

panion of Otenan. Komappan (Komakkuruppu) brother of Otenan was a peace-loving, sedate person. Otenan mastered all the tricks of Kalarippayattu at the gymnasium of Matiloor Gurukkal. Otenan had also mastered the use of the Urumi (a thin sword). He was such a master in the use of the Urumi that he could, by one sweep of it, graze the throat of a man without cutting and shedding a drop of blood. He was an expert in necromancy also. What could not be managed by the physical strength of Otenan, Cāppan used to manage with his intellectual powers.

Otenan was born on the slope of a hill at Meppa one mile east of the present Vaṭakara railway station. Relics and remnants of Māṇikkattu family are there yet to be seen. Many songs have been composed about Otenan. One of them is his going to receive presents of cloth on Onam day from a stingy chief who, after the death of Otenan's father, had become 'Putuppaṇattu Vāzhunnavar'. Another song relates to his collecting taxes from Kotumala Kuñṅikkannan on behalf of Rājā of Koṭṭayam. Yet another song is about his putting down the conceit and pride of Kuṅki amma of Kekki house. And, another song is about his killing Kaiteki Otenan Nambiyār. His fight with the māppilas on behalf of the Rājā of Cīrakkal forms the theme of yet another song. Another interesting song is about his making Koṭṭakkal Kuñṅāli Marakkār, who was a bosom friend of his, though a philanderer put on the attires of a female and thus teaching him a good lesson in life. Another song describes the escape of Otenan, who went to see the construction of the Karimala fort, with the help of Cāppan. There are also many other songs about Otenan.

The very marriage of Otenan is an interesting story. Māteviamma of Kāvīlum cāttottu had a daughter named Cīru. Māteviamma went to Māṇikkattu house and requested Otenan to marry her daughter Cīru. Otenan refused to oblige her. But, Cīru grew up to be very beautiful girl, and Otenan, who saw her in that state felt a great passion for her. He sent Cāppan to her for a pan (betel leaves for chewing) which she also refused. At last Cāppan took Otenan disguised as a blind person to Cīru's house. Cīru and Otenan got married without the knowledge of Cīru's mother, who cursed them when she knew about the marriage.

There is another story about Otenan and Karuttaniṭam (Kaṭattanāṭu) Kuñṅikkanni, the only daughter of the Rājā of Kaṭattanāṭu. A rowdy called Kelappan of Ponnāpuram fort forcibly carried her off. The Rājā, who tried to bring back his daughter had to return wounded. Otenan came to know that Ponnāpuram fort had once been given as dowry to his family and Kelappan was in illegal and forcible occupation of it. Otenan along with Cāppan went and captured the fort. He released Kuñṅikkanni from captivity and took Kelappan captive. The Rājā of Kaṭattanāṭu was very much pleased with this exploit of Otenan and married Kuñṅikkanni to him.

There is also a story about Otenan fighting with the māppilas of Cīrakkal. The māppilas did not honour the Rājā of Cīrakkal during one of his tours, and the Rājā asked Otenan to put down the haughtiness of the māppilas, and he did so. Kotamala Kuṅkiamma, the Rājā Pulinaḍu, Matilūr Gurukkal and others are referred to in this story.

Katirūr Gurukkal was a very powerful enemy of Otenan. The Gurukkal one day kept his new gun leaning against a jack fruit tree, and Otenan, in derision, commented about it thus: "Who is it that has kept the spear made of earth leaning against the tree on which usually spear made of gold is kept so?" The Gurukkal, angry at the insult challenged Otenan for a combat within three months from Wednesday, the ninth of Kumbham. On the appointed day Otenan went to Gurukkal's combat field and killed him, Parintukūl Emmenpaniykar and others. On his way home after the victory, Otenan remembered that he had forgotten his dagger on the platform of the peepal tree, and paying no heed to the advice of his friends he returned to the combat field and got killed there.

5) *Taccoli Candu*. Candu was Otenan's nephew and was reputed for his great prowess. Mālu of Tāzhattumaṭham was his wife. One day she went for worship in the Omallur temple where Kaṇḍar Menon of Tulunātan fort abducted her into his court. Candu was at the time, twentytwo years old. On hearing about his wife's mishap Candu, disguised as a Sannyāsin, entered the fort and fought singlehanded against Menon and his army of 400 soldiers.

6) *Pālāṭṭu Koman*. Koman Nāyar, another nephew of Otenan, the son of Kuṅkiamma of Kappullipalāṭṭu, became famous under the name Komappan. The family feud between the Kuruppus of Toṇṇūrāmvitu and the Nāyars of Pālāṭṭu was a long-standing affair. There were seven Kuruppus during the days of Koman, and they had two sisters named Uṇṇicciruta and Uṇṇiamma. Koman felt a great passion towards Uṇṇiamma, who was bathing in the tank, and her brothers rushed to kill Koman. But Koman outlived all obstacles created by the seven brothers of Uṇṇiamma and the tale-bearing Uṇṇicciruta because of the cleverness of the very intelligent Uṇṇiamma. Koman also got settled by Otenan the fortytwo items of family quarrels and married Uṇṇiamma.

7) *Bambāyi Ālikkuṭṭi*. In the song about Ādirāja it is said Ālikkuṭṭi, an expert in the science relating to elephants, was invited for help when the seventh elephant of the Rājā escaped back into the forest. Ālikkuṭṭi hailed from Bombay. According to the song under reference Ālikkuṭṭi brought back the elephant from the forest to the Rājā, who, greatly pleased with him, gave his daughter, Kuñṅikkanni, in marriage to him.

8) *Putumāṭan Kelu*. Putunātan Candu and Kelu were brothers. Candu married a woman named Mātu. One Vaṭṭoli Menon became Mātu's paramour by bribing her with a golden chain worth three thousand paṇams, and she got her husband killed by this paramour. Candu had two dogs called Malli and Cokkan, and one of them kept guard over Candu's dead body while the other went and informed Kelu about Candu's death. Kelu, in great rage, rushed to the place, saw the golden chain presented to Mātu by Menon and blinded one of her eyes.

9) *Kurumparampil Kaṇṇan*. This tiya youth had a very chaste wife called Āryā. One day when Kaṇṇan was away from home for tapping coconut palms for toddy Putukolottu rājā saw Āryā, and having felt a great passion for her he presented her one night four pieces of silk and a gold ring. The next day Āryā dressed her husband as a brahmin with the sacred thread on, and