of all developments. What Hyder wanted was a free passage to Travancore through the Dutch territories. The Dutch Governor replied that he had informed Batavia of Hyder's request and was waiting for a reply.

Soon rumors of a proposed invasion of Travancore started developing after the Maharajah refused to stop construction of the Nedumkotta, which passed near

the Dutch possessions, through Cochin territories, and because he had given refuge to Hyder Ali's enemies. Hyder asked the kings of Cochin and Travancore to pay the expenses of his Malabar campaign. The tribute to be paid by Cochin was Rs.4 Lakhs and 10 elephants, while Travancore was asked to pay Rs.15 Lakhs and 30 elephants. Hyder added that if Travancore refused, "He will pay a visit". While the Rajah of Cochin agreed, Karthika Thirunal of Travancore replied, stating that it was "neither to please him nor in accordance with his advice that the invasion of Malabar was undertaken". But he stated that if Hyder withdrew from Malabar and reinstated the Kolathunad and Calicut Rajahs to their thrones, he would agree to a payment. This was taken by Hyder as a threat, but before he could plan an attack on Travancore, he had to return to Mysore.^[6]

Dharma Raja and Tipu Sultan

In 1788, rebellion broke out in the territories and vassal states of Mysore, now ruled by Tipu Sultan, son and successor of Hyder Ali. Tipu entered the regions of Malabar and Coorg to put these rebellions down, engaging in tactics that included the forced deportation to Seringapatam and the conversion to Islam by force, of Hindus.^[7] The royal families of Malabar and large numbers of Hindu and Christian families fled to Travancore, where they were received and treated hospitably by the Maharajah.^{[8][9]} Tipu Sultan now demanded that the Rajah of Cochin, who had accepted the status of a vassal, to claim Alangad and Parur so as to provide Tipu with a pretext for an invasion of Travancore.^[10] However, the Rajah diplomatically assured Tipu that he would convince the Rajah of Travancore to become a vassal of Tipu like himself. Tipu then sent envoys to Travancore with a 'Khareeta', wherein he stated that "I have learnt that you desire to cultivate friendship with our Sircar..". The Maharajah received Tipu's envoys in the presence of an East India Company representative, which was taken as an affront by Tipu. The Maharajah also negotiated with the British for a force to assist in the defense of Travancore, anticipating an attack from Tipu Sultan. Finally in 1789, arguing that the Nedumkotta passed illegally through the territories of Cochin, his vassal state, Tipu Sultan gathered his entire force in Malabar and marched to invade Travancore.^[11]

Tipu and his forces reached the Nedumkotta line which protected Travancore's northern frontier and launched an attack in late December 1789.^[12] But a small number Travancore soldiers managed to change the course of events, by opening fire on the 14,000 Mysore infantry from a close cover that killed the Mysorean officer leading a bayonet charge.^[13] The Mysorean column, hemmed in by the confines of the wall, retreated in confusion and Tipu Sultan himself was carried away by the crowd. His palanquin, seals, rings, sword and other personal ornaments fell into the hands of the Travancore armies under the Dewan Raja Kesavadas Pillai.^[14] Tipu

fell back into the ditch twice before scrambling out and the occasional lameness which he suffered until his death was due to the contusions suffered by his fall into the ditches of Travancore. [15]

Tippu sent a letter on January 19, 1790 to Budruz Zuman Khan. It said:

"Don't you know I have achieved a great victory recently in Malabar and over four lakh Hindus were converted to Islam? I am determined to march against that cursed Raman Nair very soon. Since I am overjoyed at the prospect of converting him and his subjects to Islam, I have happily abandoned the idea of going back to Srirangapatnam now". [16]

In the following weeks, Tipu Sultan, stung by his defeat, complained to the English Governor Holland at Madras in a pre-dated letter that his soldiers were searching for fugitives from Malabar and that it was Travancore which had taken the offensive. Finally, Tipu attacked the Nedumkotta again after waiting for three months for further reinforcements to arrive from Coorg, Bangalore and Seringapatnam. For nearly a month, the Travancore army under the protection of the Nedumkotta lines, managed to defend the state. However, finally a breach of about 1 km (3/4 mile) in length was effected and the Mysorean army entered Travancore. Soon, the entire Nedumkotta fell into the hands of Tipu Sultan, who captured large quantities of ammunition and 200 cannons. The British forces stationed to assist Travancore did not provide aid to Travancore, but remained passive spectators, since they had not received orders from Governor Holland to fight with the Sultan, much to the despair of the Maharajah. When orders were finally received, it was too late and the British Commander thought it injudicious to commit his soldiers against the large Mysorean army. Tipu's army now devastated the whole of northern Travancore and reached Alwaye and camped on the Periyar River, although Tipu's officers advised the Sultan against it. Hindu temples were destroyed and the subjects fled to the forests. The entire country was laid waste with fire and sword. Even Christians were not spared. The Dewan Raja Kesavadas of Travancore toiled ceaselessly and raised batteries at various places further south, and surrounded them with deep ditches and prepared to obstruct Tipu from proceeding further into Travancore.



Tippu Sultan, 1792

The Sultan and his army now moved to a place where the Travancore army had built a wall across the river obstructing the water, leaving the river-bed dry. In spite of the warnings of some of his Generals, Tipu decided to wage a battle here at night, certain of his superior numbers. Tipu first ordered two of his kushoons to advance and take over the defences which they accomplished with valour. But at day-break, the Travancoreans broke down the retaining wall, letting the water flood onto the Mysorean forces. A large number of Tipu's soldiers were killed by the sudden flood and the road of succour and assistance to the advance guard was cut off. The remaining forces were defeated by a sudden attack by Travancore under the Dewan and an able General known as Kali Kutty Nair (Posthumously elevated to Kali Kutty Pillai). Of the soldiers of Tipu, who formed the advance guard, none returned to the presence of the Sultan. Three or four hundred cavalry soldiers met with death in front of him. Tipu was begged off his Palki by his General Kamruddin Khan, who fell at his feet, asking him to retreat to his camp. Kamruddin saw to it that Tipu was carried on the shoulders of loyal soldiers across the waters to the other side of the river. The Sultan's Palki with bed, some personal ornaments, and a dagger fell into the hands of Travancore soldiers. Although the Sultan was once again defeated and prevented from gaining any more ground in Travancore, the Dewan increased the garrison of the forts further South and maintained a military force ready for battle in any case.

Meanwhile, Governor-General Cornwallis removed the acting Governor of Madras Mr. Hollond from his post, because he had not provided any aid to Travancore in the battle. The new Governor mobilized the British forces stationed in Travancore to support the Maharajah. Hearing of this, Tipu Sultan decided to retreat from Travancore and Malabar to his own kingdom, to

avoid war with the British. But war did occur, in which Travancore provided its forces to the British. The Third Anglo-Mysore War led by the Governor-General Cornwallis in person eventually led to the defeat of Tipu Sultan at his capital Seringapatnam in 1792. Tipu Sultan surrendered and the Treaty of Seringapatnam was signed. The terms of surrender were particularly harsh in that Tipu had to hand over two of his sons as hostages to British custody until he cleared the amount of Rupees Three crores and thirty lakhs fixed as the costs of the British campaign against him.[17]

Treaty with the British

Following the Treaty of Seringapatnam, the British demanded large sums from Travancore for the expenses of the war although by treaty they had to bear the expenses. Further a huge amount was collected from Tippu himself towards the war-expenses. The Maharaja paid it as he was not in a military position to oppose the English. A subsidiary alliance was made between Travancore and the British by which a subsidiary force of the East India Company was to be stationed in Travancore. Besides, the Maharajah was also to help the British during times of need.[18]

Reforms

- **Communications were opened to facilitate trade and business in the state by the Maharajah under the able Dewanship of Rajah Kesavadas. Ports were improved and various new products were exported by Travancore during this reign. Ship building was also given importance and several developments in this regard took place.**
- **Gold coins known as Anantharayan Panam, 'Chinna Panam' and 'Ananthavarahan' were minted in Travancore in addition to a large bullion of silver, coined as 'Chakrams (pronounced as 'chuck-rums')'.**
- **During wartime taxes were raised but after the payments to the British and overcoming wartime expenses, these taxes were remitted.**
- **The capital at Thiruvananthapuram was developed and infrastructure like bridges and other public works such as canals for irrigation were constructed. Bazaars and shopping centers were started for the benefit of the people.**
- **The fortifications were bettered as also the ammunition and weapon manufacture was undertaken with greater vigor, particularly the manufacturing of guns. Palaces in different parts of the country were developed and new ones built.**
- **An interesting insight into the religious tolerance of the Maharajah is gained through a letter by Pope Clement XIV wherein His Holiness thanked the Maharajah for the kindness to the members of his church in Travancore and officially placed all the Christians in Travancore under the protection of the sovereign.**

Kathakali Playwright and Composer

- **As the composer of Kathakali Plays (attakadha).** He set a systematic curriculum for teaching Kathakali. Being a good vocalist and scholar in music and dance, he composed excellent Kritis[19] which have enriched Carnatic music. He was perhaps the first violinist from the royal family. He has to his credit nearly 150 compositions. It was with the advent of the Kathakali plays of Karthika Thirunal that many reforms were brought in Kathakali. Changes were implemented in the structure of plays and in their technique to be adopted during presentation. Priority was given for sringara padas.[20] The rule that each character should enter the stage with sringara padas was introduced by him. Kathakali characters must enter by presenting pada in Padi raga. All his kathakali plays attained much popularity and fame on account of its technical superiority in stage presentation, variety and vividness of characters and the story. He has to his credit seven plays:
 - **Rajasooyam,**
 - **Subhadrapaharanam,**
 - **Gandharvavijayam,**
 - **Panchali Svayamvaram,**
 - **Bakavadham,**
 - **Kalayanasougandhikam (Thekkan or southern style)**
 - **Narakasuravadham.[21]**

Demise

- The maharajah died on 17 February 1798, at the age of 74, after a long reign that was prosperous, save for the invasion of the kingdom by Tipu Sultan. He had maintained the sovereignty of Travancore and protected it from destruction by the superior Mysore forces. He maintained the friendship cultivated with the British by his uncle Marthanda Varma. More importantly, he came to be known as Dharma Raja due to the asylum he provided to the thousands of people from Malabar fleeing to escape forced proselytization by Tipu Sultan. So pleased were these subjects of Malabar that many families of kings and nobles stayed back in Travancore.
- **Karthika Thirunal Maharajah had four wives or Ammachis.** His first wife was Panapillai Kali Amma Nagamani Amma from Vadasseri. His other three wives hailed from Thiruvattar, Arumana and Nagercoil. He constructed four Ammaveedus for his wives in Trivandrum in the last decade of the 18th century and these families are his descendants. The Maharajah's brother married from the Puthumana Ammaveedu and his grandson was the poet Irayimman Thampi. The Maharajah's descendant from Arumana Ammaveedu married Balarama Varma, his successor,

and their descendant was the consort of Visakham Thirunal Maharajah.[22]

Balarama Varma

Avittom Thirunal Balarama Varma (c. 1782–1810) was a ruler of the Indian princely state of Travancore from 1798 to 1810, succeeding Maharajah Dharma Raja. His rule of Travancore was full of disturbances and internal and external problems. The revolt of Velu Thampi (who as Dewan negotiated the formal alliance between Travancore and the British East India Company) occurred during his reign

Gouri Lakshmi Bayi

Maharani Ayilyom Thirunal Gouri Lakshmi Bayi (1791–1814) was the Maharani of the Indian state of Travancore from 1810 till 1813 and Regent from 1813 till her death in 1814 for her son Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma. She was the only Queen of Travancore to have reigned in her own right for two years before becoming a regent

Background

Gouri Lakshmi Bayi was born in the year 1791 to Princess Attham Thirunal, Senior Rani of Attingal of the Travancore Royal Family, adopted sister of Maharajah Balarama Varma. Attham Thirunal was adopted into the Travancore family from Kolathunad in 1788. The Maharanis of Travancore were styled as the "Ranis of Attingal". Gowri Lakshmi Bayi was one of Travancore's most popular Queens and introduced several reforms in the state.

Accession

The unpopular Maharajah Bala Rama Varma, during whose reign Travancore faced a number of internal and external problems, revolts and unnecessary battles and conspiracies, including the most important revolt of Velu Thampi Dalawa, died in 1811. At the death of the Maharajah, Gowri Lakshmi Bayi, the senior Rani of Attingal, was barely twenty years of age. There were no eligible male members in the family which meant she would have to take over Travancore and rule it as regent till such an heir would be born to her. However her accession was not easy because a member of the Mavelikara Royal family, a distant cousin, Prince Kerala Varma, who was the pet of the previous ruler, staked a claim on the throne which was anything but unsubstantiated. The Princess placed in the hands of the British Resident Col. John Munro, one of Travancore's most loved British Residents, a document

asserting her claim and proving the claim of Kerala Varma untenable. This irked Kerala Varma who resorted to tact and tried to convince the Princess to give up her claim. However the Resident sided with Gowri Lakshmi Bayi and she was made the Regent Maharani of Travancore in 1811. Kerala Varma was permitted to reside at Trivandrum, the capital; but when he tried to create further troubles, he was imprisoned and banished from Travancore.

Colonel Munro Dewan

On of the earliest acts of Gowri Lakshmi Bayi was Regent was to dismiss the existing Dewan or Prime Minister, Ummini Thampi. Ummini Thampi was accused of squandering money and acquiring all the property of the vanquished rebel freedom fighter Velu Thampi Dalawa and others. He was dismissed and when he tried to cause further trouble he was imprisoned and punished after being found guilty of conspiracy against the Regent Maharani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi. The Maharani was now asked to nominate some individual for the post of Dewan, to which she stated that she found no eligible individual and would like to appoint the Resident Colonel John Munro as her Dewan. Accordingly, Munro became Dewan of Travancore in 1811.

