

WHAT BEFELL THATHRI NEXT?

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Abstract: This offers a glimpse into the probable conditions enveloping Thathri before, during and after the trial which have left us guessing about her whereabouts. By walking down the memory lane with persons connected to Thathri in different measures and degrees and piecing together their reminiscences, the author deftly weaves the fragmentary recollections and associations into a cohesive whole, resulting in something akin to a study in unarchived history. The end product is open-ended, granting the reader the right to imagine and create. The article raises a lot of questions which need to be addressed in earnest.

Keywords: Kuriyedathu Thathri

Years ago, when cars were still a novel spectacle in Kerala, a white car pulled up at Thalassery near Deshamangalam¹ in Trichur district. People thronged it with a sense of curiosity and concern. The driver was a dark, stout fellow who looked like a Tamilian. Inside the car was a noble and gracious woman past her middle age with long hair reaching up to the knees and a big bindi on her forehead. A beauty untouched by time, she enquired about the residence of Konavally Madhavi. She also asked of Konavally Govindan.

¹Deshamanglam is both a place in Trichur and the name of a famous Namboothiri *mana* there. Deshamangalathu Vasudevan Namboothiripadu was fifth in the list of Thathri's paramours. See P. Bhaskaranunni *Smarthavicharam* (Kottayam: SPSS, 2000) p 191.

Madhavi was the maid² of Kuriyedathu Thathri who was ostracised after a chastity trial. Some villagers grew suspicious of this lady who had come in search of Madhavi. People around the car began to reminisce in hushed tones about Thathri, her trial and exile to Tamilnadu. The driver must have found lingering there unwise. He swiftly moved the car forward and went off the place. The legend is that Thathri had come in search of her old maid, that they did meet and that Madhavi, after opening the door and seeing her old mistress, retreated inside chanting the name of God.

II. There are only hearsays in the memories of Arangottukara Konavally Chinnammu Amma who is the niece (sister's daughter) of Konavally Madhavi who can safely be described as Thathri's shadow and associate. The eighty-four year old Chinnammu Amma only knows a few stories that she heard as a child, about her aunt. Nothing but a handful of scattered verbal pictures remain with her about Kalpakassery *illam*³. She knows many have fallen to disgrace because of Thathri. But she uninhibitedly refers to Thathri whom her aunt served as a maid, as 'she' because of the common knowledge that a Brahmin woman banished from her community on the grounds of adultery can be addressed in any way⁴. In Chinnammu Amma's social sensibility, moral schemata and lifestyle, Thathri and those who copulated with her have deservedly reaped the wages of sin. She says that she did not enquire about things which are not good to remember. After delving into the innermost chambers of her memory she stopped by describing Kalpakassery *illam*:

² Though a maid was essentially a servant, at times she was more of a companion. In the case of Thathri, the relationship was even deeper. As we have already seen, it is believed that her maids (impersonating as Thathri) received the nocturnal paramours and carefully noted down or committed to memory their identification marks on their body which would spell doom for them in the trial.

³ The house where Thathri was born .

⁴ In Kerala there were strictly prescriptive rules governing the forms of address to be used between castes. See P.M. Gireesh *Keralathile Aacharabhasha*. (Trivandrum: Language Institute, 2008); also P. Bhaskaranunni *Pathonpatham Noottantile Keralam* (Trichur: Sahitya Akademi, 2000) p 115.

“There were three tanks in Kalpakassery *illam*. One on the northern side for women to bathe. One on the west for men to wash their hands and all. Then another one in the south. The *illam* faced east. There was a cowshed too. The *illam* is extinct now. Apparently they sold the land to Arangottukaravaryam⁵. It is said that people burnt down even the foundations of the *illam*, in fact the members of the family itself did it. The present owners of the land are plagued by plenty of troubles. It is heard that Thathri has been deified and consecrated there”.

She doesn't criticise her aunt for colluding with Thathri since the former was not guilty of anything. She has heard about her aunt being a witness to Thathri adroitly enticing and snaring men in the guise of *avarassyar*⁶ and other caste-women. It was at the age of sixty that Madhavi passed away. Chinnammu Amma recollects how her family made it a point to avoid situations in which children would be exposed to information about Thathri. “As whatever spoken about Thathri was distasteful, we did not care to listen either”, Chinnammu Amma adds. She has forgotten Thathri almost entirely.

