

## BUGRI

**Bugiri** (pastoral pipe), which holds an unique place in Badaga music is at once one of the sweetest and most revered instrument to play. Its tones faithfully follow the human voice. Thus, since the vocal art is given pride of place in Badaga music, The bugiri requires extreme dedication and endurance from an aspirant. When they hold the bugiri close to the lips, and this transforms the pain in their finger in to soul stirring music.

The body of the **bugiri** is made out of a single block of bamboo with six holes. The **bugiri**, whose name is said to derive from the ancient Tamil word **vayir**, which means bamboo, trumpet. In Tamil professional musicians were called **vayiriyar** or **vayiriya maakkaL** and it was attested in sangam literature. **bugiri** used mostly as a solo instrument is Badaga music. At the same time, especially during worship few musicians play with their instruments together. The music represents the theme of rural life, especially pastoral life.

Unlike other instrument, **bugiri** is not taught in institutions, but remains within families. Although people from outside the family circle also learn, a large majority of **bugiri** exponents hail from family traditions. There is no woman player of **bugiri**. They are even forbidden from touching.

**bugiri** is a kind of bamboo flute used invariably in worship. Formerly each **Badaga** house had a **bugiri** and most of the males especially elders used to play this instrument. People used to play **bugiri** for hours together. This instrument is considered as sacred and is preserved with religious care. The **bugiri** player should observe certain cleanliness. It is preserved by applying butter. Its music is very impressive and enchanting and it is more or less like a conch sounded musically with soulful and enchanting modulation of tone. **bugiri** music was used to console persons who are ill. It was sounded in funerals by relatives to express their mourning. Above all the **bugiri** music is considered as spiritual. Many elders regret to lack of interest among youth to pursue this tradition.

In the quite of the early morning or night hours their music is carried by the cool weather that resides through the green plateau. An unusual feeling of peace settles over the listeners. Normally bugiri players love to sing. But their forte is making the bugiri instrument synonymous with song. The bugiri music has the tradition richness of the melodious songs.

*Note:* This instruments is played by other tribes of the Nilgiri origin too. Mostly these instrument makers are Kasabas of the Nilgiris.

## BUGIRI

by **IR Loganathan, Ithalar**

[from Silver Jubilee Souvenir 1993 of Badaga Welfare Association, Madras]

Bugiri is one of the musical instruments of our ancestors. This looks like a long flute. There are a couple of small side branches at the knots of this bamboo instrument. There are six holes in this. It is learnt that this instrument was kept in all the Badaga houses in earlier days. It is also said that all the elders had the capacity to play this instrument in those days. This was played near the patients/suffering so as to make them go off to sleep forgetting their pain. During funerals, the relatives of the deceased played this to vent their sorrow.

It is difficult to exactly say the type of music/sound the bugiri produced. Still, it may be like the sound of a big fire, or the sound produced when things are rubbed systematically, or like the sound of a spinning top or like that of a constant 'sangu' being blown. There are high and low notes produced by this instrument which can kindle deep feelings as well as to make one get thoroughly engrossed.

\* \* \* \* \*  
-----