Government reforms

- The Dewan Col. Munro informed the Maharani of the widespread corruption in her Government owing to the practice of giving all power, administrative and judicial, to a single officer right from village level to district level. To end this the Proverticars (village officers), Kariakkars (Taluka officers) and the district officials were all deprived of their judicial powers and instead a Court of Appeal and five District Courts at Padmanabhapuram, Mavelikara, Trivandrum, Vaikam and Alwaye were established and modern judicial system was introduced in Travancore. The Courts had each two judges and a Brahmin Sastri. The judges were chosen only from the Brahmin and Nair castes and the Christian community of Travancore. For the trial of Government servants another court known as the Huzhur court was also established.**
- The Police was reorganised in Travancore during the reign of Maharani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi at the suggestion of Col. John Munro Dewan.**
- Deprived of magisterial and judicial power, the district and village officials now could concentrate their attention on the collection of revenue alone, curtailing their power greatly and making them subject to judicial trial in case of misconduct. The revenue department was cleaned of corruption and revenue collection became smoother and organised.**

Social reforms

- **All males excepting of the Brahmin and Nair castes and a few communities from the Christian and Islamic religions had to pay a certain capitation tax, taxes on festivals, taxes on inheritance of property was abolished.**
- **Travancore contained a large number of Devaswoms or Temple Corporations that held vast areas of land and controlled most of the important and wealthy temples in the country. These corporations had fallen prey to corruption and mismanagement and they next engaged the Dewans attention. More than three hundred of the biggest temples of Travancore were appropriated by the Government under a Devaswom Board and cleared of corruption and mismanagement.**
- **By a Royal Proclamation in 1812, Her Highness Maharani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi, abolished the purchase and sale of all slaves and granted them independence excepting those attached to the soil for agricultural purposes. Syrian Christians were freed from their attachment to temples and castes like the Ezhavas, Kaniyans etc. were given independence from their Lords.**
- **A vaccination department was started in Travancore in 1813 under her regency. Finding orthodox reservations amongst her subjects with regard to vaccination, the Queen first vaccinated herself and other members of the Royal family to reassure her people.**

Change in Dewanship

- **In 1814 Col. J Ohn Munro resigned his Dewanship as it was not a permanent arrangement for the Resident to take that post. In his stead the Judge of the Appeal Court, Devan Padmanabhan was appointed as Dewan. However he soon after died from smallpox. In his place, one of Col. Munro's assistants, Bappu Rao, was appointed as Dewan of Travancore in that same year.**

Family and demise



- **The Maharani was married to a Koil Thampuran, Prince Rajaraja Varma Avargal of the Changanassery Royal Family. From this marriage Gowri Lakshmi Bayi had issue two sons and a daughter. Her daughter was Maharani Gowri Rukmini Bayi born in 1809. Her eldest son was born on 16 April 1813, the famous Maharajah Swathi Thirunal who was a musician and artist and ruled independently from 1829-1846. He married a lady who belonged to the Thiruvattar Ammaveedu family. The Maharani next had a son in 1814, Maharajah Uthram Thirunal who ruled from 1846-1860. The Maharani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi started losing her health after giving birth to Uthram Thirunal and died in 1815. She was succeeded as Regent Maharani by her sister, Gowri Parvati Bayi. Her only daughter, who was now the only female in the matriarchal Travancore Royal Family, Gowri Rukmini Bayi married Rama Varma Koil Thampuran of Thiruvalla Royal Family in 1819 and had seven children, five sons and two daughters. One of these daughters died soon while the other married and had two sons, including Moolam Thirunal Sir Rama Varma. She too died in 1857 after the birth of Moolam Thirunal and so in 1858 two princesses were adopted from the Mavelikara Royal family into Travancore.**

Full Title

- **Her Highness Sri Padmanabha Sevini Vanchi Dharma Vardhini Raja Rajeshwari Maharani Ayilyam Thirunal Gowri Lakshmi Bayi, Attingal Mootha Thampuran, Rani of Travancore.**

Maharani Uthrittathi Thirunal Gowri Parvati Bayi was the Regent of the Indian state of Travancore who succeeded her sister Maharani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi from

1815 till her regency was relinquished in favour of her nephew, Maharajah Swathi Thirunal, in 1829.

Early life

Rani Parvati Bayi was born to Princess Bharani Thirunal of the Travancore Royal Family in 1802, who was the Senior Rani of Attingal (the Maharani's of Travancore were styled as Ranis' of Attingal). When her elder sister Regent Maharani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi died after childbirth in 1815 Gowri Parvati Bayi was only thirteen years of age and being the only female left in the family, besides her deceased sister's little daughter, she became Regent Maharani on behalf of her nephew, the heir, Maharajah Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma. She was on her accession actively counselled by her brother in law, Raja Raja Varma of the Changassery Royal family as well as her husband, Raghava Varma, who belonged to the Royal family of Kilimanoor

Ministerial changes

As soon as the Maharani came to power her first act was to appoint a new Dewan or Prime Minister to her state as Dewan Devan Padmanabhan had died and state affairs were being conducted by his deputy Bappu Rao. In 1815 Sanku Annabi Pillai, a Brahmin, was appointed as Dewan but soon he was found incapable of handling his difficult office and hence within two months he was freed from Dewanship. After ten months following the suggestion of the British Resident, Col. Munro, Raman Menon, a Judge of the Huzhur Court of Travancore was appointed Dewan. However differences of opinion arose between Dewan Raman Menon and the British Resident and hence Raman Menon was removed to an inferior office in 1817, on which he preferred to retire from service entirely. It may be of interest to note that Dewan Raman Menon was the great grandfather of Krishna Menon, the reputed Indian diplomat of the 20th century, and the ancestor of the Vengalil family.

In his stead a deputy known as Reddy Rao was appointed Dewan as he was close to the Resident in September 1817. He successfully reigned as Dewan till the year 1821. In 1819 the British Resident Col. Munro resigned his office and a new Resident Col. McDowell succeeded him as the British Representative in Travancore. He had a capable assistant in Vencatta Rao who managed to make him fall out with the Dewan and in 1821 Vencatta Rao became Dewan of Travancore. He remained Dewan till the year 1830.

Chief acts

Maharani Gowri Parvati Bayi instituted several reforms in her state during her regency on behalf of her nephew. Some of the chief reforms were:

Christian ryots were freed from their services connected with Hindu religious ceremonies. They were also freed from attending to public work on Sundays with regard to their religious customs.

Restrictions put on some of the lower castes of Travancore regarding the wearing of ornaments of gold and silver were removed and they were permitted to adorn themselves as they pleased. Among the higher castes such as the Nairs, for the use of gold ornaments special licenses were to be obtained after paying an Adiyara Panam for the same. This was abolished.

The Maharani passed a proclamation allowing everyone in her kingdom to tile the roofs of their houses. This was an important proclamation in the context of Kerala, seeing that at a time powerful kings like the Zamorin did not even permit their vassal kings, such as the Rajah of Cochin to tile the roofs of their palaces.

Restrictions in terms of usage of certain types of houses were removed. Previously only castes till the Nairs were permitted residences known as Nalukettus, after paying an Adiyara Panam. Buildings known as Ettu Kettus, Panthrandu Kettus etc. were subject to high taxes and required licences. Such taxes and payments were entirely abolished and members of all castes were permitted the usage of these buildings. Similarly the right to travel in palanquins, atop elephants and in carriages was permitted to all who could afford the same.

Coffee cultivation was introduced into Travancore for the first time.

Vaccination was introduced towards the end of the reign of her sister Maharani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi. This was popularised by her sister the Regent Maharani Gowri Parvati Bayi which was a great achievement for her in a state so orthodox as Travancore.

The Maharani permitted Christian Missionary enterprise in Travancore and even donated lands for the construction of churches in her state.

Following the rebellion of Velu Thampi Dalawa the armies of Travancore had been disbanded save for seven hundred men to guard the palaces and for state ceremonies under the supremacy of the British. The Maharani convinced the British Government of Madras to raise it to two thousand one hundred men in 1819.

In 1818 under the regency of the Maharani, Travancore entered into a trade treaty with Ceylon for the supply of Jaffna Tobacco on certain stated terms and prices.

The Maharani relieved the females of her country from their religious obligations of bearing torches during state processions in 1823. This relief to her womenfolk was twenty years before Lord Ashley passed an Act in England relieving women of that country from certain oppressive and degenerating obligations such as working bare chested in coal mines etc.

End of Regency

In the year 1829 Maharajah Swathi Thirunal reached the age of sixteen and became a major. Hence his aunt, the Maharani, decided to relinquish her regency on his behalf and invest him with full powers. Accordingly Maharajah Swathi Thirunal was crowned King in 1829.

Full Title

Her Highness Sri Padmanabha Sevini Vanchi Dharma Vardhini Raja Rajeshwari Maharani Uthrittathi Thirunal Gowri Parvati Bayi, Attingal Mootha Thampuran, Rani of Travancore.

Review of the Maharani

In the words of V.Nagam Aiya, the author of the Travancore State Manual, 1906,

“ Her Highness was an enlightened and thoughtful ruler who illuminated her reign by many humane acts of good government, the memory of which gladdened her last days...she used to refer with pride and satisfaction to her various acts of administration for the amelioration of her people..for many acts of redress of public wrongs had been either carried out or innaugrated during her reign. This was no small achievement for a Travancore queen when we remember that in the early years of reign of Queen Victoria of England, the condition of women in England was far worse than in Travancore. ”

Family

The Maharani Gowri Parvati Bayi was married thrice. Her first husband was Raghava Varma of the Kilimanoor Royal family and after his early death she

married again, her husband's brother. His death in 1824 caused her to marry again but from neither of her three marriages did the queen have any issue. She looked upon her nephews and niece as her own children since after the death of Gowri Lakshmi Bayi it was she who brought them up. She died in 1853.

Gowri Parvati Bayi

[Kulasekhara Dynasty](#)

Born: 1801 Died: 1853

Regnal titles

Preceded by

[Gowri Lakshmi Bayi](#)

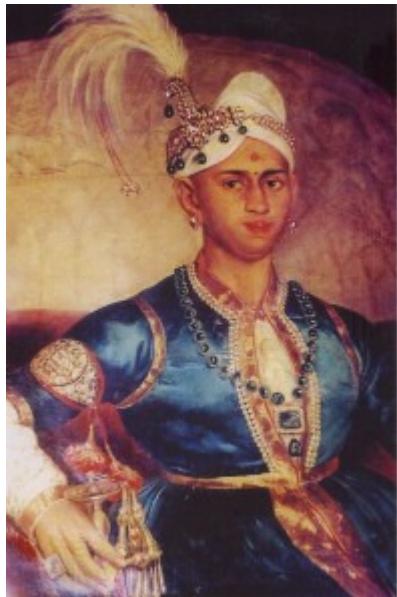
[Maharani Regent of Travancore](#)

1814-1833

Succeeded by

[Swathi Thirunal](#)

Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma



Sri Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma ([Malayalam](#): ശ്രീ സ്വാതി തിരുനാള് രാമ വർമ്മ) : (April 16, 1813 - December 25, 1846) was the Maharaja of the state of Travancore

(ശ്രീ തിരുനാള് രാമ വർമ്മ), in India. He reigned under the regency of his mother Maharani

Gowri Lakshmi Bayi from 1813 till 1815 and henceforth under the regency of his aunt **Maharani Gowri Parvati Bayi** from 1815 till 1829. In 1829 he turned major and assumed full powers of ruler and ruled Travancore till his demise in 1846.

Besides being an able ruler, he was a patron of music and a musician himself. He encouraged both broad systems of Indian music, Hindustani and Carnatic music, though he was essentially a connoisseur of the Carnatic music tradition. He is credited with composing over 400 compositions^[1] in Carnatic music as well as Hindustani music. Some of his favorite compositions are Padmanabha Pahi, Deva Deva, Sarasijanabha and Sree Ramana Vibho. The king was fluent in a number of languages such as Malayalam, Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Kannada,^{[2][3]} Bengali, Tamil, Oriya and English.

The Astronomical Observatory in Thiruvananthapuram, the Museum & Zoo, the Government Press, Trivandrum Public Library (now State Central Library), the Oriental Manuscript Library, etc. were started by Swathi Thirunal. The Maharajah was also an honorary member of the Royal Asiatic Society from 1843.^[4]

Early life

Swathi Thirunal (as he is commonly known) was born into the Kulasekhara dynasty of the Royal family of Travancore state, which is now a part of Kerala State in India) on April 16, 1813. He was the second child of the Regent Queen Gowri Lakshmi Bayi who ruled Travancore during 1811 - 1815, and Rajaraja Varma Koyithampuran of Changanasseri Palace. The famous poet and composer and close relative Iraiayamman Tampi wrote the song Omanathinkalkkitavo nulla komalathamarappuvo (ഓമാനഥിന്കല്ക്കിടവോ നല്ല കോമലാതാമരാപ്പുവോ), perhaps the most famous lullaby in Malayalam, about Swathi Thirunal when he was born. He had an elder sister (Rukmini Bai) and a younger brother (Uthram Thirunal Marthanda Varma). Rani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi died about two months after the birth of her third child. After her death, her younger sister

Gowri Parvati Bayi was in charge of the state and the children. Since Rama Varma was just seventeen months old when his mother died, Gowri Parvati Bayi ruled for fourteen years before Swathi Thirunal took over as the king. When he was just four months old, his mother invited Col. Munro (who was the representative of the British East India Company) and his officials and declared in the Durbar that she was entrusting the British East India Company with the care of her child and expected the Company to co-operate with him in future.