III. Arangottukara Kunneru Nair is seventy-six now. His grandmother was Thathri's maid. They were coevals too. When Thathri's horoscope was examined on her attaining puberty, she was divined to “face excommunication”. It was also prophesied that her domicile would be burnt to dust. Both proved true. That the local people set her *illam* afire twice bears this out.

Kunneru Nair is not much informed about Thathri's fate after her ostracism. He has heard that Thathri had an assistant named Annamma (a Christian by faith) near Kuriyedathu *illam* and that Thathri embraced Christianity through her mediacy. Thathri's family found it hard to live as they had been ostracised by all their relations. There was nobody to support them.

⁵*Varyam* is the name of the house where the intermediate caste of *Varriers*, who performed ancillary roles in a temple, live.

⁶*Varasyaris* a female member of the aforementioned caste. It was common for many Brahmins to have sexual relationships with these women. Namboothiris could cook and eat in a *varyam*, though the food prepared by the members of the house was forbidden to him. For a detailed description of the subtle and complex relationships between Namboothiris and intermediate castes see P. P. Bhaskaranunni op cited 116 – 118.

Their kith and kin feared they would also incur the ordeal of excommunication if they helped Thathri's family. Nobody was supposed to be seen there during daytime. He has heard that a family would come there before daybreak to sweep the courtyard and to wash soiled utensils. It was by selling the ornaments left in the *illam* that they survived. But they were not permitted to venture out of the house even for this purpose. A man named Enthu helped them in selling jewellery. Thathri's father and mother left for Kashi as pilgrims at the end.

Senile infirmities and diseases make Kunneru Nair reluctant in conversations about Thathri.

IV. "She will bring disaster and disgrace!" This is how the astrologer Thirumittakkodu Karuthedam Namboothiri reacted on overhearing Namboothiris discussing the birth of a girl in Kalpakassery at the bath ghat. The prophesy came true. She even got the name of the village whore, didn't she?

A native of Thathri's birthplace responded so on the condition of anonymity.

V. In her childhood Kappiyoor Parvathy Antarjanam has heard others remark that her face resembled Thathri's who was her grandmother's elder sister's daughter. During her childhood whenever the members in the family had to mention Thathri's name they used the monosyllabic sound 'Em' instead. To realize that this 'Em' was none other than Thathri she had to grow up still. "My mother was afraid to send me out to study because I looked like Thathri. Then slowly this feeling was overcome. And I loved to study."

She beamed on being asked why she did not search more about Thathri. The smile connoted that it is a subject that no one wanted to remember and recount. It is something best left untouched. But she doesn't turn her back on enquiries regarding Thathri. Remarks about her physical resemblance to Thathri do not enrage her; neither does she quarrel with Thathri's history.

She clearly remembers the details that her mother had recounted about Thathri's wedding day. The people who went for the marriage were expecting a warm and grand welcome. But everyone was held up at the doorway as a serious discussion was going on inside. The elder brother, who had arranged Thathri's marriage with his younger brother to satiate his

own carnal desires, was hell-bent on spending the first night with the bride!⁷. She recollects these ghastly events narrated by those who had heard them and infers that the vengeful decisions and actions of Thathri in subsequent life might have been propelled by this gross humiliation⁸.

Parvathy Antarjanam is seventy-one. By the time she reached eight, her mother had already performed the *pulakuliadiyanthiram* (rituals performed by the close relations of the deceased) for Thathri thrice . How did they come to know about her demise? Who told them? None of these are greatly clear. When the news of the death reached first she took the ritual bath assuming the information was true. Later it transpired to be fake. The same farce repeated twice more. Exasperated at having been made a fool, unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood, I have heard my mother wail “How many times more will I have to perform *pulakuli*?”. “This damned creature is not dying. Even if her death is confirmed, there is no need to perform the *pulakuli*”, Parvathi Antarjanam remembers someone in the *illam* murmuring thus.

VI. I am of the view that the Kathakali maestro Kavunkal Sankarapanikkar was a towering historical figure among those who were ostracised in Thathri’s chastity trial. The ban at *illams* and *kovilakams* prompted him to adopt a new method and aesthetics of the stage. By converting fallow paddy fields into makeshift stages, Panikkar was able to lure his audience there. During those days no performance could be complete without Panikkar. No wonder the masculine charm of Kavunkal’s *Kathi* (a make-up in Kathakali) enamoured Thathri. We have heard of her instructing Panikkar to reach her chamber in costume , haven’t we?

