

# A Manual of Badaga Festivals (as observed in Athigaratty village)

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## Badaga Calendar

The Badaga calendar has twelve months like the English and Tamil calendar. All the Badaga festivals are fixed based on Badaga calendar.

Badaga months start on the new moon day (*muttu*). Badaga festivals are fixed based on the new moon day, usually the Monday following the new moon day. It may so happen that two new moon days fall within the same English month. In those months, there is always a confusion about which new moon day should be considered for fixing the festival date. The thumb rule being followed is that all Badaga months start between 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the English month. This implies that if two new moon days occur within a single English month, that which falls before 10<sup>th</sup> of the English month is ignored and the other new moon day is reckoned with.

There is another important difference. The Badaga new moon day is supposed to occur one day prior to the new moon day mentioned in the *pancha:nkas*. Festivals are held only after the crescent moon is noticed. It is usually very difficult to sight to crescent on the second day, i.e., the day after new moon, when a very faint outline of the moon will flash for a few seconds before disappearing. Therefore, Badaga festivals are held usually on or after the third day after the new moon. Thus, if the *pancha:nga* new moon day falls on a Sunday, the Badaga *muttu* is on Saturday, and hence festivals can be held on the Monday, the third day after *muttu*. All Badaga festivals, with the exception of *Ma:si magam* and *ka:rtigai di:pam*, are held only on waxing crescent moon days.

Badaga month	Equivalent Tamil month	English month	Name of the festival	Day
<i>Ku:dal</i>	<i>Tai</i>	Jan - Feb	<i>Ka:nikke habba</i> ( <i>Dodda habba - kade uppu atto:du, e:r ma:tto:du</i> )	Monday after new moon
<i>A:la:ni</i>	<i>Ma:si</i>	Feb - Mar	<i>Ma:ri habba</i> <i>Ma:si magam (te:r habba)</i>	First Friday after New Moon Full moon day

Nalla:ni	Panguni	Mar - Apr	Kenda habba (bittikkodu, e:r u:do:du)	
A:ni	Citirai	Apr - May	No festival	
A:dire	Vaika:si	May - Jun	Ka:r uppu - Uppa:tta Jena budo:du	Monday Tuesday, Friday, Sunday
A:di	A:ni	Jun - Jul	Hallaga halatto:du	Monday
A:vani	A:di	Jul - Aug	Devva haba - patta harasodu, tene etto:du Gangamma habba	Monday, Tuesday Next Monday
Peratta:di	A:vani	Aug - Sep	Gowrabba Tene etto:du	Monday Tuesday
Dodda di:vige	Puratta:si	Sep - Oct		
Kiru di:vige	Aipasi	Oct - Nov	Haccikkore habba	
Tai	Ka:rtigai	Nov - Dec	Nelliore habba Ka:tigai Di:pam	Monday Full Moon day
Hemma:tti	Ma:rgazhi	Ded - Jan	Teppa kula habba Ka:ppu habba Sakkala:ti habba	Monday Sunday Monday

### ***Ku:dal* month and *ka:nikke (dodda) habba***

The first Badaga month is *ku:dal*. It starts around mid-January and ends in mid-February and coincides with the Tamil month of *tai*. In *me:rku na:du si:me*, the *ka:nikke habba* or *dodda habba* is celebrated in this month. *Uppatto:du*, the ceremony of feeding salt to the cattle is conducted on the *dodda habba* day. *Uppatto:du* is done twice a year: the ceremony held in the month of *ku:dal* is known as *kade uppu* and the ceremony held in the month of *A:dire* is called *ka:r uppu*.

The month of *ku:dal* and the *ka:nikke habba* is beginning of slack period for agriculture. It is the height of winter and till the onset of rains after two or three months, there will not be much of agricultural activity. The fodder for the cattle, particularly buffaloes, will also be scarce. We must remember that prior to taking to full-time agriculture, Badagas were part agriculturists (mainly swidden or shifting agriculture) and part herdsmen, and they maintained a large posse of buffaloes in each household, which were the *banda badukku*, the wealth of the Badaga families, used for both ploughing and as milch animals. During this off-season, the cattle herds were taken to *malla:du*, the present the Wenlock Downs, and kept there for months for grazing. On *ka:nikke habba* day, prayers are offered to God, and an offering (*ka:nikke*) is made for the safety of the cattle and for a liberal yield of crops. The yoke (*e:r*) is off-loaded (*e:r matto:du*) from the cattle and they are given salt (*uppu*) which is an excellent emetic and a de-worming agent before their departure for *malla:du*. *Ka:nikke habba* being the first *habba* (festival) of the year, it is celebrated on a grand scale and was hence called *dodda habba*.