Education

Both his aunt/foster mother, who was well-versed in music, and his father, a Sanskrit scholar, took special care about his education. Col. Munro also is said to have taken interest in his education. He started learning Malayalam and Sanskrit at the age of six and English at the age of seven. The young Prince studied several languages, including Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Hindustani, Telugu, Marathi, Sanskrit, English and Persian. He impressed all his teachers, and even guests from abroad, with his keen understanding of not only languages but also other subjects like geometry. P. Sankunni Menon (A History of Travancore from the Earliest Times, 1878) records an incident when Swathi Thirunal told Col. Welsh, a visiting British officer, that the word geometry and words like hexagon, septagon and so on were derived from Sanskrit.

As a Musical dynamic star

Swathi Thirunal was deeply interested in music right from childhood. He tried to learn the languages in which he found good music. His education in music started with the first lessons from Karamana Subrahmania Bhagavathar and Karamana Padmanabha Bhagavathar. Later, he studied music from his English teacher Subbarao. He continued to learn music by listening to accomplished musicians and practicing himself. This was a period when music and art were thriving in many parts of south India. The triumvirate of Carnatic music, Tyagaraja (1767–1847), Syama Sastri (1762–1827) and Muthuswami Dikshitar (1775–1835), lived and enriched music during this period. Swati Tirunal's palace also was home to many musicians and artistes of the period, including the famous Thanjavur Quartet brothers, Tyagaraja's disciple Kannayya Bhagavathar, Ananthapadmanabha Goswami (a Maharashtrian singer known as Kokilakanthameru swami), Shadkala Govinda Marar, and many others.

Swathi Sangeethotsavam

Prince Rama Varma, the South Indian Classical Musician, is a descendent of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal. He is the organiser for Swathi Sangeethotsavam, a

week long music festival featuring exclusively the compositions of Swathi Thirunal. This unique musical event is conducted every year from 6 to 12 January at Kuthira Malika, Trivandrum. As a Ruler Swathi Thirunal took over the reins of Travancore from his aunt (She was the regent in lieu Swathi Thirunal in his boyhood) at the age of sixteen. He appointed his teacher Subbarao as the chief minister (Diwan). One of his first moves was to shift the government secretariat from Kollam (about seventy five kilometres away) to Thiruvananthapuram. This enabled him to give personal attention to government affairs. He took steps to curb corruption in the government, and told even the Diwan to resign when he heard that the Diwan had acted to favour a particular party in a land dispute. He started an English school at Thiruvananthapuram in 1834, which came to be called the Raja's Government Free School and later became Maharaja's High School and then Maharaja's College. This is now the University College. Later, similar schools were started at many other places. He also implemented reforms in the legal sector, starting Munsif, District and Appellate Courts and modernising laws. He identified one Kandan Menon from Malabar and appointed him as Huzoor Diwan Peshkar to bring about legal reforms. Another of his achievements was to settle many land disputes by carrying out a resurvey of the land, in which also Menon helped him. He also conducted the first census of the state in 1836. As per the census, the population of Travancore was 1,28,068.



Kuthira Malika, Thiruvananthapuram, constructed by Maharajah Swathi Thirunal

Swathi Thirunal was also instrumental in bringing modern medicine to the state. He appointed a European as the palace physician. He was also given the responsibility of providing medical assistance to local people, for which hospitals were started. It is this post that was known as Surgeon General till the formation of Kerala State. He also started an engineering department, which was placed under the command of one Lieutenant Horsley. The Karaimana bridge was built at that time.

Another area where Swathi Thirunal took interest was in astronomy. He wished to compare Western findings with Indian knowledge. For this, he invited one Caldecott, an industrial representative who lived in Alapuzha, who used to fabricate instruments for astronomical observations. Finding that there was much common between western and Indian knowledge about the universe, Swathi Thirunal started an observatory and placed Caldecott in charge. Started in 1837, some of the equipment is still to be seen at the Thiruvananthapuram observatory (now under the Department of Physics, University of Kerala). He is also credited with starting the first government press (the only press at that time was CMS Press in Kottayam), and the museum and zoo in Thiruvananthapuram.

Family



The Elephants of Raja of Travancore, May 1841.

Maharajah Swathi Thirunal was only a child when his mother Maharani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi died and he grew up under the maternal care of his childless aunt, who was the Regent of Travancore on his behalf, Maharani Gowri Parvati Bayi. He had a brother, Uthram Thirunal Marthanda Varma, who succeeded him in 1846 till his demise in 1860. The Maharajah also had a sister, Maharani Gowri Rukmini Bayi, whose children ascended the Travancore musnud consecutively. Her only daughter was the mother of Maharajah Moolam Thirunal Sir Rama Varma.

Swathi Thirunal married Thiruvattar Ammachi Panapillai Amma Srimathi Narayani Pillai Kochamma of the Thiruvattar Ammaveedu family after the demise of his first wife. She was an expert carnatic singer and Veena player. She originally belonged to an ordinary Nair family in Quilon by the name of Aaikutty Veedu. Prior to her marriage with the king she was adopted into the Thiruvattar Ammaveedu along with her mother and siblings (her sister was

married to the Maharajah's brother and successor Uthram Thirunal). From this marriage the Maharajah had a son, **Thiruvattar Chithira Nal Anantha Padmanabhan Chempakaraman Thampi.** In 1843 the Maharajah married **Sundara Lakshmi Ammal**, daughter of a Mudaliar who had migrated to Trivandrum. Lakshmi was a dancer, known better as Sugandhavalli. The Maharajah first adopted her into Vadasseri Ammaveedu, making her an Ammachi and bestowing the title of Thampi on her family members. In 1845 he constructed the Thanjavur Ammaveedu and Sugandhavalli, along with her family members resided here. The Maharajah's second wife, **Thiruvattar Ammachi**, whose sister was married to Uthram Thirunal did not approve of this marriage. Soon after in 1846 the Maharajah died. Legend and folklore has it that Sugandhavalli was banished from Travancore following which the Maharajah died broken hearted. However facts and records prove otherwise.

Sugandhavalli continued to live in Trivandrum at Thanjavur Ammaveedu until her own death in 1856, a full decade after the death of Swathi Thirunal, enjoying all the provisions and privileges she was entitled to as a royal consort. However soon after her death, her late husband's brother and successor, **Maharajah Uthram Thirunal** issued an order to attach the estate and properties that belonged to Thanjavur Ammaveedu on the ground that Sugandhavalli for whom they were made, had died. Sugandhavalli's sister **Sundara Parvathi Pillai Thankachi**, who had been married to Singaravelu Mudaliyar the former Alleppey District Judge, then filed a petition in Madras. The High Court of Madras in 1858 permitted the Travancore Government to attach the properties after compensating the family. Accordingly Rs. 10,000, a princely sum, was given to Sugandhavalli's family and the Thanjavur Ammaveedu taken over by the Travancore Government. The Ganapathi idol worshiped by Sugandhavalli was moved and consecrated at the Palkulangara Temple in Trivandrum. Her sister later died in 1883 (This information is from "Thiruvananthapurathinte Eithihaasam").

Compositions

| Composition | <u>Raga</u> | <u>Tala</u> | Type | Language | <u>Other Info</u> | Audio Links |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------------------|---|-------------|
| <i>dEva dEva kalayAmi tE</i> | <i>mAyA mALava gowLa</i> | | Rupaka | <u>Sanskrit</u> | MS Subbulakshmi ^[6] | |
| <i>glta dhuniku taka dhlm</i> | <i>dhana shRI</i> | Adi | | <i>tillAna bhOjpurl</i> | TS Satyavati ^[7] | |
| <i>jaya jaya padmanAbha murArE</i> | <i>Sarasangi</i> | Adi | | <u>Sanskrit</u> | Mangalampalli Balamurali Krishna ^[8] | |
| <i>kamala nayana</i> | <i>vAgadhlswari</i> | Adi | | <u>Sanskrit</u> | Mangalampalli Balamurali | |

jagadIswara

Krishna^[9]

pAhi shrlpatE

hamsa dhwani Adi

Sanskrit

MS Subbulakshmi^[10]

sArasAkha paripAlaya

mAmayi

pantu varALi

Adi

Sanskrit

MS Subbulakshmi^[11]

•

Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma

Kulasekhara Dynasty

Born: 16 April 1813 **Died:** 25 December 1846

Regnal titles

Preceded by

Gowri Lakshmi Bayi

(as Maharani Regent of
Travancore)

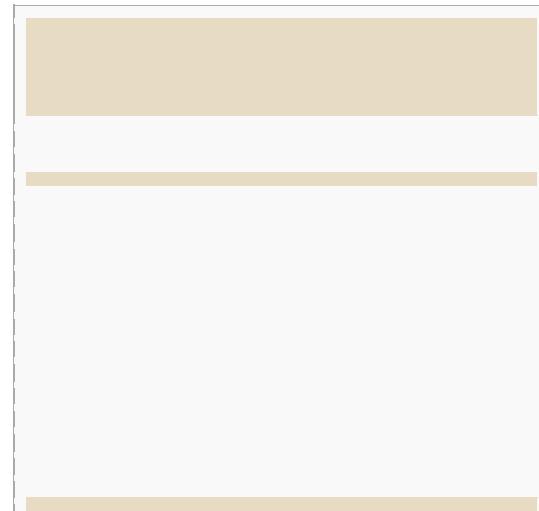
Maharaja of Travancore

1813-1846

Succeeded by

Uthradom Thirunal

Uthradom Thirunal





Sri Padmanabha Dasa Vanchi Pala Uthram Thirunal Marthanda Varma Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharaja Raja Rama Raja Bahadur Shamsher Jung (26 September 1814-18 August 1860) was the Maharajah of Travancore state in southern India, succeeding his elder brother Maharajah Swathi Thirunal in 1846 till his demise in 1860. Known for his progressive rule, he abolished slavery in the kingdom. He was succeeded by his nephew Maharajah Ayilyam Thirunal in 1860. His mother was Her Highness Maharani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi. He was married to Thiruvattar Ammachchi Panapillai Amma Srimathi Madhavi Pillai Kochamma of the Thiruvattar Ammaveedu, who died in 1860, a few months before the Maharajah's death. She was the younger sister of Maharajah Swathi Thirunal's consort. The Maharajah's daughter was married by his nephew and heir Maharajah Ayilyam Thirunal.

The Maharajah also adopted Rani Lakshmi Bayi and Rani Parvathi Bayi in 1857 after the death of his niece to perpetuate the royal line.

Uthradom Thirunal

[**Kulasekhara Dynasty**](#)

Born: 26 September 1814 **Died:** 18 August 1860

Regnal titles

Preceded by
[Swathi Thirunal](#)

[**Maharaja of**](#)
[**Travancore**](#)
1846-1860

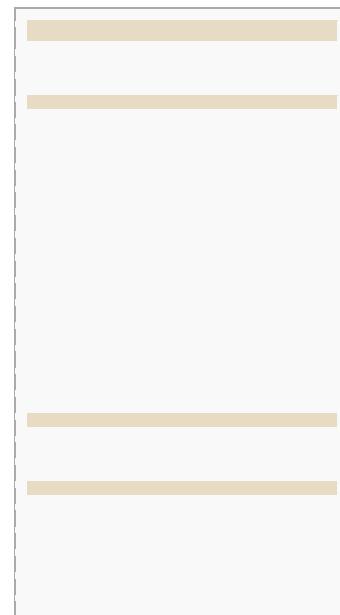
Succeeded by
[Ayilyam Thirunal](#)

Ayilyam Thirunal



Maharajah Ayilyam Thirunal Sir Rama Varma

Maharajah Ayilyam Thirunal Rama Varma (1832–1880) was the ruler of the princely state of Travancore in India from 1860 to 1880. His reign was highly successful with Travancore gaining the appellation of "model state of India". Ayilyam Thirunal was the nephew of Uthram Thirunal and Swathi Thirunal and grandson of the celebrated Gowri Lakshmi Bayi.



Early life

Ayilyam Thirunal was born on the 14th of March, 1832 to H.H. Rani Rukmini Bayi, the only sister of Maharajahs Swathi Thirunal and Uthram Thirunal. In the Travancore Royal Family inheritance and primogeniture was determined by the Marumakkathayam system i.e. through the female line. With the accession of Uthram Thirunal in 1846 and his elder brother's exclusion from the line of succession due to imbecility, Ayilyam Thirunal became the Elaya Rajah or heir apparent of Travancore State. Of the seven children born to Rukmini Bayi, only four, including a daughter, Rani Lakshmi Bayi, survived and the eldest and third son were declared unfit to rule owing to mental incapacity. Ayilyam Thirunal's youngest brother Visakham Thirunal was therefore to be his successor.

Ayilyam Thirunal's early education was provided privately and later T. Madhava Rao was appointed tutor to the Elaya Rajah and his brother in 1848. Madhava Rao eventually rose in service and was appointed by Uthram Thirunal in 1857 as Dewan of Travancore and remained in that capacity during the initial decade of Ayilyam Thirunal's reign, until, owing to personal disaffection, he was retired in 1872. In 1854 Ayilyam Thirunal was married to his uncle's daughter, Panapillai Madhavi Pillai Lakshmi Pillai Kochamma of the Thiruvattar Ammaveedu. His consort however died a few years later. In 1860 Maharajah Uthram Thirunal died and Ayilyam Thirunal ascended the musnud as Maharajah.