What was Thathri’s deposition?

“The performance at Koodalloor. This man’s Keechakan⁹. Talked about that story.

⁷ The novel *Bhrashtuby* Madambu Kunjikkuttan (1973) contains a similar scene. Cheriendathu Thundan arranges his brother Neelakantan’s marriage to the young Paphthikutty but consummates marriage himself.

⁸ The novel also suggests this as a reason behind her later actions.

⁹*Keechakavadham* (The Slaying of Keechaka) is an Attakatha by Irayimman Thampi. (114, *Malayala Sahityacharitra Samgraham* P. Sankaran Nambiar, Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University, Malappuram, 2017)

If I see Keechakan being performed I said I shall oblige Keechakan¹⁰. I made him sing the verse “sodarashrunu” .My wish came true in the *pathayappura*¹¹ during the day. I liked him because of the performance.He has often performed in the *illam* free of cost. Was thirty two years of age. There is a stain in the front teeth.He would wear a dental cap made of silver during performance” (Thathri’s words from the *Smarthavicharam Records* in the Kochi Archives).

Keechakan – Puranic Encyclopaedia . Vettom Mani. SPCS, Kottayam 1982.pp. 270-71.

The son of King Kekaya and brother-in-law of Matsya, King of Virata. He followed his sister Sudeshna to Virata when the King married her and occupied the post of the army commander. During the year long *Agnatavasa* (the year spent incognito) when the Pandavas reached the kingdom of Virata Draupadi assuming the name Malini, took up the position of a maid in waiting attending to the Queen Sudeshna and her daughter Princess Uttara. Once Keechaka happened to lay eyes on Malini/Draupadi and was besotted with her. Upon failing to gain her favour he requested his sister to send her maid to wait upon him. The Queen ordered Draupadi to reach Keechaka’s palace on the pretext of collecting food and drinks . Draupadi, manhandled by Keechaka upon her arrival manages to have a narrow escape by the intervention of a *rakshasa* who had been appointed for her safety. With tears in her eyes Draupadi informed her husband Bhima of the circumstances. Bhima vowed to kill him and informed her of his plan to ensnare the villain. Accordingly Draupadi accosted Keechaka and invited him for a secret rendezvous at midnight in the dance hall. Keechaka all decked up for the romantic rendezvous embraced the person lying on the bed there repeatedly. It was none other than Bhima who lay waiting for his prey. Bhima, the ferocious one crushed him in course of the embraces.

¹⁰ Note that it is the heroic character, not the artiste in flush and blood, that fascinates Thathri.

¹¹ A big granary adjacent to Brahmin houses in Kerala

Sankarapanikkar's nephew Chathunni panikkar was a witness to the performance which ended his excommunication. Chathunni panikkar talked about this in an earlier conversation thus:

“I don't know the full details of the entire period of his excommunication. But the belief that he remained a complete outcaste and was socially boycotted is wrong. He hadn't retreated a step but remained brave and resilient. He donned a lot of roles in the Mathoor Kaliyogam. In reality the Namboothiris of the time were secretly longing to see his performances. The performance which ended his excommunication took place in Kollamkodu palace. I was present on the occasion. It was a day performance in front of the king of Kochi. He donned the role of Bheema in *Bakavadha*¹² and recited a single verse to Kunthi. After that he prostrated before the king who gave him a prize and with that the excommunication got annulled. His swan song was the same role at Thichur Ayyappa temple.”

What attracted Thathri was not merely the visual elegance and appeal of Kathakali. She was scholarly and well versed in the Kathakali texts. How did she reward those who lent these texts?

¹²Bakavadham- *Bakavadham* (The Slaying of Baka) is an [Aattakatha](#) written by Kottayathu Thampuram (*Malayala Bhashacharitam*. P.318- P. Govindapilla. Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University, Malappuram, 2017. (108, *Malayala Sahityacharitra samgraham* P. Sankaran Nambiar, Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University, Malappuram, 2017) In the story featured in *Adiparva* of the *Mahabharata*, Baka was a *Rakshasa* who created trouble for the villagers of Ekachakra. He would eat a man everyday that the villagers would send him. Once Bhima upon the order of his mother Kunti took the turn of a Brahmin who was supposed to be the dinner of this *Rakshasa*. Bhima killed him in the fight that followed. (*Puranic Encyclopaedia* 759-60).