On the *dodda habba* day, the temple is opened. In Athigaratty village, by temple, we refer to the Mahalinga temple (*a:da gudi*). The Kariabettarayar temple is known by the name *devva mane*, the Godly house, but not a temple. *Dodda habba* is one of the only three occasions on which the temple is opened, the other two being the *devva habba* and the *kenda habba*. The *Siva linga*, the deity of the Mahalinga temple is kept in the *devva mane*. When the temple is opened on the three occasions, the *linga* is taken from the *devva mane* to the temple. People stay awake in the *devva mane* throughout the night prior to the festival, cleaning the premises, lighting *di:pam*, offering *pu:ja* and singing *bhajan* (this is known as “*savute adavadu*”).

Early next morning, the *siva linga* is taken to the temple. The entire path between the *devva mane* and the temple is cleaned. No women should cross the path of the deity. While the *pu:ja:ri* takes the *linga* in his loincloth, the *tu:de pujari* proceeds ahead of him with *dodda tu:de*<sup>1</sup> in his hand.

*Ka:nikke habba* is celebrated on Mondays. Prayer is offered in the temple and *prasa:d* distributed during this festival. In earlier days, women did not come to the temples, but nowadays they do. Each household makes an offering (*ka:nikke*) of not less than a quarter of a rupee without fail, praying for a good yield of crops and protection for the cattle.

In earlier days, *dodda habba* was celebrated on a grand scale for two days (Monday and Tuesday) and sons-in-law were invited. Games (*senda:tta*, lifting of huge stones, *illu* and throw-ball) and sports competitions including adventure sports were held on the second day. It was an occasion for many an eligible bachelor from neighbouring villages to show his mettle and to get a suitable match. Unlike others, *ku:dal* month was not inauspicious for marriages for Badagas.

Hence the saying: “*ku:dal utti ka:nikke konda:du*”.

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<sup>1</sup> *Dodda tu:de* is ... plant which is believed to purify the surroundings and offer protection against evil spirits.



In the pre-monsoon days, there is the frequent coming together (*ku:dal*) of clouds and hence the name *ku:dal*.

### ***A:la:ni* month and *ma:ri habba* and *ma:si magmam* festivals**

The second month in the Badaga calendar is *a:la:ni* coinciding with the Tamil month of *ma:si*. “*A:la:niyo a:du bettodu*” (Goat be sacrificed in *a:la:ni*) is a Badaga saying. Though no animal sacrifice is done in Athigaratty, the ritual of sacrificing a goat by pushing it down a cliff was prevalent in Kundah and Poranga:d areas. Goat sacrifice continues till date in Todana:d area.

*A:la:ni* month is the beginning of Nilgiri summer (*be:sage*) and epidemics of cholera, chicken pox and small pox used to break out during that season. People believed that these epidemics break out due to the displeasure of Goddess *Ma:ri* and to propitiate Her, sacrifices were done. On the first Friday after the new moon in the month of *a:la:ni*, the *ma:ri habba* is held in Athigaratty, the first *ma:ri habba* in *me:kuna:du si:me*. This festival is celebrated on Sundays or Mondays in other areas. Turmeric and *ve:ppilai* are used in plenty during this month, both of which have got antiseptic properties.

The Athigaratty *ma:ri amman* temple belongs to the six villages surrounding it: Athigaratty, Godalatty, Bickol, Muttina:du, Ko:deri and Ka:so:lai and all the villages join together in the functions. No sacrifice is done. But the *amman* is decorated and *pu:ja* offered.

Another important festival being celebrated in *a:la:ni* in Athigaratty is the *ma:si magam*, the car festival. This is the most important festival for Athigaratty. The celebrations spread over almost a week. It is celebrated on the full-moon day in *magara nakshatra* in the Tamil month of *ma:si*, the same day on which the car festival is held in Karamadai. All women married to other villages and their husbands are invited to this festival. A finely decorated temple car is drawn and a drama performance is also held.