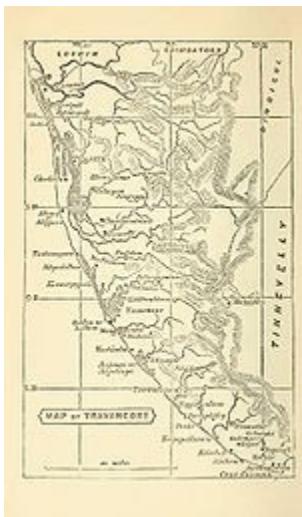
Maharajah of Travancore



Dewan Rajah Sir [T. Madhava Rao](#)

The accession of Ayilyam Thirunal ushered in a new era in Travancore. Assisted by his Dewan T. Madhava Rao, the Maharajah implemented many reforms and changes in Travancore, which were all agreeably beneficial for the state. At the time of his accession, the Travancore Government was struggling with its many debts and mismanaged financial department. Nevertheless, many monopolies, taxes and cessations were abolished by the government. In 1863 the Dewan finally declared that Travancore no longer had any public debt. Gradually salaries of public servants were raised by more than 50% and its efficiency was bettered. A great deal of development in Education, legislation, public works, medicine, vaccination and public health, agriculture etc. was made. Year after year Travancore was commended by the Madras Government. Important proclamations such as the Jenmi-Kudiyan Proclamation of 1867 were made. In 1866 the Maharajah was admitted into the Order of the Star of India while his Dewan was admitted into the Order of the Indian Empire. In

the same year the British Government officially granted the title of Maharajah to Ayilyam Thirunal, who was in formal communications so far addressed only as Rajah. By 1872 Travancore was in a prosperous state with a surplus revenue of 4 million rupees. However by now the relations between the Maharajah and his Dewan, now styled Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao had turned sour and the latter was retired on a lavish pension of Rs. 1000 per mensem. Seshayya Sastri was now appointed Dewan, a position he held until 1877. The new Dewan concentrated on the development of roads and infrastructure in the state. In 1874 the Maharajah's College in Trivandrum started a Law class and other developments in the education department were made. In 1875 the first systematic census of Travancore was taken by the government. in 1877 Seshayya Sastri was retired on a pension of Rs. 500 per mensem. In accepting this liberal pension, the outgoing Dewan said:



Map of Travancore in 1871

“ **In service, Your Highness made me affluent by the grant of a high salary, out of service, Your Highness makes me comfortable with a liberal pension and a generous donation. The bread thus given will not be eaten in ungratefulness or sulky discontent. The brightest chapter in my life is my service under Your Highness. The little name and fame I have acquired is in reality but the light reflected on the servant by an illustrious master, to serve whom, even for a brief period, has been my pride and privilege** ”

Seshayya Sastri was later admitted into the Order of the Star of India. He was succeeded by Dewan Nanoo Pillai, a native of Travancore. During his premiership which lasted until 1880 irrigation was expanded in Travancore, museums and other institutions were established, surveys of land and

agriculture etc. were taken and several other legislative and judicial reforms were passed. With the death of Ayilyam Thirunal in 1880, Nanoo Pillay was retired by his successor, Visakham Thirunal. Prior to this Ayilyam Thirunal had been awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal and admitted into the Order of the Indian Empire.

Personal life



Ayilyam Thirunal Bala Rama Varma II, Travancore (1832-1880)

After the death of Thiruvattar Ammachi, his first consort, the Maharajah married again in 1862 Kalyanikutty Amma of Mathrappillil, a prestigious family of Nadavarambu, Irinjalakuda, Thrissur in the neighboring state of Cochin. She was born in 1839 as the only daughter of Nadavarambathu Kunju Krishna Menon, a former Dewan of Cochin and his wife Mathrappillil Lakshmi Amma. She was first married to Punnakkal Easwara Pillai Vicharippukar. Kalyanikutty Amma was a woman of renowned beauty and the first commission given to Raja Ravi Varma by Ayilyam Thirunal was for her portrait. In 1865 after their marriage, she was adopted by the Maharajah into the Nagercoil Ammaveedu after which her full title became Nagercoil Ammachi Panapillai Amma Srimathi Lakshmi Pillai Kalyanikutty Pillai Kochamma. Nagercoil Ammachi was also a scholar of Sanskrit and a poet in her own right, having authored Rasa Krida, Satya Panchakam, Pativrata Panchakam, Ambarishacharitram and other works. She died in 1909. The Maharajah had no children of his own from either marriage. However along with his consort he adopted a niece and nephew of hers, namely Panapillai Ananthalakshmi Pillai Kochamma, who married in 1879 the Maharajah's nephew Moolam Thirunal and a son Nagercoil Achuthan Thampi. The

Maharajah was also a poet having authored the Meenaketanacharitram and Bhasha Sakuntalam.

The first decade of the Maharajah's reign was happy and peaceful but several problems arose after the dismissal of Dewan Madhava Rao. The Maharajah's relationship with Kerala Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran, the consort of his niece, the Rani Lakshmi Bayi (who was adopted in 1857 soon after the Maharajah's sister of the same name died giving birth to Moolam Thirunal) turned sour and subsequently he was imprisoned in Haripad in 1875 where he stayed until his release in 1880 after the Maharajah's death. Ayilyam Thirunal's own brother, Visakham Thirunal was also on bad terms with him until his death. However in the last week before his demise, the brothers reconciled. Maharajah Ayilyam Thirunal died on the 30th of May 1880. The Gazette of Fort St. George of the British Government makes the following comment on the Maharajah's reign:

“ His Highness ascended the musnud on the 19th of October 1860 and his reign has been marked by the development of wise and enlightened principles of administration which have placed Travancore in the first rank of Native States

”

Titles

1832-1847: Prince Balarama Ayilyam Thirunal

1847-1860: Maharajkumar Ayilyam Thirunal Balarama Varma, Elaya Raja of Travancore

1860-1866: His Highness Sri Padmanabha Dasa Vanchi Pala Ayilyam Thirunal Rama Varma, Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharajah Raja Rama Raja Bahadur, Shamsher Jang, Raja of Travancore

1866-1877: His Highness Sri Padmanabha Dasa Vanchi Pala Ayilyam Thirunal Sir Rama Varma Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharajah Raja Rama Raja Bahadur, Shamsher Jang, Maharaja of Travancore, GCSI

1877-1878: His Highness Sri Padmanabha Dasa Vanchi Pala Ayilyam Thirunal Sir Rama Varma Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharajah Raja Rama Raja Bahadur, Shamsher Jang, Maharaja of Travancore, GCSI, KIH

1878-1880: His Highness Sri Padmanabha Dasa Vanchi Pala Ayilyam Thirunal Sir Rama Varma Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharajah Raja Rama Raja Bahadur, Shamsher Jang, Maharaja of Travancore, GCSI, CIE, KIH

Honours

Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Star of India (GCSI)-1866

Prince of Wales Gold Medal-1875

Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal (KIH)-1877

Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire (CIE)-1878

Ayilyam Thirunal

[Kulasekhara Dynasty](#)

Born: 14 March 1832 **Died:** 30 May 1880

Regnal titles

Preceded by

[Uthradom Marthanda](#)

[Maharaja of Travancore](#)

1860-1880

Succeeded by

[Visakham Thirunal](#)

Visakham Thirunal





Maharajah Visakham Thirunal Rama Varma of [Travancore](#)

His Highness Sir Sri Visakham Thirunal Rama Varma V GCSI, FRGS, FRAS (19 May 1837-4 August 1885) was the Maharaja of the erstwhile Indian kingdom of Travancore from 1880-1885 AD. He succeeded his elder brother Maharajah Ayilyam Thirunal to the throne of Travancore.

Early life

Vishakham Thirunal Rama varma was born on the 19th of May 1837 to Rani Gowri Rukmini Bayi and her husband Punartham Thirunal Rama Varma Koil Thampuran of the Royal Family of Thiruvalla. His mother died when he was barely two months of age leaving him and his elder siblings to the care of their father. His Highness was grandson to Maharani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi and nephew of Maharajah Swathi Thirunal.

As a prince he received his early education from his father, Rama Varma. This was basic training in vernacular Malayalam language and Sanskrit which were essentials for members of the Royal family. At the age of nine he started his English education under Subba Row, who later became Dewan of Travancore. The prince took a keen interest in English composition and his first work, *Horrors of war and benefits of peace*, was well acknowledged. Some of his compositions were also published in "Madras Athenaeum". He also wrote in "The Indian Statesman" and the "Calcutta Review".



Visakham Thirunal as First Prince with his brother Ayilyam Thirunal and the Dewan Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao

In 1861 the prince visited Madras and met with the Governor, Sir William Denison, upon whom he made such a favorable impression that the Governor remarked that "He is by far the most intelligent Native I have seen; and if his brother is like him, the prospects of Travancore are very favorable." The prince was soon appointed a Fellow of the Madras University, a rare honour conferred on Natives in those days. While he was still a prince he was also offered a seat in the Viceroy of India's Legislative Council which he, however, declined owing to ill health. He had a special aptitude for botany and agriculture.

He was an erudite scholar and had in his court learned brahmins, known as Tharka Sastry and used to take their advice in settling cases that were referred to him. There is a story about his asking a question on Mahabaratha and only two in the group of Tharka Sastrys answered. One was Gopala Iyer and according to his request his son, K G Seah Iyer, was made a Munsiff who later became a famous Judge. The other was Gopala Sastry at whose request the Maharajah took up with the British Resident to get the son of Gopala Sastry appointed the Sub-Registrar at Tiruchendur.

Both Gopala Iyer (Kadayam) and Gopala Sastry (Mela Cheval) were Vadadesa Vadama Brshmins from Tirunelveli.

Chief Compositions

The Horrors of War and Benefits of Peace

A Political Sketch of Travancore, Madras Athenaeum

Lectures on "Human Greatness", "The relation between nature and art", "Our Morals" and "Our Industrial Status" etc.

A Native Statesman, Calcutta Review

Observations on Higher Education

Accession



Painting by Raja Ravi Varma depicting Richard Temple-Grenville, 3rd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos being greeted by Visakham Thirunal, with Ayilyam Thirunal of Travancore looking on, during Buckingham's visit to Trivandrum, Travancore in early 1880.

The Maharajah's elder brother, Ayilyam Thirunal, died after ruling Travancore for twenty years from 1860 to 1880. As per the Marumakkathayam law, Prince Visakham Thirunal Rama Varma succeeded to the Travancore throne in 1880. He introduced a number of reforms including changes in the education system, police department, justice and judiciary etc. He furthered the cultivation of Tapioca which became so popular and commonly available that it came to be known as the poor man's meal in Travancore.

Family and Demise

The Maharajah fell ill towards the end of July in 1885 at the age of 48 and died on the 4th of August 1885. His Highness was married in 1859 to a noblewoman of the Arumana Ammaveedu of Trivandrum with which family more than one of his ancestors had been related through marriage, Arumana Ammachi Panapillai Amma Srimathi Lakshmi Pillai Kochamma (educated privately and in English by the Church of England Zenana Mission in Trivandrum since 1865. Within the royalty and nobility of Trivandrum, she was the first lady to commence English Education), descendant of Maharajah Balarama Varma and Dharma Raja. The Maharajah chose his own consort, causing displeasure to his uncle and the then Maharajah, Uthram Thirunal. From this marriage the Maharajah had issue four children. His eldest and only son, Sri Narayanan Thampi, who started the first bus services in Travancore (Trivandrum-Nagercoil route), was born in 1865.



Arumana Ammachai Panapillai Amma Srimathi Lakshmi Pillai Kochamma, wife of Visakham Thirunal Maharajah of Travancore

He married a daughter of Irayimman Thampi who was also of royal descent. In 1873 the Maharajah and his wife had their eldest daughter Bhagavati Pillai Kochamma who married Sri Rajaraja Varma Avargal of the Mavelikara Royal family. Their next daughter was born in 1876, Rukmini Pillai Kochamma who was married by Sri Kerala Varma Thirumulpad. The Maharajah's youngest daughter, Bhageerathi Pillai Kochamma was born in 1877 and was married to Sri Rama Varma of the Royal Family of Poonjar. The Thali Kettu Kalyanam of the Maharajah's daughters was conducted on the 18th of May 1883 in a grand public ceremony with the above mentioned husbands, as recorded by the French Ambassador in the Travancore Court.

Successors

Under the Marumakkathayam law of matriarchy the Maharajah was succeeded not by his own children but by those of his sisters. The Maharajah had only one sister and was succeeded by her younger son, Maharajah Moolam Thirunal Sir Rama Varma GCSI, GCIE. This King reigned from 1885 till his demise in 1924. His nephew, Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma was the last independent Maharajah of Travancore before ceding his state to India in 1947.

Official full name

Officially he was also known with his full name, style and honours: His Highness Sri Padmanabha Dasa Vanchi Pala Visakham Thirunal Sir Rama Varma Kulasekhara Kiritapathi Mamney Sultan Maharajah Raja Ramaraja Bahadur Shamsher Jang, GCSI, Kaiser-i-Hind, FRGS, FRAS.

Visakham Thirunal

Kulasekhara Dynasty

Born: 19 May 1837 **Died:** 4 August 1885

Regnal titles

Preceded by
[Ayilyam Thirunal](#)

[Maharaja of](#)
[Travancore](#)
1880-1885

Succeeded by
[Moolam Thirunal](#)

Moolam Thirunal

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Portrait of Sri Moolam Thirunal by Artist Shivarama Pillai

His Highness 'Padmanabha Dasa' Sree Moolam Thirunal, Sir Rama Varma Maharajah of Travancore GCSI, GCIE, MRAS was the ruling Maharajah of the Indian state of Travancore between 1885 and 1924, succeeding his uncle Maharajah Visakham Thirunal (1880–1885).