-If five books including *Narakasuravadham* and *Kirmiravadham*¹³ were given to me I promised I would consent. The books were bought and I agreed.(From the *Smarthavicharam* records)

It can be seen that the era of feminine appreciation in Kathakali began with Thathri. Perhaps due to the ignominy that she earned through it, there were no active interventions on the part of women towards Kathakali appreciation in Kerala for the next hundred years. Geetha's book *Women and Kaliyarrangu*¹⁴, published at the beginning of this century, can be a continuation or rupture of this tradition. Geetha's book was neglected and rejected maybe because women are a miniscule minority among the Kathakali artists and fans in Kerala, and feminists are hardly Kathakali aficionados. K.P.S. Menon suggests that her connoisseurship had the potential to alter the subject position and agency of women in the ways Kathakali is decoded and appreciated: "But for his ostracism the period presently

¹³*Narakasuravadham* (The Slaying of Narakasura) is Kathakali play by Karthika Thirunal Rama Varma Maharaja and Aswathi Thirunal. (*Malayala Sahitya charitram* 100. P.K. Parameswaran Nair.sahitya Akademi. 13 reprint 2014.) (117. , *Malayala Sahityacharitra Samgraham* P. Sankaran Nambiar, Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University, Malappuram, 2017)

- Narakasura, the *Asura* king with capital at Pragjyotisha was the son of Bhumidevi, . He had 16100 wives. Killed in the fight with Srikrishna. (*Puranic Encyclopaedia* 604-05).

Kirmeeravadham- (The Slaying of Kirmeera) is a [Kathakali](#) play([Aattakatha](#)) written by Kottayathu Thampuran . (*Malayala Bhashacharitam*. P.318- P. Govinda pilla. Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University, Malappuram, 2017; (108, *Malayala Sahityacharitra samgraham* P. Sankaran Nambiar, Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University, Malappuram, 2017)

Kirmeera was Baka's brother and wanted to take revenge on Bhima who killed him in the fight. (*Puranic Encyclopaedia* 269)

¹⁴ The slim volume was published by SPSS, Kottayam, in 2000.

known as Pattikamthodi's¹⁵ age would have been known as KavunkalSankarapanikkar's age" (*Kathakali Rangam* p 254). He wistfully remarks: "If only Thathri had not been a fan of Kathakali!"

VII. What are the other tales in store about Thathri? Her life became free fodder for stories, novels, poems, plays and movies in Malayalam. Research and investigation have amalgamated giving birth to new histories of Thathri. The leitmotif of women's debauchery has played a role in endearing this subject to many. The poem "Aparadhiniyayaya Antarjanam" by OduvilKunjikrishna Menon, a chapter in the novel *Hemalathaby Sadasyathilakan* T. K. Velupilla, Lalithambika Antarjanam's short story, novels like MadambuKunjukuttan's *Bhrashtu*, Unnikrishnan Puthoor's *Amruthmadhanam*, Nandan's *KuriyedathuThathri*; the poem "Oru Koodiyattathinte Katha" by M. Govindan, the play *Ororo Kalathilum* by Sreeja Arangottukara; the movies *Bhrashtu*, *Marattam* and *Parinayam*; P. Bhaskaranunni's study titled *Smarthavicharam*, AlangottuLeelakrishnan's investigative narrative *SmarthavicharathinteNizhalvazhikal*; portions in K.P.S. Menon's *Kathakali Rangam*—many and variegated are the accounts that evoke Thathri's life in Malayalam. How did the Malayali readers and viewers receive them? How did these works influence them? How are we going to welcome those Thathri narratives waiting to be written?

VIII. Just one year remains for the historical trial of Thathri to turn a century. Her trial remains a locus of investigations still. Thathri is the central character in the first and last chastity trial in which the highest number of men were excommunicated. In the socio-cultural history of Kerala, Thathri continues to be a feminine persona constantly studied and examined. But Thathri, who bravely fought against the shackles binding the Antarjanams and challenged male supremacy even before the Namboothiri renaissance, is a closed chapter among the Namboothiri community.

¹⁵Pattikkamthodi Ravunni Menon (1880-1948) was a renowned and influential Kathakali artiste.