Three days prior to the Car festival, the Lord’s flag (*ba:vattu*)<sup>2</sup> is hoisted. The celebrations last a full week from the day *ba:vattu* is hoisted. All rituals connected with the festival are done by local *pu:ja:ris* and no outsider is engaged for this purpose. All the surrounding villages too join the festivities.

### ***Nalla:ni* month and *kenda habba***

The third Badaga month of *nalla:ni* falls in March – April, coinciding with the Tamil month of *a:ni*. The festival called *uva:di* in Badagu and *uga:di* in Kannada and Telugu is celebrated on this month. The *kenda habba*, the fire-walking festival is celebrated in Athigaratty on the *uva:di* day. Even though *kenda habba* is celebrated every year, the temple is opened once in two years only. On the days when the temple is opened, the *siva linga* is brought from the *devva mane*, after following the ritual of *savute adavadu*. During the years when the temple is not opened, *pu:ja* is performed on the veranda of the temple.

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<sup>2</sup> A bamboo tree is used for the pole for hoisting the *ba:vattu*. The bamboo tree is replaced once a few years. The tree is obtained from forests near Pilloor or Chengal estate, almost 20 kms away from Athigaratty, and it is carried all the way up to the village by the youth.

Long ago, *kenda metto:du*, the fire-walking ceremony, was conducted in Athigartty, but over the last few decades, the ritual is not conducted. It is clear from the fact that the temple is opened once in two years, *kenda mettodu* was performed in earlier year once in two years. During the years the temple is opened, *pu:ja* is conducted and *prasa:da* prepared, but the actual distribution of the *prasa:da* is done only in the night at the *devva mane*, where *pu:ja* is offered to Kariabettaraya, *arake (archana)* is done, and the *prasa:da*, mixed with the *prasa:da* brought from the Mahalinga temple, is distributed to the devotees.

On the day following *kenda habba*, the ceremony of *bitikkodu* or *e:r u:do:du* is performed. The rains are expected any time, and it is time for restarting the agricultural operations. To symbolise this, the *e:r* (plough) is placed symbolically on the cattle (?) (*e:r u:do:du*). The *pu:ja:ri* sows *ganje* (barley) seeds in a secluded place, not frequented by cattle and women, on this day. A few months later, after the barley seeds sprout and grow and give out tender ears, the *pu:ja:ri* will harvest them from these plants on the harvest festival of *devva habba*.

After the village *pu:ja:ri* sows the *ganje* seeds in the sacred plot, the *dodda mane* of each *kudumba* also sows *ganje* in their own plot. The villagers start their sowing in the next few days.

### **A:ni month**

The Badaga month corresponding to the Tamil month of *Citirai*, in April-May, is *A:ni*. The Nilgiris summer (*be:sage*) is at its height during this month. There are no festivals on this month.

### **A:dire month and ka:r uppu atto:du**

In the months of May - June comes the Badaga month of *a:dire*, coinciding with the Tamil month of *Vaika:si*. On the first Monday after the new moon day in *A:dire*, the cattle are given *ka:r uppu*.

The cattle, earlier taken to *Malla:du* during the month of *Ku:dal* (Jan - Feb) after *kade uppu* for grazing, are brought back to the village, after almost four months. In *Malla:du*, the cattle graze all and sundry. The fresh sproutings in the charred areas of spontaneous bush fires, are eagerly foraged by the cattle. In the process, greed feed as well as charcoal get into them, as also an assortment of worms. Hence, deworming is necessary and salt solution is given to them immediately on their return. Since *A:dire* falls in the *Ka:r* season, the ceremony is called *Ka:r uppu*, to distinguish it from the *Kade uppu* given in the month of *Ku:dal* in *Kade* season.

On the day of *Ka:r uppu*, *Pu:ja* is offered in the *devva mane* in the morning. Then the villagers take all their cattle to a common (*Nidika:du* and *Bu:dige* in the case of Athigaratty) and give salt water to them. All of them return to the village immediately afterwards.