Early life and education

Moolam Thirunal Rama Varma was born on the 25th of September 1857 to Prince Raja Raja Varma of the Changanassery Royal Family and Maharani Lakshmi Bayi of Travancore, niece of the illustrious Swathi Thirunal Maharajah. He lost his mother when he was only a few days old. The Maharajah had an elder brother, Hastham Thirunal. After the usual vernacular Malayalam studies the two princes were placed under the tutorship of Annaji Rao B.A. and later under Raghunath Rao B.A. at a special country house built for the purpose. Hastham Thirunal soon had to stop his studies owing to ill health and so Rama Varma remained the only pupil under the tutor. He was taught subjects such as History, Geography of the world, Arithmetic and Grammar initially. His great grandmother was the illustrious Maharani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi of Travancore.

Chief Reforms



Maharaja Moolam Thirunal Rama Varma, portrait by [Raja Ravi Varma](#).

The Travancore Legislative Council was established under a Regulation in the year 1888, three years after Rama Varma became the Maharajah succeeding his uncle Visakham Thirunal who died in 1885. This was the first Legislative Council for a Native state in the whole of India. It was later succeeded by Sree Moolam Popular Assembly the first legislature in Indian history to have elected members.

In 1886 a Proclamation was passed relieving the people from payment of penalties on documents executed on unstamped government cadjan leaves (Paper was not in common use yet in Travancore). In 1887 the penalty on non payment of stamp duty was reduced as it was found to be a huge burden. Likewise in the same year another Royal Proclamation was passed relinquishing the right of the Government in property left by a person under the Marumakkathayam matrilineal system of inheritance when a person died without heirs. Likewise under the then system, when a tenant of a Jenmi or landlord died heirless instead of the land passing in entirety to the landlord, it passed with sovereign right to the Government who auctioned it later. This was abolished.

In 1888 the Anchal System of post was improved and postage stamps of new values were introduced. His reign also saw major changes in the transport sector in Travancore. The first bus services of the native state were started in 1908 in two routes starting from Trivandrum. The first bus on the Trivandrum-Nagarcoil route was started by Arumana Narayanan Thampi, son of Visakham Thirunal, and the first bus on the Trivandrum-Kollam route was started by Joseph Augusti Kayalackakom, a textile merchant of Trivandrum. Ten years later in 1918, the first train reached Trivandrum as the Chenkotta-Quilon railway line was extended to Trivandrum.

Several other reforms were also brought in by Moolam Thirunal Rama Varma in the fields of education, medicine, law and order, civil service etc. Sanitary Departments were opened and female education progressed. Changes were brought in the management of prisons and the Public Works department was reorganised. Life Insurance system was introduced by the Maharajah. For these, the British recognised him by granting him a personal salute of 21 guns in 1898.

Dewans

All through the reign of Maharajah Sir Rama Varma he was assisted by able men as Dewans or Prime Ministers. These most illustrious personalities included:

Dewan V. Ramiengar (1880-1887)

Dewan T. Rama Rao (1887–1892)

Dewan S. Shungrasoobyer C.I.E. (1892–1898)

Dewan K. Krishnaswamy Rao (1898–1904)

Dewan V. P. Madhava Rao (1904–1906)

Dewan P. Rajagopalachari (1904–1914)

Dewan M. Krishnan Nair (1914–1920)

Family and Demise



Sree Moolam Thirunal Maharaja of Travancore



Nagercoil Ammachi, the First Consort of the Maharajah in 1879 as painted by RM Thampi



HH Sethu Lakshmi Bayi and HH Sethu Parvathi Bayi, adopted nieces of the Maharajah, with HH Rani Lakshmi Bayi in 1900

Since the Royal House of Travancore followed the Nair Marumakkathayam system of matriarchal inheritance the presence of females was very essential in the family. Since the family had failed to exist in the female line, on the suggestion of Rani Lakshmi Bayi, two princesses including the Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi were adopted from the cousin Royal family at Mavelikara. Sethu Lakshmi Bayi succeeded Moolam Thirunal Sir Rama Varma in 1924 as Regent till 1931, when her nephew Maharajah Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma took over as Maharajah and became the last Maharajah of independent Travancore.

Maharajah Sir Rama Varma married twice, both noblewomen of the Thampi clan of the Nairs as tradition. His first wife (married in 1880) was Nagercoil Ammachi Panapillai Amma Srimathi Kunjulakshmi Pillai Anantha Lakshmi Pillai Kochamma, of the Nagercoil Ammaveedu Family, whose aunt was the consort of Ayilyam Thirunal. She died prior to the Maharajah's accession to the throne in 1882 giving birth to an only son, Nagercoil Sri Narayanan Chempakarainan Thampi, who remained aide de camp to his father till his death. Following this the Maharajah remained single for more than a decade. The Maharajah's second wife was Vadasseri Ammachi Panapillai Amma Srimathi Lakshmi Pillai Karthyayani Pillai Kochamma, of the Vadasseri Ammaveedu family.

She originally belonged to the Kaipally family of Palkulangara but was adopted before marriage to the Maharajah into the Vadasseri Ammaveedu in 1899. She was born to Krishnan Nair (manager of Nagercoil Ammaveedu) and Lakshmi Amma. She was the sister of play writ and author, Vadasseri Krishnan Thampi, who also was the Principal(1917 to 1934) of Sanskrit College in Trivandrum. Her other two sisters were Kalyani Pillai Kochamma and Bhageerathi Pillai Kochamma. She was first married to T.Sankaran Thampi, Palace Manager, from which marriage she had a son, V. Sri Velayudhan Thampi in 1898. From her marriage to the Maharajah she had a daughter, Vadasseri Shrimathi Kartyayani Pillai Bhagavathi Pillai Kochamma, K.I.H. Gold Medal (1924) in June 1901. Her elder son was also adopted by Moolam Thirunal (This was not the first instance of a Maharajah espousing an already married woman. Moolam Thirunal's uncle Ayilyam Thirunal's consort was also already married before she became royal consort in 1862). Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer writes about the Maharajah's consort in "Progress of Travancore Under HH Sree Moolam Thirunal":

“ ..Katyayani Pilla Kochamma by birth belongs to a very ancient and highly respected Nayar family in Trivandrum and is a lady of remarkable culture and attainments, a gifted pianist, musician and artist. Her many lovable and ennobling qualities have won for her a warm place in the hearts of His Highness' subjects.. ”

Official full name

Officially he was also known with his full name, style and honours: Colonel His Highness Sri Patmanabha Dasa Vanchipala Moolam Thirunal Sir Rama Varma Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharajah Raja Ramaraja Bahadur Shamsher Jang, GCSI, GCIE, MRAS.

Moolam Thirunal

Kulasekhara Dynasty

Born: 25 September 1857 **Died:** 7 March 1924

Regnal titles

Preceded by [Maharaja of Travancore](#) Succeeded by
[Visakham Thirunal](#) 1885-1924 [Chithira Thirunal](#)

Sethu Lakshmi Bayi



 Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi (1924)

Maharani Pooradam Thirunal Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, CI (1895 – 1985) was the ruler of Travancore as regent for her nephew, Chithira Tirunal from 1924 until late 1931. She is known for continuing the progressive tradition of the Travancore rulers preceding her with many social and economic reforms.

Early life



Ayilyam Nal Mahaprabha of Mavelikara, Sethu Lakshmi Bayi's mother with her elder brother R. Marthanda Varma as a child, in a Raja Ravi Varma painting

Sethu Lakshmi Bayi was born on the 19th of November 1895 to Ayilyam Nal Mahaprabha Thaimpuratti of the Utsavamadhom Palace in Mavelikara. Her mother belonged to a branch of the Kolathunad Royal Family that had settled in Travancore towards the end of the 18th century and was the daughter of the celebrated artist Raja Ravi Varma. Her father Kerala Varma Koil Thampuran was a nephew of her grandfather from Kilimanoor palace. The Mavelikara family was closely associated with the Travancore Royal Family as Mahaprabha's direct aunts, Lakshmi Bayi and Parvathi Bayi had been adopted and installed as the Ranimis of Travancore in 1858. This adoption, which was the 6th in the Travancore House, was without results as the Senior Rani Lakshmi Bayi, who was married to Kerala Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran was childless while the Junior Rani Parvathi Bayi had only sons. In the prevalent matrilineal system of inheritance known as Marumakkathayam, the presence of females to continue the line and dynasty was crucial. With the death of the Junior Rani in 1893, followed by that of the eldest of her three sons in 1895 the royal family came to consist solely of Maharajah Moolam Thirunal, Rani Lakshmi Bayi and her two nephews. The Rani now looked upon her nieces, Mahaprabha and Kochukunji of Mavelikara, to bring forth females who could subsequently be adopted into the royal family. The Rani, accompanied by her nieces, went on a pilgrimage to Rameswaram (Sethusamudram) and performed several religious ceremonies there in early 1895. Within months of their return, news reached her that Mahaprabha had conceived. Subsequently a daughter was born to her. Since her birth was believed to be a direct result of the Rani's pilgrimage to Sethusamudram, the child was named Sethu Lakshmi Bayi. The next year in 1896 Kochukunji gave birth to a daughter who was similarly named Sethu Parvathi Bayi.



Her Highness Rani Lakshmi Bayi of Travancore

In 1900 Rani Lakshmi Bayi formally petitioned Maharajah Moolam Thirunal that time had come for an adoption to perpetuate the ruling line and hence the two children were adopted. The adoption itself was met with some opposition from other branches of the Kolathunad family who nominated females from their families as also objections from the First Prince Chathayam Thirunal Rama Varma, but these were overcome and Sethu Lakshmi Bayi was adopted into the Travancore Royal Family as Junior Rani as Sethu Parvathi Bayi was First Princess.

Senior Rani

Within a year of the adoption in 1900 the two princes, Chathayam Thirunal and Aswathy Thirunal died followed by Rani Lakshmi Bayi herself in 1901. Thus at the age of six Sethu Lakshmi Bayi succeeded her as Senior Rani of Attingal and Travancore while Sethu Parvathi Bayi became Junior Rani. Kerala Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran was appointed the guardian of the Ranis and tutors were appointed to teach them. In 1906 when she was still ten years old the Senior Rani was married to Sri Rama Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran, a grandnephew of her guardian who belonged to the royal house of Haripad. Four years later in 1910 the marriage was consummated and the couple started living together, before which they were allowed to see each other only briefly for an hour every day. Meanwhile, after her adoption and subsequent separation from her family she was permitted to meet her relations only after 6 month intervals and this separation caused her to grow closer to her consort.



Picture of HH Sethu Lakshmi Bayi and her sister Sethu Parvati Bayi as children in 1900 with Rani Lakshmi Bayi

In 1910 she was found to be pregnant but suffered a miscarriage. In 1912 having passed her minority the Maharajah granted her the rights to assume control of the Sreepadom Estate which consisted of revenues from Attingal and

large landed properties traditionally held by the Senior Rani. Meanwhile the Junior Rani gave birth to her eldest son Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma, the last ruling Maharajah of Travancore. He was on birth proclaimed heir apparent to Moolam Thirunal and this greatly changed the position of the Junior Rani whose status was always thus far below that of the Senior Rani. The Junior Rani was granted a separate palace and establishment after her demand that the Sreepadom be granted to her could not be met. Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, in the meantime, it was found, was unable to conceive and bear a child. Gradually the relations between the two Ranis grew distant. The Rani's chief counsellor after the death of her guardian in 1913 was her consort. The Maharajah objected to this and took a further disaffection to the Senior Rani on her refusal to entertain his principal favorite, a certain Sankaran Thampi, who was his consort Vadasseri Aimmachi's first husband, and later, on her espousal by the Maharajah, married her sister. Thus he was closely related to the Maharajah and was further influential as the Comptroller of the Palace. In addition, her inability to bear an heir further strained her relations with the Maharajah, to whom the principal objective of the 1900 adoption was to ensure the continuation of the dynasty. The Senior Rani was increasingly confined to Trivandrum by the Maharajah and her meetings with her family members were further curtailed. At the same time the Junior Rani was allowed adequate liberty as she had borne two more children namely Karthika Thirunal Lakshmi Bayi in 1916 and Uthradom Thirunal Marthanda Varma in 1922. Finally in 1923 Sethu Lakshmi Bayi became pregnant and gave birth to her elder daughter, Uthram Thirunal Lalithamba Bayi.

Maharani Regent of Travancore

“ No one who met her once could ever forget her. She stands as a shining example to womanhood as a great queen and a great woman - Lord Mountbatten on the Maharani ”

In 1924 while on a sojourn in Madurai, her first trip outside Travancore, the Senior Rani received news that Moolam Thirunal was critical due to septicemia. The Maharajah died after her return leaving behind the 12 year old Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma as heir to the throne. Since the boy Maharajah was still a minor it was decided that the Senior Rani should assume power and be Regent ruler until he came of age in 1930. Accordingly Sethu Lakshmi Bayi was proclaimed Maharani Regent of Travancore and commenced the regency in September 1924. Soon after this the Junior Maharani Sethu Parvathi Bayi represented to the Paramount Power that as she was the mother of the Maharajah, the regency should belong to her. However the Senior Maharani sent a clarification to the Government of India that under the Marumakkathayam system in the event of the minority of a male member, the Senior Rani, irrespective of her relation to the Maharajah, was by inherent right, to be the interim ruler. In fact when the regency was

proclaimed, the title of the Senior Rani was read out as "...Rani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi Maharajah..." to imply that she reigned in her own right as Head of the royal house and not as wife or mother of a Maharajah.