In the magazine *Lakshmi bhai*¹⁶ published in Edavam 1080 (Malayalam Era) there appeared an article by Vallathol¹⁷ titled ‘BharthruSushrusha’¹⁸(Serving the husband). eulogising the chastity of women. Many prominent writers including Kottarathil Sankunni¹⁹wrote responses to it. This article betrays the extent to which Malayalis as a society were concerned with the chastity of women. The article was published in the same year that of Thathri’s trial. The fear that if a Brahmin woman goes to such lengths in violating moral norms, women in other communities will go even further afield is the subtext here. V.T.Bhattathirippadu, who woke Namboothiris to contemporary realities also justifies the mis/conduct of Thathri thus: “It can be illustrated that Thathrikutty was countering the male sexual anarchy of the then patriarchy by wilfully employing the very same weapon” (V. T. *Krithikal*. P 627). (Isn’t there another Thathri operating in the story “Agni” written by Sithara S.²⁰?). See how V.T. differs from his coreligionists in assessing

¹⁶ A now extinct Malayalam magazine for women started in 1906 by Vellaikkal Narayana Menon from Trichur.

¹⁷Vallathol Narayana Menon (1878 – 1958), one of the most influential Malayalam poets of the twentieth century.

¹⁸ To know the popular perceptions of female chastity in 19th century Keralam see, *Pathiorithasathakam* (1879) of Chathunny Vaidyar. Ed Dr. M. Sreenathan (Tirur: Malayalam University, 2018) . It is a normative/prescriptive text in 100 stanzas.

¹⁹Kottarathil Sankunni (1855-1937) is now chiefly remembered as the author/compiler of *Aithiyamala* (literally a garland of legends), an immensely popular and highly influential compendium of quasi-historical, anecdotal, mythical and folklorist narratives. Originally collected by Sankunni and serialised in the *Bhashaposhini* monthly from 1909 to 1934, the narratives were later collected into book form and is one of the best sellers in Malayalam. Right now it is published by Current Books, Trichur, and a total number of 1,73,000 copies have been sold as on 2008. The work under reference is central in moulding our collective repertoire of imagination as many of its narratives have undergone adaptations, appropriations and imitations.

²⁰An English translation of the story by R.K. Jayasree can be had from www.samyukta.info > wp-content > uploads > fiction > S. Sithara > Agni

Thathri whom they are trying to deliberately forget for having tarnished the whole community. Why did V. T. exhort every Namboothiri and Antarjanam to build a memorial in their minds for Thathri? It was V. T.'s mission to emancipate the Brahmin women from their oppressive familial confines and Thathri was the first liberated woman he had come across. He discovered positive and beneficial aspects in Thathri's quest for freedom and in her travels. V. T. cannot describe the first woman from the Namboothiri community to withstand men as 'fallen' and sought to understand Thathri's deviance as a daring trek.

Understood in this way, doesn't the early history of feminism in Kerala germinate with Thathri's forlorn struggle? We can say that celebration of freedom in women's life begins with and from Thathri's undaunted life. She possessed the skill and sensibility to get along and quarrel with the contemporary social system. She was not only beautiful but also knowledgeable. She submitted herself for the sake of knowledge and appreciation of art. She stipulated certain conditions before yielding to the men smitten with love and lust. Her insatiable craving spread to different arenas. She was able to master all of them effortlessly. It is to be noted that the men who were ostracised for having had illicit relationship with her formed a motley group.

What animates her story is the questions of morality. Sexual anarchy verging on sin is the backbone of her life story. Our own secret sexual desires are at play in the countless retellings about Thathri. Who doesn't want to enter and explore her mystique? We cannot blame those who wish they were contemporaneous and proximate with Thathri. She reappears as a nemesis in the pseudo-moralistic thoughts of the Malayali.

IX. Women in the mould of Thathri are born from the lifestyle of the Namboothiris itself. There was a well thought-out plan behind the institution of chastity trial. It was devised to prevent miscegenation at any cost and to ensure a Namboothiri woman would never give birth to a child of mixed parentage. The provision to segregate women accused of adultery and subsequent excommunication have plunged many a Brahmin woman to grief and misery. The reforms within the Namboothiri community were a revolt against such practices too.