In the *dodda mane* of every *kudumba*, adequate quantity of food and buttermilk are prepared and kept ready by lunch time. The returning villagers engage in various village games (*uppa:tta*) till lunch time. Then they go to their respective *dodda manes* and eat together from a single plate. This is to show symbolically that all of them are descendants of the same forefather and hence are brothers, sharing food from the same plate.

The Tuesday, Friday and Sunday following the Monday on which *uppatto:du* is done, the villagers suspend farm work (*jena budodu*) and pray for rains (*haraso:du*). The seeds sown in the month of *nalla:ni* (March - April) require rains. Hence, the prayer.

On each of these three days, *pu:ja* is done in the *devva mane* at about 7:00 a.m. After the *pu:ja*, the *pu:ja:ri* and the *u:r gowda* come out of the temple and wait outside. The villagers assemble in numbers, men on one side and the women on the other. Then they pray:

“ <i>Sa:vira mane janavu</i>	Persons from all the thousand houses
<i>Ku:di bandu adda buddanio:</i>	Have come together and offer prayers
<i>Me: u:du</i>	Give us rains
<i>Be: be:du</i>	Let crops flourish
<i>Ollittu ma:dali so:mi</i> ”	Lord, bless us all to prosperity

After prayers they return home and undertake no agricultural work; this prayer is done on all three days. At around this time, the *ko:de ga:yi*, the monsoon gales start and bring rains most of the years.

### ***A:di* month and the *hallaga (Gangammaga) a:latto habba***

The sixth month of the Badaga calendar is *A:di*, corresponding with the Tamil month of *A:ni* in June-July. (The Tamil *A:di* month occurs a month later.) On the first Monday following the new moon day in *A:di*, the festival of *hallaga a:lattodu* (pouring milk on the stream) is celebrated (similar to the Tamil *A:di perukku* festival). A small area on the bank of the stream near the Mahalinga temple is cleared. From each house, milk, coconut and a plantain are brought. The *pu:ja:ri* also brings milk and fruit. *Pu:ja* is conducted on the bank and the milk let into the stream. The temple is not opened on this occasion.

A different type of prayer is conducted on this occasion. The *u:r gowda* is seated near the stream; everybody touches his feet and pay obeisance. Then the following prayer (*arakke*) is offered:

<i>U:rella ku:di</i>	The entire village having assembled,
<i>Mallamma esara e:gi</i>	Praying to Goddess Mallamma
<i>Malla madeswarana esara e:gi</i>	[and] praying to Malla Ma:de:swara
<i>Anga hallaga a:lu buttano:</i>	We let milk into the river;
<i>Ni:ru perugi</i>	Let water be plenty;
<i>Me: u:du</i>	Let rains be plenty;
<i>Be: be:du</i>	Let there be a copious crop;
<i>Ollittu ma:dali so:mi</i>	Let Lord do us all good.

Mallamma is Goddess Gange amma and the prayer is for copious rain, water and yield.

### ***A:vani* month and *Devva habba* and *Gangamma habba***



The seventh month in the Badaga calendar is *A:vani*, corresponding to the Tamil *A:di* (Tamil *A:vani* falls a month later). The *Devva habba*, the Badaga harvest festival, is observed in this month, on Monday and Tuesday.

On the Thursday prior to the *Devva habba* Monday, is observed a ceremony called *Patta: haraso:du*. On this occasion, four silver replicas of the third eye of Lord Shiva are made and they are given to the four temples: *Devva mane*, *Mahalinga temple*, *Muttina:du temple* and *Anehatti temple*, after conducting *pu:ja*. Offerings (*ka:nikke*) are made to the God from each of the houses in these villages. The *ka:nikke* used to be a quarter of a rupee, but now it is at least a rupee and a quarter but can be five rupees and a quarter or ten rupees and a quarter. These offerings are made to the *Devva mane*. Out of the money collected, nearly 50 kgs of fresh paddy, a bunch of banana fruits and *hone*, the milk vessel made from bamboo.

On Thursday morning, after conducting *pu:ja*, a team leaves for Mettupalayam to procure these goods. A *ka:nikke* is given to Ko:de:ri village who procure and supply the bunch of plantains. The team visits the Nellitore Kariabettara:ya temple on Friday and offers prayers and *ka:nikke*. On its way back, it procures fresh paddy from Mettupalayam and four *hones* from Burlia:r, one each for the four temples. By Saturday, all these items reach the *Devva mane*.