The relations between the Junior and Senior Maharanis were further strained during the Regency. Often attempts were made to replace the Maharani's regency by establishing a Regency Council. However none of these propositions were accepted. In 1929 the Junior Maharani once again complained to the Viceroy regarding the regency but the same year Sethu Lakshmi Bayi was decorated with the Order of the Crown of India.

The Regency

The regency had opened amidst many troubles including a Satyagraha at Vaikom. Soon after in 1925 the Maharani was visited by Mahatma Gandhi. Their meeting resulted in a royal proclamation by which all the public roads and streets in Travancore were thrown open to all Hindus irrespective of caste. Mahatma Gandhi called it a "bedrock of freedom" in his Young India (26 March 1925) magazine while describing the Maharani thus:

“ My visit to Her Highness was an agreeable surprise for me. Instead of being ushered into the presence of an over decorated woman sporting diamond pendants and necklaces, I found myself in the presence of a modest young woman who relied not upon jewels or gaudy dresses for beauty but on her own naturally well formed features and exactness of manners. Her room was as plainly furnished as she was dressed. Her severe simplicity became an object of my envy. She seemed to me an object lesson for many a prince and many a millionaire whose loud ornamentation, ugly looking diamonds, rings and studs and still more loud and almost vulgar furniture offend the taste and present a terrible and sad contrast between them and the masses from whom they derive their wealth.

”



Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi and Rama Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran, with their daughters, Princesses Uthram Thirunal Lalithamba Bayi and Karthika Thirunal Indira Bayi

The regency was marked by many social reforms in Travancore. In 1925 less than a year after she assumed power, animal sacrifice was banned in Travancore. In 1926 the Maharani abolished the Devadasi system in temples. She broke an orthodox tradition of appointing upper-caste Brahmins and Nairs as Dewans and appointed M.E. Watts, a Travancore Anglo Indian Christian as her Dewan in 1925. Amendments were brought about in the same year in the Travancore Nayar Act pertaining to the Marumakkathayam system of inheritance and family which was being found more and more unsuitable in modern times, and eventually in 1928 the system was altogether done away with, introducing patrilineal nuclear family system in Travancore. Also a law was passed in 1925 fostering and developing local self government in rural areas in the form of Panchayats. The Panchayats even held the power to act as juries in small and petty civil cases. In 1926 the Maharani passed a Newspaper Regulation to curb the misuse of press which became a controversial topic as it curbed many rights of the press. Meanwhile the College for Women in Travancore was raised to First Grade by the Maharani Regent and the Scouts movement was given impetus. The Medical Department was bettered and modernized so as to provide better services. The Maharani also appointed the first female doctor in Travancore as Durbar Physician and head of the Medical Department. In 1928 a Central Road Board was established and several new highways and roads were constructed across Travancore. The Quilon Ernakulam Railway was completed and Telephone services were thrown open for the public. In 1929 Trivandrum was lighted with electricity for the first time. The Maharani also began work on the establishment of a Travancore University, which was accomplished by Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma

later. By the end of the regency, the Maharani was spending nearly 1/5 of the state's revenue on the Education Department.

Meanwhile owing to several complaints from the Junior Maharani pertaining to the Regent's refusal to permit her complete control over the Maharajah's Civil List funds, once again attempts were made to replace the Maharani's rule with a Regency Council. However, the Viceroy being satisfied with the regency of the Senior Maharani, did not permit any such changes. Amidst all this, in 1929 came an episode of Black Magic. The Maharani and the British resident received intelligence that secret ceremonies, involving animal sacrifice, were being performed in the Kowdiar Palace under the supervision of the Junior Maharani's brothers. The three brothers and the Junior Maharani's mother were thereafter asked by the Resident to leave the Palace and to seek prior permission from him before any further interaction with the Maharajah or Junior Maharani. Following this episode the Resident decided it would be prudent to send the Maharajah to Mysore for administrative training, without the Junior Maharani accompanying him. However by personally applying to the Viceroy the Junior Maharani was permitted to reside close to her son in Bangalore. Meanwhile the Travancore Government began work on developing Cochin Harbor and a special Banking Enquiry Committee was set up to look into providing rural credit facilities. In 1929 the Maharani was informed that the Maharajah would not accede to full powers on his 18th birthday in November 1930, but when he turned 19 and a half in May 1932. Thus the regency was extended for a period. However by mid 1931 it was decided that the accession should take place after the Maharajah's 19th birthday. Thus accordingly in November 1931, after almost 8 years the regency of Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi terminated and Chithira Thirunal BalaRama Varma was proclaimed ruler of Travancore.

During the regency the Senior Maharani had been drawing Rs. 200,000/- per annum for expenses. The revenues of Travancore had risen to more than Rs. 250,00,000/- during this period. Since the Senior and Junior Maharanis were on bad terms with each other, to protect her interests Sethu Lakshmi Bayi applied to the Viceroy to allow her to retain her allowance and all the dignities and privileges that she had enjoyed as Maharani Regent. However these were not met and the Maharani was retired on an pension of Rs. 75,000/- per annum, given by the Maharajah who had full rights to withdraw this allowance as well.

After the Regency

After the regency the Maharani retired from active involvement in the affairs to the state. She continued to look after affairs of the Sreepadom estate for sometime after which in 1939 the Maharajah assumed control of the estate and placed it in a trust from which all the female members of the royal family would receive allowances. Thus the traditional holdings of Sethu Lakshmi Bayi as Senior Rani of Attingal were taken away. Complaints to the Viceroy were

met with no benefit to her. Similarly the Maharajah initiated a move to secure the Maharani's summer estate at Peermade which however did not succeed due to the timely intervention of the Resident. In 1935 and 1937 respectively the Maharani received the King George V Silver Jubilee Medal and the King George VI Coronation Medal respectively. Around this time all the official papers and records of the Travancore Government pertaining to the regency were destroyed in a mysterious fire.

The Maharani spent only a few months at her palace in Trivandrum (Satelmond Palace). She preferred otherwise to reside at her "country residence" on the banks of the Vellayani lake, Lalindloch Palace. The monsoons were spent at Halcyon Castle on the beach at Kovalam and for the summers she retired to her estate in Peermade. Her husband also owned a villa at Pothencode where the family lived sometimes.

The Maharani thus spent her time until 1947 in Travancore with her husband and two daughters. Her second daughter, Karthika Thirunal Indira Bayi was born in 1926. In 1936 the Maharani was informed that her allowance would be withheld as she was failing to make courtesy calls on the Maharajah from time to time. The Maharani replied that as the eldest member in the royal family, it was her nephew, the Maharajah who should be calling on her and not the other way round, yet she conceded to do as she was asked to. She was asked to return to Satelmond Palace in Trivandrum which was under the control of the Maharajah. In 1938 her elder daughter Princess Lalithamba Bayi was married to Sri. Kerala Varma Avargal of Kilimanoor. In 1940 her eldest granddaughter, Bharani Thirunal Rukmini Bayi (Rukmini Varma) was born. Later in 1945 her younger daughter Princess Indira Bayi was married to a member of the Haripad family who, however, died in 1949. Thereafter in 1952 she was married to Kerala Varma of Kilimanoor, a cousin of her brother in law.



Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi and Rama Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran in Bangalore

After Independence

After Independence in 1947 and the creation of Travancore-Cochin in 1949, Lalithamba Bayi moved away to Bangalore and settled there with her children. In the early 1950s even Indira Bayi settled in Madras and the Maharani was alone in Trivandrum. Slowly she started disposing the many properties and palaces she privately owned and by the late 1950s was greatly lonely and contemplating moving to Bangalore to be with her daughter and grandchildren. This was hastened in 1957 by her servants in the Palace forming a Union and creating problems. While it was strictly controlled and put down initially, it resurfaced in 1958 and the servants went on strike. About this time the Maharani suffered a mild heart attack as well. Thereafter it was decided that she should stay with her family members in Bangalore. Thus in 1958 the Maharani arrived in Madras after leaving Trivandrum hastily, and by early 1959 moved to Bangalore where she constructed a bungalow for herself close to her daughter's house and took up residence there. She never came back to Travancore.

The Maharani lived in Bangalore for more than 25 years. Her consort, the Valiya Koil Thampuran, occasionally visited Kerala where he had his own properties and estates. In 1971 the Government of India abolished the Privy Purse in India given to former rulers and their families and thus the Maharani stopped receiving her allowances. However after a prolonged legal battle, a few years before her death, the pension granted her after the regency was reinstated. Since many years she had been bedridden and ill in Bangalore and in February, 1985 the Maharani died in Bangalore. She was at that time the last surviving member in the Order of the Crown of India. Prominent among her descendants are artists Rukmini Varma and Jay Varma, writers Shreekumar Varma and Dr. Lakshmi Raghunandan. The Malayala Manorama describes the reign of Sethu Lakshmi Bayi as follows:



Lalithamba Bayi (1923-2008), elder daughter of Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi

“ The reign of Setu Lakshmi Bayi was the Golden Age of Travancore. At the time these words echoed through the land: "When the Rani of

”

"Vanchi rules, there is everlasting Thiru Onam in Vanchinadu"

Every year the Maharani Setu Lakshmi Bayi Memorial lecture is held in Trivandrum. In 1995, on her 100th birth anniversary, her biography At the Turn of the Tide was published by the Maharani Setu Lakshmi Bayi Memorial Charitable Trust, Bangalore.

Full Title

As Senior Maharani of Travancore, Sethu Lakshmi Bayi's full title was: Her Highness Sree Padmanabha Sevini Vanchi Dharma Vardhini Raja Rajeshwari Rani Pooradam Thirunal Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, Attingal Mootha Thampuran, Companion of the Imperial Order of the Crown of India, Maharani of Travancore

Chithira Thirunal



Maharaja Chithira Thirunal of Travancore, wearing the mantle of a Knight Grand Commander of **Chithira Thirunal, Maharaja of Travancore (November 7, 1912–July 19, 1991) was the last** ruling [maharaja](#) of the [princely state](#) of [Travancore](#).



Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi who ruled as Regent during Chithira Thirunal's minority

Balarama Varma was the eldest son of HH Sethu Parvathi Bayi, Junior Rani of Attingal, by her consort, M.R.Ry Ravi Varma Kochu Koil Thampuran of Kilimanoor, a grandnephew of the celebrated painter Raja Ravi Varma. Balarama Varma's mother was distantly related, by birth, to the royal house of Travancore in the direct female line. In 1900, following the absence of heirs in the Travancore Royal Family, she had been adopted by her maternal grandaunt. Thus, upon the death of his adoptive maternal uncle, Sri Moolam Thirunal Ramavarma, on August 7, 1924, Balarama Varma succeeded to the throne of Travancore under the Regency of his maternal aunt, the famous **Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi.** [1] As was customary, he took the regnal name 'Sree Chithira Thirunal,' as he was born under the Chithira nakshatram or star.

Maharaja of Travancore

Sree Chithira Thirunal reigned under the regency of his maternal aunt, Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, who was also his mother's first cousin. On November 6, 1931, upon his attaining majority, Sree Chithira Thirunal was invested with full ruling powers. He was instrumental in establishing the University of Travancore (now the University of Kerala) in 1937. He also had a beautiful palace built which is now a museum. He was able to secure the services of eminent statesmen such as C.P.Ramaswami Aiyar, who served as his chief minister for several years.



The Maharajah's parents: HH Maharani Sethu Parvathi Bayi and M.R.Ry Ravi Varma Kochu Koil Thampuran on their wedding day in 1906

The period of HH Sree Chithira Thirunal Bala Rama Varma who took the reign of administration in 1931, witnessed many-sided progress. The promulgation of "Temple Entry Proclamation" (1936), was an act that underlined social emancipation. But the Punnapra - Vayalar massacre and government involvement at the time would represent the negatives. Those who consider Travancore included in India as having contributed to its development would see the declaration of an Independent Travancore in 1947 also as a negative.

Later years

After India became independent in 1947, Sree Chithira Thirunal agreed to merge his state with India after some initial hesitation. Travancore was united with neighbouring Cochin state and Sree Chitira Tirunal served as Rajpramukh of the Travancore-Cochin Union from July 1, 1949 to October 31, 1956, which was the entire duration of the existence of that political entity. On November 1, 1956, the state of Kerala was created by uniting the Malayalam-speaking areas of the Travancore-Cochin Union with those of neighbouring Madras State, and Sree Chithira Thirunal demitted office. On December 28, 1971, Sree Chitira Thirunal lost his titles when the Indian government derecognized the rulers of the erstwhile princely states.

Sree Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma died at the Kowdiar Palace, Trivandrum in 1991, aged seventy-eight. He had ruled Travancore for 67 years and at his death, was one of the few surviving rulers of a first-class princely state in the old Indian Empire. He was also the last surviving Knight Grand Commander of both the Order of the Star of India and of the Order of the Indian Empire. He was succeeded as head of the royal house of Travancore by his brother, Uthradom Thirunal Marthanda Varma.

The government of India issued a stamp in 1991, commemorating the reforms that marked the rule of Sree Chithira Thirunal in Travancore. The Sree Chitra Thirunal Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology and the Sree Chitra Thirunal College of Engineering at Trivandrum were named after him.