What were the marital conventions of Namboothiris in the past? Only the eldest in the family had the right to marry from his own caste and he was at liberty to have any number of formal alliances. The bride had to bring a part of her paternal property as dowry and after the marriage she would be confined within the walls of her husband's household. The younger sons of a Namboothiri family were known as *Aphbhans*. They were destined to be

content with *Sambandham* from Nair /intermediate castes known for their promiscuity and easy availability.

The picture drastically changed during the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century. The number of women married to the eldest son swelled and the nonagenarian Brahmins with eight or nine wives began to die out fast. The number of widows shot up commensurate with male deaths. In order to douse the fire of sex, they began to have secret liaisons. The aging patriarchs, on discerning such relationships, began to accuse them of adultery and segregate them from the rest of the family.

It was in this context that the younger Namboothiris began to reason anew: why should we settle for *Sambandham* when we can marry these beautiful widows living alone? To propagate this shortcut they staged plays and held Kathakali performances throughout the land. The widows also liked the idea and remarriages became pretty popular soon.

Thathri's life after her excommunication was wretched. On the heels of the excommunication the king of Cochin himself took the initiative to arrange her shelter at Chalakudy. What is her story like after that?

What befell Thathri next? How did she spend her later days?

It is heard that after a sojourn at Chalakudy she left for Tamilnadu and spent the rest of her life there. Why didn't the contemporary newspapers follow her up?²¹ That is to say why were people unwilling to walk alongside history? Her putative destinations in Tamilnadu are conflictingly described as Vadapalani, Pothannur and Thrissinapally, and she is rumoured to have converted to Christianity. It is heard that she gave birth to two children and that her daughter's daughter went on to become a celebrated actress in Malayalam. She revealed sixty-four names during the trial and had more to disclose. Surprisingly no stories about her deal with pregnancy or abortion, though she admitted/claimed to have sexual relations with such a large number of men. Was she aware of contraceptive methods from her own knowledge or from someone else's?

²¹ They were otherwise anxious about the proceedings of the trial and everything was reported in great detail.

One alternative explanation is that all the bodily identification marks that she produced against men in the trial were not seen by herself, but obtained through loyal maids, and she had the acuity to memorise and recount every detail. And there was none from non-Hindu communities in the long list of paramours she stated in the trial.

No works which contain detailed investigations about Thathri enlighten us on what happened to her after the excommunication. Among the living too, nobody has a finite and accurate answer. All the investigations about Thathri by writers are limited to the territorial boundaries of Kerala. Why did the cultural and historical investigations, based as they were on conjectures and hearsay, not spill over into Tamilnadu? In other words, all those who wrote about Thathri as their central character stood paralysed in front of this question. Is our historical sense getting so alien that it falters in pursuing and retrieving an event which occurred a hundred years ago?

It is heard that an Anglo- Indian, an officer at the railway station in Pothannur, married her and that later they moved to Madras.

A priest whom he befriended in train took Thathrikutty to an orphanage. She was married later. She gave birth to two girls and a boy(*Kuriyedathu Thathri- Nandan*, p 66/68).

She was ostracised by everyone. At last somehow she reached the Pothannur railway station and a son of Nazareth sheltered her. It is heard that Kuriyedathu Thathri married a Christian priest. (*Amrithamadhanam- Unnikrishnan Puthoor*).

After her ostracism, a Nair clerk of an advocate from Palakkad married Thathrikutty. She has two daughters in that relationship(*Smarthavicharam- P. Bhaskaranunni*, p. 179).

In this way Thathri's exiled life does not lend itself to precise inferences. Read in conjunction with news of her death that Kappiyoor Parvathy Antarjanam heard as an eight-year old girl, Thathri must have passed away some where in the 1940s. Who embarked on the thoroughgoing enquiries into the genealogies of those disgraced because of Thathri? Even if we exclude the extinct families, what forms could the tales of families tainted with the dark shadow of excommunication assume? That the list of people who were ostracised is readily available eases such an enquiry.

Thathri has not been exorcised from among us; she lives on with us in the form of myths, cuss words and gibes. There are also people with the attitude that it is not their business to probe such a despicable being.

We are enjoying the comfort of unsolved enigmas. It is a part of the hypnotic lives that Malayalis lead. The story of an era would have been complete if we had located and recorded her life in Tamilnadu properly. Beauty of incompleteness is also enjoyable. We have awarded the ultimate punishment of oblivion to Thathri. It is definitely easier and more convenient to forget than to remember.

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