Throughout Sunday night, people will stay awake in the *Devva mane* (*savute adavadu*). Around 10:00 p.m., the paddy brought is divided into three equal parts, one for the *Devva mane Kariabettara:ya* temple, one for the *Mahalinga* temple and the third for other purposes. In earlier periods, the portion earmarked for Mahalinga temple, was in fact given to Me:lu:r Maha:linga temple and the *prasa:da* (*u:tta*) in Me:lu:r temple was made from the paddy given from Athigaratty village. It used to be said, “Me:lu:ramana a:tta, Adikkarattiyamana u:tta”, i.e., the festivities are that of Me:lu:r people, but the *u:tta* is that of Adikkaratti. Due to a misunderstanding which crept up sometime in the past, this practice of sending paddy to Me:lu:r temple has been discontinued and it is given, instead to the Adigaratti Mahalinga temple. The left over portion of paddy from last year is given to the *Dodda mane* for use during *korambu* rituals.<sup>3</sup>

The next day morning, the *Siva linga* is taken by the *pu:ja:ri* to the Mahalinga temple, preceded by the *tu:de pu:ja:ri*, who wields the *dodda tu:de* to purify the path being taken by the *Siva linga*. As is the custom, the path is cleaned in advance, and women refrain from crossing the path during the journey. The *Sivalinga* is kept in the *Mahalinga* temple, decorated and *pu:ja* offered. Though *prasa:da* is prepared, it is not distributed there. It is mixed with the *prasa:da* (*u:ta*) of the Kariabettara:ya temple in the night and distributed there. In the night, while prayers are offered (*haraso:du*), it is explicitly mentioned that “we are celebrating *devva habba*” (*devva habba ma:dina*).

The next day night (i.e., Tuesday) also *u:ta* is conducted. During this day, the *pu:ja:ri* harvests the fresh ears of *ganje* he had sown during the *bittikko*: ceremony on *kenda habba* day. This fresh harvest is mixed with the *u:ta* being prepared. So also, many villagers would send their fresh harvest of beans, peas etc. to the temple before they start using them. All of them

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<sup>3</sup> Unlike other villages, during the *korambu* ritual, paddy is used in Adigaratti village, not *batta*.

are cooked and mixed with the *u:ta* in the temple and distributed. While offering prayers (*haraso:du*), it is mentioned that “*indu osattu eca ma:dina*”, i.e., “We are tasting the fresh grains today”.

On that day, all the *dodda manes* also harvest their *ganje* and prepare food (*tene ku:*) using the freshly harvested *ganje*. People attending the prayers in the *Devva mane*, go to their respective *Dodda mane* straight from the temple and partake of the *tene ku:* kept there.

*Dodda habbe* being the most important festival, the village annual body meeting (*maga: sabe*) is held, usually on Tuesday afternoon, to approve the accounts for the year just completed. After the accounts are approved, the new accounting year starts.

On the occasion of the *maga: sabe*, the *pu:ja:ri*, *u:r gowda* and the *tu:de pu:ja:ri* are given new clothes – dhoti, *si:le* and *mandare* (headgear). The honorarium due to them is also handed over during the *maga: sabe* meeting itself.

Also on this occasion, a new cloth is wrapped around the *sinnada ganige*, the golden insignia given to the village headman by the erstwhile rulers. Nobody is certain about the period from which it is in the village. It used to be in the custody of the village *maniaga:r* in earlier years. The insignia is treated as a holy substance and there were stringent restrictions – for example, menstruating women should not stay in the house which has the *sinnada ganige*. Hence, from time immemorial, the insignia is kept in the *Devva mane* in the case of Adikkaratti village. Every year a new cloth is wrapped around the ring, without removing the old one. The bundle has not been unraveled so far.

Thus *Devva habba* rings in everything new: a new year, new accounts, fresh harvest, new grains and vegetables, new clothes for the functionaries and new cloth for the insignia.