Titles

to 1924: Maharajkumar Bala Rama Varma III, Elaya Raja of Travancore

1924-1935: His Highness Sri Patmanabha Dasa Vanchipala Bala Rama Varma III, Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharaja Raja Ramaraja Bahadur, Shamsher Jang, Maharaja of Travancore

1935-1943: His Highness Sri Patmanabha Dasa Vanchipala Sir Bala Rama Varma III, Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharaja Raja Ramaraja Bahadur, Shamsher Jang, Maharaja of Travancore, GCIE

1943-1944: Major His Highness Sri Patmanabha Dasa Vanchipala Sir Bala Rama Varma III, Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharaja Raja Ramaraja Bahadur, Shamsher Jang, Maharaja of Travancore, GCIE

1944-1945: Lieutenant-Colonel His Highness Sri Patmanabha Dasa Vanchipala Sir Bala Rama Varma III, Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharaja Raja Ramaraja Bahadur, Shamsher Jang, Maharaja of Travancore, GCIE

1945-1946: Colonel His Highness Sri Patmanabha Dasa Vanchipala Sir Bala Rama Varma III, Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharaja Raja Ramaraja Bahadur, Shamsher Jang, Maharaja of Travancore, GCIE

1946-1991: Major-General His Highness Sri Patmanabha Dasa Vanchipala Sir Bala Rama Varma III, Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharaja Raja Ramaraja Bahadur, Shamsher Jang, Maharaja of Travancore, GCSI, GCIE

Honours

King George V Silver Jubilee Medal-1935

Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire (GCIE)-1935

King George VI Coronation Medal-1937

Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Star of India (GCSI)-1946

Indian Independence Medal-1947

References

1. [▲] The Royal family of Travancore followed the [Marumakkathayam](#) system of [matrilineal succession](#) like the [Nairs](#) of Kerala.

Chithira Thirunal

Kulasekhara Dynasty

Born: 7 November 1912 Died: 19 July 1991

Regnal titles

[Maharaja of Travancore](#)

1924-1949

Preceded by
[Moolam Thirunal](#)

Succeeded by
[Monarchy abolished](#)

Preceded by
Post created 1 July 1949

Political offices
Rajpramukh of the Travancore-Cochin Union
1949–1956

Succeeded by
Post abolished by the Government of India 31 October 1956; succeeded by that of Governor of Kerala

Preceded by
None

Titles in pretence
— TITULAR —
Maharaja of Travancore
1949–1991
Reason for succession failure:
[Monarchy abolished in 1949](#)

Succeeded by
Uthradom Thirunal

Padmanabhapuram

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in [Tamil Nadu](#) and [India](#)

 [8°14'N 77°20'E](#) [8.23°N](#)

Coordinates [77.33°E](#) **Coordinates:**  [8°14'N](#)
[77°20'E](#) [8.23°N](#) [77.33°E](#)

Country [India](#)

State [Tamil Nadu](#)

District(s) [Kanniyakumari](#)

Population 20,051 (2001)

Time zone [IST](#) ([UTC+5:30](#))

Area

- [Elevation](#)
- 15 metres (49 ft)



Padmanabhapuram Palace

Padmanabhapuram (Malayalam: പദ്മനാഭപുരം) (Tamil: பத்மநாபபுரம்) **the old capital of Travancore is currently in the state of Tamil Nadu, (municipality near Thuckalay in Kanniyakumari district)**

History

Padmanabhapuram was the old capital of the princely state of Travancore in India. The Travancore King, Rama Varma, who was popularly known as Dharmaraja, shifted the capital in 1795 from Padmanabhapuram to Thiruvananthapuram.

Geography

Padmanabhapuram is located at  8°14'N 77°20'E / 8.23°N 77.33°E / 8.23; 77.33.[1] It has an average elevation of 15 metres (49 feet).

Demographics

As of 2001[update] India census,[2] Padmanabhapuram had a population of 20,051. Males constitute 50% of the population and females 50%. Padmanabhapuram has an average literacy rate of 82%, higher than the national average of 59.5%: male literacy is 85%, and female literacy is 79%. In Padmanabhapuram, 10% of the population is under 6 years of age.

Tourism

The popular Padmanabhapuram Palace, the old palace of the Travancore kings, is also located here. It is spread over an area of 6 acres (24,000 m²). The palace is known for its antiques, including the armoury of the royal family. The woodwork in this palace is intricate. The Palace though surrounded entirely by the State of Tamil Nadu is still part of Kerala and the land and Palace belongs to the Government of Kerala. This Palace is maintained by the Govt. of Kerala Archaeology Department.

Other tourist locations include Thirparappu Waterfalls, Hanging Bridge in Mathoor, Ancient Jain Temple in Chitharal (a small village situated at a distance of 8 km from Marthandam.) Thiruvalluvar Statue in Kanniyakumari. One can take a bus from Thiruvananthapuram or Nagercoil and get down at Thuckalay, which is two kilometres away from Padmanabhapuram. The nearest places around this old capital city of South travancore is Marunthukottai (It is a very old fort having weapons storage facility), Saravilai, Kumarakoil (Lord Murugan Temple), Moolachel, Charode, Manali, Udaygiri fort ...

Education

The Thuckalay Government Higher Secondary School is the largest Government Educational institution in the region. There are also age old institutions such as Amala Convent, which are run by a local church and Hindu Vidyalaya near Kollen Villai. Noorul Islam College of Engineering is the nearest engineering college, and is located at Kumarakoil, approximately 4 km from Thuckalay.

Politics

Padmanabhapuram assembly constituency is part of Nagercoil (Lok Sabha constituency).[3]

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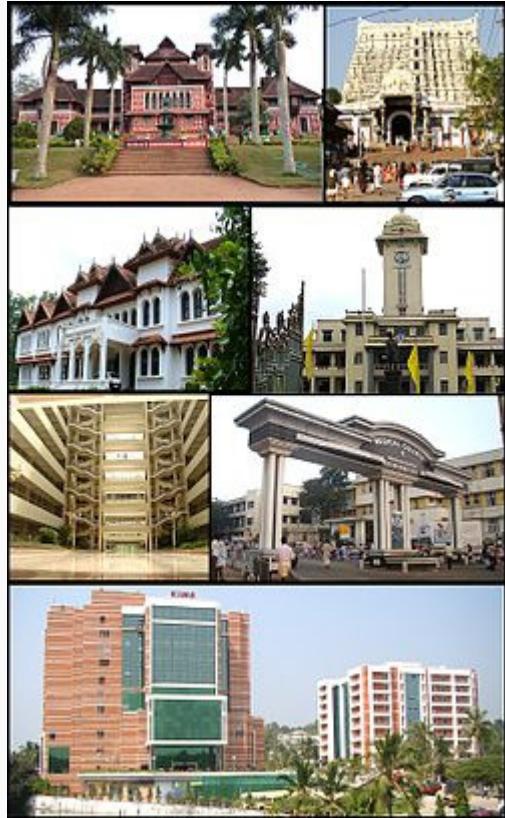
This article is about the city. For the district, see Thiruvananthapuram district. For the urban agglomeration area of Thiruvananthapuram, see Thiruvananthapuram metropolitan area.

Thiruvananthapuram (திருவனந்தபுரம்)

Trivandrum

• Evergreen City of India • The Gateway of Monsoon • [III](#)

— capital city —



From top clockwise: [Napier Museum](#), [Padmanabhaswamy Temple](#), [University of Kerala](#), [Government Medical College](#), [Kerala Institute of Medical Sciences](#), [Bhavani building in Technopark](#) and [The Oriental Research Institute & Manuscripts Library](#)



Thiruvananthapuram (திருவனந்தபுரம்)

Location of Thiruvananthapuram (திருவனந்தபுரம்)

in [Kerala](#) and [India](#)

Coordinates [08°26'25"N 76°55'25"E](#) [8.44028°N](#)

Coordinates [76.92361°E](#) [08°26'25"N](#)
[76°55'25"E](#) [8.44028°N](#) [76.92361°E](#)

Country [India](#)

State [Kerala](#)

District(s) [Thiruvananthapuram](#)

Mayor Adv. K. Chandrika

Deputy Mayor G. Happykumar

Planning Agency [TRIDA](#)

Civic agency [Thiruvananthapuram Corporation](#)

Population 752,490^[2] (2011)

- **Density** • 5,284 /km² (13,685 /sq mi)
- **Metro** • 1,067,861^[3] (42nd) (2010)

Sex ratio 1018 ♂/♀

| | |
|---|---|
| Literacy | 88.26% |
| • Male | • 94.82% |
| • Female | • 85.17% |
| Official languages | Malayalam • English |
| Spoken languages | Malayalam • English • Tamil |
| Time zone | IST (UTC+5:30) |
| Area | 141.74 km² (55 sq mi) |
| • Metro | • 250.00 square kilometres (96.53 sq mi) |
| • Elevation | • 10 metres (33 ft) |
| • Coastline | • 78 kilometres (48 mi) |
| Climate | Am/Aw (Köppen) |
| • Precipitation | •  1,700 mm (67 in) |
| Temperature | •  27.2 °C (81.0 °F) |
| • Summer | •  35 °C (95 °F) |
| • Winter | •  24.4 °C (75.9 °F) |
| Distance(s) [show] | |
| • From Mumbai | • 1,543 kilometres (959 mi) NW (land) |
| • From Delhi | • 2,814 kilometres (1,749 mi) N (land) |
| • From Chennai | • 708 kilometres (440 mi) NE (land) |
| • From Bangalore | • 753 kilometres (468 mi) N (land) |
| Codes [show] | |
| • Pincode | • 695 xxx |
| • Telephone | • +91 (0)471 |
| • UN/LOCODE | • INTRV |
| • Vehicle | • KL-01, KL-22, KL-15 (for K.S.R.T.C) |
| Website | www.corporationoftrivandrum.in |

Thiruvananthapuram ([Malayalam](#): തിരുവന്നന്തപുരം, *tiruvaññāntapuram*?), **IPA: [t̪ɪruvən̪ən̪t̪ən̪t̪əpʊr̪əm]** (▶ [listen](#))), formerly known as **Trivandrum**, is the

capital of the Indian state of Kerala and the third largest city in South India by area after Hyderabad and Bangalore. It is the headquarters of the Thiruvananthapuram District. It is located on the west coast of India near the extreme south of the mainland. Referred to by Mahatma Gandhi as the "Evergreen city of India",[4] the city is characterized by its undulating terrain of low coastal hills and busy commercial alleys.[5] With almost 745,000 inhabitants per the 2001 census, it is the largest and most populous city in Kerala; the wider urban agglomeration has a population of more than one million.[6] Apart from being the IT hub of the state with over 80% of the state's software exports,[7][8][9] Thiruvananthapuram ranks first in the number of international tourists in Kerala.[10][11]

The city houses many central and state government offices and organizations. Apart from being the political nerve centre of Kerala, it is also a major academic hub and is home to several educational institutions including the University of Kerala, and to many science and technology institutions, the most prominent being the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Technopark, the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST),[12] the Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management, Kerala[13], Indian Institute of Molecular Materials, Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER),[14] and the Centre for Development Studies. It is also considered as one among the 10 greenest cities in India.[15][16]

Origin of name

The city gets its name from the word, Thiru-anantha-puram, meaning the "Abode of Lord Ananta".[17] The name derives from the deity of the Sri Padmanabhaswamy temple at the centre of the city. Anantha is the serpent Shesha on whom Padmanabhan or Vishnu reclines. This temple of Vishnu reclining on Anantha remains the iconic landmark of the city. It is estimated that the value of the monumental items and assets of the temple partially revealed are close to ₹100,000 crore (US\$22.3 billion), making it the richest temple in the world.[18][19] The city was officially referred to as Trivandrum until 1991, when the government decided to reinstate the city's original name Thiruvananthapuram.

History

Main article: History of Thiruvananthapuram



Painting by Raja Ravi Varma depicting Richard Temple-Grenville, 3rd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos being greeted by Visakham Thirunal, with Ayilyam Thirunal of Travancore looking on, during Buckingham's visit to Trivandrum, Travancore in early 1880.



Kowdiar Palace built in 1915 was the official residence of the Travancore Royal Family.[20]

Thiruvananthapuram is an ancient city with trading traditions dating back to 1000 BCE.[21][22] It is believed that the ships of King Solomon landed in a port called Ophir (now Poovar) in Thiruvananthapuram in 1036 BCE.[23] The city was the trading post of spices, sandalwood and ivory.[24] However, the ancient political and cultural history of the city was almost entirely independent from that of the rest of Kerala. The early rulers of the city were the Ays. With their fall in the 10th century, the city was taken over by the rulers of Venad.[25]

The rise of modern Thiruvananthapuram began with accession of Marthanda Varma in 1729 as the founding ruler of the princely state of Travancore (Thiruvithamkoor in the local vernacular). Thiruvananthapuram was made the capital of Travancore in 1745 after shifting the capital from Padmanabhapuram in Kanyakumari district.[26] The city developed into a major intellectual and artistic centre during this period. The golden age in the city's history was during the mid 19th century under the reign of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal and Maharaja Ayilyam Thirunal. This era saw the establishment of the first English school (1834), the Observatory (1837), the General Hospital (1839), the Oriental Research Institute & Manuscripts Library and the University College (1873). The first mental hospital in the state was also started during the same period. Sanskrit College, Ayurveda College, Law College and a second grade college for women were started by Moolam Thirunal (1885–1924).[25]

The early 20th century was an age of tremendous political and social changes in the city. The Sree Moolam Assembly, established in 1904 was the first democratically elected legislative council in any Indian state.[27] Despite not being under direct control of the British Empire at any time, the city however featured prominently in India's freedom struggle. The Indian National Congress had a very active presence in the city. A meeting of the Indian National Congress presided by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramaiah was held here in 1938.