On the eighth day of the *Devva habba*, another festival called *Gangamma habbai* is celebrated. Milk is let into the stream near the Mahalinga temple during this festival, this time to thank the Goddesses Gangi and Gowri for good rainfall and a full harvest. The temple doors are not opened on this occasion. It is considered a lucky year if virgin milk from a just heifered cow is available on this occasion (as also during *Devva habba* and *Ka:nikke habba*). Hence, if such a cow has given birth a few days earlier, the first milking is delayed till the festival day and the first milk is given to the temple. Similarly, if anybody comes across honeycombs around this time, fresh honey is also provided to the temple by them. All these new products are offered to the Goddesses. Pu:ja is conducted, milk and honey poured into the stream (*Gangamma*) and on that night prayers and *u:ta* are done at the *Devva mane* temple.

### ***Peratta:di month and Gowrabba***

The eighth month of the Badaga calendar is *Peratta:di*, occurring in August – September, coinciding with Tamil *A:vani*. On the *A:vani* Monday is celebrated *Gowrabba*, seeking the blessings of Goddess Gowramma. This festival is akin to the Tamil *Varalakshmi Viradam* and the *Ke:da:ra Gowri Viradam*, the festival on which married women seek the blessings of Goddesses (*Sumangali Pira:rtanai*) for long lives for their spouses. *Gowrabba* coincides with *Ke:da:ra Gowri Viradam*. In earlier days, women donate oil to the temple. They light *di:pas* in their house which are not extinguished before the *U:ta* is over in the temple



(which will be evident by the sound of conch and the “O: O:” sound of people make when they finally leave the temple); they are let burn till the oil supply lasts. This was strictly observed in all the *Dodda manes*.

On the Tuesday following *Gowrabba* the *Pu:ja:ri* harvests the fresh crop of *korali* (*tinai* in Tamil). The earlier harvest on the day following *Devva habba* was that of *ganje* (barley). This harvest is also submitted to the God first, like in the *Devva habba*, by conducting *u:ta* with it. *Sa:me* was the staple food of Badagas and it was grown in plenty but it was not offered to God (may be because of its use during funerals?). Hence *korali tene* is offered to God. Once this offering has been done, people are free to harvest their *sa:me* crop. In the subsequent month a festival called *accikkore habba*, is observed when *accikke*, a puffed *sa:me* speciality is prepared which can be stored for months and used as ready-made food.

### ***Dodda Di:vige* month**

The ninth month of the Badaga calendar is *Dodda Di:vige*, coming in September-October, corresponding to Tamil *Puratta:si*. In Badaga society, all agricultural operations like sowing and harvesting will be done by the individual households only after the corresponding ceremonies of sowing and harvesting have been conducted both in the village temple and the *dodda manes*. Generally, the ceremonies in the *devva mane* temple and the *dodda mane* are not held on the same day; the ceremony is held in the *doddamanes* three or four days after it is held in the *devva mane*. Thus, three or four days after the village *pu:ja:ri* sows the seed on behalf of the temple, all the eleven *Dodda manes* in Athigaratty hold the ceremony. Similar is the case with harvests, the only difference being the harvesting of *Sa:me tene* in the *dodda manes* whereas it is *ganje tene* in the *devva mane*. The harvesting of *sa:me tene* in the *dodda manes* is done during the month of *dodda di:vige*.

### ***Kiru Di:vige* month and *Accikkore habba***

The tenth month of the Badaga calendar is *kiru di:vige*, corresponding to Tamil *Aippasi*, in October-November. *Kiru di:vige* is the month of incessant rain, *kiru*. Agricultural operations will be at a low ebb. *Accikkore habba* is being celebrated during this month.

*Accikke* is a ready-to-eat snack prepared from *sa:me*, the yester-year staple food of Badagas. *Accikke* has a long shelf life and can be eaten as it is, or can be soaked in hot water or milk and eaten. Because of the usefulness of *accikke*, a separate festival is celebrated marking the preparation of *accikke* and *hu:ta* is conducted in the temple on that night.

### ***Tai* month and *Ka:rtigai di:pam* and *Nellitore habba***

The next Badaga month occurring in November-December, corresponding to the Tamil *Ka:rtigai* is the Badaga *Tai*. Two important festivals - *Ka:rtigai Di:pam* and *Nellitore habba* are celebrated during this month.