The Thiruvananthapuram Municipality came into existence in 1920. The municipality was converted into Corporation on 30 October 1940, during the period of Chitra Thirunal Bala Rama Varma, who took over in 1931.[28] The city witnessed many-sided progress during his period. The promulgation of "Temple Entry Proclamation" (1936) was an act that underlined social emancipation. This era also saw the establishment of the University of Travancore in 1937, which later became the Kerala University.[29]

With the end of the British rule in 1947, Travancore chose to join the Indian union. The first popular ministry headed by Pattom Thanu Pillai was installed in office on 24 March 1948. In 1949, Thiruvananthapuram became the capital of Thiru-Kochi, the state formed by the integration of Travancore with its northern neighbour Kochi.[30] The king of Travancore, Chitra Thirunal Bala Rama Varma became the Rajpramukh of the Travancore-Cochin Union from July 1, 1949 until October 31, 1956. When the state of Kerala was formed on November 1, 1956, Thiruvananthapuram became the capital of the new state.[31]

With the establishment of Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS) in 1962, Thiruvananthapuram became the cradle of India's ambitious space programme. The first Indian space rocket was developed and launched from the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) located in the outskirts of the city in 1963. Several establishments of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) were later established in Thiruvananthapuram.[32]

A major milestone in the city's recent history was the establishment of Technopark—India's first IT park—in 1995.[33] Technopark has developed into the largest IT Park in India[34] and third largest in Asia, employing around 30,000 people over 195 companies.[35] This placed Thiruvananthapuram on the IT map of India and it is today one of the most promising in the country in terms of competitiveness and capability.[36]

Padmanabhapuram Palace

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Padmanabhapuram Palace

Padmanabhapuram Palace ([Tamil](#): பத்மநாபபுரம் அரண்மனை, [Malayalam](#): പത്മനാഭപുരം കൊട്ടാരം) **complex** is located in at [Padmanabhapuram Fort](#), close to the town of [Thuckalay](#) in [Kanyakumari District](#), [Tamilnadu](#), in [India](#). It is about 20 km from [Nagercoil](#), and about 50 kilometers from [Thiruvananthapuram](#), [Kerala](#). The palace complex is inside an old [granite](#) fortress around four kilometers long. The palace is located at the foot of the [Veli Hills](#), which form a part of the [Western Ghats](#). The river [Valli](#) flows nearby.^[1] The palace is administered by the [Government of Kerala](#) archeology department.

The palace was constructed around 1601 CE by Iravi Varma Kulasekhara Perumal who ruled [Travancore](#) between 1592 CE and 1609 CE. It is believed that the Thai Kottaram

was built in CE 1550. The maker of modern Travancore Anizham Thirunal Marthandavarma (CE 1706 -1758) who ruled Travancore from CE1729 to 1758 rebuilt the palace in 1n around 1750. King Marthaanda Varma dedicated the kingdom to his family deity Sree Padmanabha , an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and ruled the kingdom as Padmanabha dasa or servant of Lord Padmanabha. Hence the name Padmanabhapuram or City of Lord Padmanabha. In the late 18th century, precisely in 1795 CE the [capital](#) of Travancore was shifted from here to Thiruvananthapuram, and the place lost its former glory. However, the palace complex continues to be one of the best examples of traditional Kerala architecture, and some portions of the sprawling complex are also the hallmark of traditional Kerala style architecture.

The Padmanabhapuram Palace complex consists of several structures:

- **Mantrasala; literal meaning, King's Council Chamber**
- **Thai Kottaram; literal meaning, Mother's Palace(It didn't mean the mother's palace, but the first building or the mother of the buildings over there) - believed to have been constructed before AD 1550**
- **Nataksala; literal meaning, the Hall of Performance, or of Performing Arts**
- **A four-storeyed building at the centre of the Palace complex**
- **Thekee Kottaram; literal meaning, the Southern Palace**



The Clock Tower and the Roof of the Padmanabhapuram Palace



Hanging Lamp and wood carving in ceiling



Mantrasala (Council chamber)

Mantrasala (Council chamber)

King's Council chamber is the most beautiful part of the entire palace complex. It has windows, with coloured mica, which keep the heat and the dust away, and the interior of the council chamber remains cool and dark. Delicate and beautiful lattice work can be seen all over the council chamber.

The floor is also beautifully done, with a fine and perfect finish. The floor is dark and is made of a mixture of varied substances, including burnt coconut shells, egg white and so on. The remarkable aspect is that this particular floor finish and texture could not be duplicated in any

Thai Kottaram (Mother's palace)

Mother's palace, designed in traditional Kerala style, is the oldest construction in the entire palace complex and is believed to be constructed around mid-16th century. True to the traditional Kerala style, there is an inner courtyard, called 'nalukettu'. In the inner courtyard, sloping roofs from all four sided taper down. Four pillars on four corners support the roof.

On the south-west corner of the mother's palace, there is a relatively small room, called the chamber of solitude or 'ekantha mandapam'. The chamber of solitude has very beautiful and intricate wood carvings of every description all around. Of particular interest is a pillar of single

Nataksala (Hall of performance)

This is a relatively new building, constructed at the behest of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal, who reigned in Travancore from 1829 to 1846. He was a great connoisseur of arts, especially music and dance. He himself composed music and has left a rich legacy to classical carnatic music.

The Nataksala or the hall of performance has solid granite pillars and gleaming black floor. There is a wooden enclosure, with peepholes, where the women of the royal household used to sit and watch the performance.

Four-storeyed central building (UPPIRIKKA MALIGA)

The four-storied building is located at the centre of the palace complex. The ground floor houses the royal treasury. The first floor houses the King's bedrooms. The ornamental bedstead is made of 64 types of herbal and medicinal woods, and was a gift from the Dutch merchants. Most of the rooms here and in other parts of the palace complex have built-in recesses in walls for storing weapons like swords and daggers. The second floor houses the King's resting and study rooms. Here the King used to spend time during fasting days. The top floor (called upparikka malika) served as the worship chamber of the royal household. Its walls are covered with exquisite 18th century murals, depicting scenes from the puranas, and also few scenes from the social life of the Travancore of that time. This top floor was supposed to be Sree Padmanabha Swamy's room. This building was constructed during the reign of King Marthandavarma. He was also designated as Padmanabha Dasa and used to rule the Travancore kingdom as a servant of Sree Padmanabha Swamy.

Thekee kottaram (Southern palace)

The southern palace is as old as the 'Thai kottaram' (Mother's palace), which would make it about 400 year old. Now, it serves as a heritage museum, exhibiting antique household articles and curios. Collections of items give an insight into the social and cultural ethos of that period.

Other interesting features

- **The Padamnabhapuram Palace complex has several other interesting features:**
- **The Palace though surrounded entirely by the State of Tamil Nadu is still part of Kerala and the land and Palace belongs to the Government of Kerala.**
- **The clock tower in the palace complex has a 300 year old clock, which still keeps time.**
- **A big hall now bare, which can accommodate around 1000 guests, and where ceremonial feasts were held, on auspicious occasions.**
- **A secret passage, now blocked, through which the king, his immediate family members, and their entourage could escape to another palace, located several kilometers away in the event of any emergency. Name of this palace is Charottu kottaram.**
- **A flight of steps leads to a bathing pond, which has lost its freshness due to neglect and years of disuse.**
- **The Palace complex also has a section of curios and several interesting objects:**
 - **An entire room filled with old Chinese jars, all gifts by Chinese merchants.**

- **A variety of weapons (which were actually used in warfare), including swords and daggers.**
- **Brass lamps, wood and stone sculpture, a variety of furniture and large mirrors made of polished metal.**
- **A gallery of paintings depicting incidents from the history of Travancore.**
- **A wooden cot made of up to 64 wooden pieces of a variety of medicinal tree trunks**
- **Polished stone cot, meant for cool effect**
- **Toilet and well**



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Ambari Mukhappu - Built for King to view chariot races.

The structure built in the shape of Ambari, the seat put on the elephant back for safaris



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Ambari Mukhappu - Built for King to view chariot races.

The structure built in the shape of Ambari, the seat put on the elephant back for

safaris



-

Queen's dressing room



-

Polished stone cot, meant for cooling effect



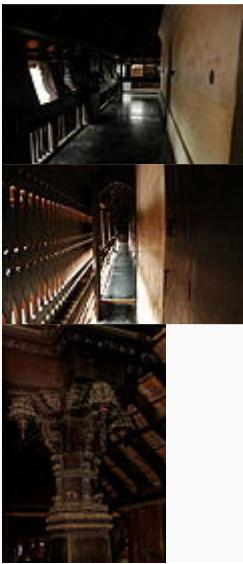
Cot made with about 64 medicinal woods



Palace Toilet



Palace Stone Weight



Single Wood Pillar made of Jackfruit Tree



Thooku-vilakku - Hanging Lamp

Kilimanoor palace

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Entrance to the Kilimanoor Palace or "Arch"

Kilimanoor palace is famous as the birth place of Raja Ravi Varma, the celebrated Indian painter.

The Palace

The Palace complex covers more than six hectares, and comprises the traditional residential structures of Kerala, like the Nalukettu, small and medium sized buildings, two ponds, wells and sacred groves (kaavu). Raja Ravi Varma is said to have built and maintained some of the buildings from the proceeds of his paintings. Families related to the Travancore royal house continue to live here.

History

The royal house at Kilimanoor has a history stretching back more than 300 years, although the oldest buildings are from a much earlier period. However, it was in 1753 that the palace was built in its present form.



Umayamba Thampuratti, [Raja Ravi Varma](#)'s mother

Kilimanoor palace and Travancore royal house

In 1705 (ME 880) the son and two daughters of Ittammar Raja of [Beyapore](#) Thattarikovilakam, a [Kolathunadu](#) royal house, were adopted into the Royal house of [Venad](#). Ittammar Raja's sister and her sons, Rama Varma and Raghava Varma, settled in Kilimanoor and married the now adopted sisters. [Marthanda Varma](#), the founder of the Kingdom of [Travancore](#), was the son of Raghava Varma. The nephew^[1] of Raghava Varma, Ravi varma Koil Thampuran, married the sister of Marthanda Varma. Their son became known as [Dharma Raja](#) Kartika Thirunnal Rama Varma.

In 1740 when an allied force,^[2] led by Dutchman Captain Hockert supporting the Deshinganadu King, attacked Venad, an army from Kilimanoor resisted and then defeated them. Although a small victory, this was the first time an Indian army had defeated a European power. In 1753, in recognition of this feat, Marthanda Varma exempted the areas controlled by the Kilimanoor palace^[3] from taxes, and granted them autonomous status.^[4] The present palace complex was built at this time, together with the Ayyappa temple.^[5] for the family deity, *Sastha* or *Ayyapan*^[6].

[Velu Thampi Dalawa](#) held meetings at Kilimanoor palace while planning uprisings against the British. He handed over his sword at the palace before going into his final battle against the British, and India's first President, Dr [Rajendra Prasad](#) received this sword from the palace and it is now kept in the [National Museum in Delhi](#).



Birth place of Raja Ravi Varma with his studio in the foreground

Personalities

- **Raja Ravi Varma, Famous Painter**

- **Kareendran thampuran, Poet, Composer, Childhood friend Of Swathi Thirunal**
- **Raja Raja Varma, Uncle of Raja Ravi Varma.**
- **C. Raja Raja Varma Koil Thampuran, Painter, Brother of Raja Ravi Varma**

1.

Kuthira Malika

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Kuthira Malika, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

Puthen Malika Palace (Malayalam: പുത്തൻ മാളിക കൊട്ടാരം), **most popularly known as Kuthira Malika (Mansion of Horses)**, is a palace built by Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma, on the south-eastern side of Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram.

Etymology

The palace gets its name from the 122 horses that are carved into the wooden wall brackets that support the southern roof. The official name of the palace is Puthen Malika (New Mansion). The palace forms part of a vast complex of royal buildings in the vicinity of Padmanabhaswamy Temple. The building was left unoccupied for more than a century, following the demise of Swathi Thirunal in 1846.

Architecture



A view of the 'horses' at Kuthira Malika

Built in the 1840s, Kuthira Malika is a fine example of traditional Kerala architecture, with its typical sloping roofs, overhanging eaves, pillared verandahs and enclosed courtyards. Intricate carvings adorn the wooden ceilings with each room having a distinctive pattern.

Museum

A portion of Kuthira Malika has been converted to a Palace Museum that houses some of the assets owned by the Travancore Royal Family. The collection includes Kathakali mannequins, Belgian mirrors, crystal chandeliers, paintings, armaments, musical instruments, traditional furniture and other artifacts. On the right side of the mannequins are the ivory cradles of various sizes. The palace has on display two royal thrones, one made of ivory and the other of Bohemian crystal with the Travancore emblem 'conch' adorning the top of the backrest. The palace has a large collection of idols and sculptures made from white marble.

On the first floor are rooms that once served as the audience chamber, the library and an alcove that Swathi Thirunal used for meditating and for conceiving many of his famous musical compositions. This place offers a direct view of the Padmanabhaswamy temple gopuram. One of the rooms displays an illusion portrait of Sree Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma, painted by Svetoslav Roerich. The face and the shoes of the king appear facing the onlooker from every corner of the room.

Swathi Sangeethotsavam

The courtyard of Kuthira Malika is the venue for Swathi Sangeethotsavam, a yearly music festival commemorating the legacy of Swathi Thirunal. This music festival is conducted from 6 to 12 January every year. It attracts many of the leading stalwarts of Carnatic and Hindustani classical music.

In films

The Kuthira Malika palace has been visualised in many films.

Kowdiar Palace

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Kowdiar Palace, Trivandrum

Kowdiar Palace (Malayalam: കുടിയാർ കൊട്ടാരം) in Trivandrum, Kerala, India was built in 1915 by Sree Moolam Thirunal and was gifted to Sethu Parvati Bayi. It is the official residence of the Travancore Royal Family. Kowdiar Palace's architectural work is famous and has over 150 rooms. The entry to this famous palace, which has great historical importance is restricted.[1]