*Nellitore*, near Mettuppalayam, is the place where *Aiya Kariabettara:ya* became one with God. The well in which *Aiya* threw himself is still there. There is a temple for *Kariabettara:ya* near the holy well. Every year, on the Monday following the sighting of the crescent moon after new-moon day, the *pu:ja:ri*, *Gowda* and a large number of people go to *Nellitore*, offer prayers to the *Linga* and the holy well there. On their return, they offer prayer at the *Amman*

temple on the banks of river *Bhavani*. That night, there is a *hu:ta* in the temple, during which it is mentioned that “We are celebrating *Nellitore habba*”.

During earlier years, the holy well in *Nellitore* was desilted and drained every twelve years and people vie for a *darshan* of idol of *Kariabettara:ya* immersed in the well. The last such function was held in the early 1970s. In those years, the *Lingam* in *Athigaratty* temple, after worship, is carried all the way from *Athigaratty* to *Nellitore* by foot by the *pu:jari*, who holds it in his lap. He is accompanied by the *Gowdas* and at least one person from each household, the procession being preceded by the *Tu:de*-wielding *Tu:de pu:jari*. The well is drained, *pu:ja* offered to the well and the *Linga* and *prasada* distributed to the devotees. The next morning, the procession returns to *Athigaratty*, all the way from *Nellitore* on foot, with the *pu:ja:ri* carrying the *Linga* all the while. That (Tuesday) night, *hu:ta* is conducted in the *devva mane*, wherein it is mentioned that “We are celebrating *Nellitore habba*”. The next day, there used to be a *Jaga paruva*, a grand feast for which people from all the four *na:d* ~~us~~ were invited. The next such grand *Nellitore habba* is long overdue.

On the full-moon day of this month (full moon on Tamil *Ka:rtigai* month), coinciding with the *Tiruvannamalai Deepam*, is celebrated the *Ka:rtigai Di:pam* festival or the *Lakkisa habba*. This day need not be a Monday. Until a few decades ago, the temple car was drawn on *Lakkisa habba* also. But because of the huge expenditure involved for the households to celebrate two car festivals every year, car festival is no more celebrated on *Ka:rtigai Di:pam*. However, the procession of idols is taken out both on the full-moon day and the next day. On the *Ka:rtigai Di:pam* day, the procession of the idol of *Kariabettara:ya* is taken out from *Devva mane* to the *Vina:yakar temple*; the next day is celebrated as *Vishnu Di:pam* and the idol of *Vishnu-Bu:de:vi-Sride:vi* is taken out in procession accompanied by *Bhajans*. Worship is offered on both days to the *Teppakulam* near the *Vina:yaka temple*. During the *hu:ta*, it is mentioned that “We are celebrating *Lakkisa habba*”. On both days, *di:pa* are lighted in all the houses.

### ***Hemma:titi* month and *Teppakula habba*, *Ka:ppu habba* and *Sakkala:ti habba***

The twelfth and last month of the *Badaga* calendar is *Hemma:titi*, coming in December-January coinciding with Tamil *Ma:rgazhi*. *Teppakula habba*, *Ka:ppu habba* and *Sakkala:ti habba* are celebrated on this month.

During *Hemma:titi*, in *Poranga:d si:me* and in villages like *Nunthala*, the *Hette habba* is celebrated on a grand scale. Though *Hette habba* per se is not celebrated in *Athigaratty*, on the same day is celebrated the *Teppakula habba*. Goddess *Hette* is believed to have become one with God in a well. Similarly, *Karibettara:ya Aiya* is also believed to have achieved immortality in a well. Not coincidentally, *pu:ja* is offered to the *teppa kula* during a number of festivals.

On the *Teppakula habba* day, the well in the place of origin of the drinking-water source (head works) is desilted and cleaned and *pu:ja* with coconut and fruits is offered at the site earmarked for this purpose. *Pu:ja* is also offered for the *Allajo:ni teppakkula*. In the *hu:ta* held during the night at the *devva mane*, it is specifically mentioned that “We are celebrating *Teppakula habba*”.

In the interregnum between the *Teppakula habba* and the *Ka:nikke (Dodda) habba*, is celebrated the *Sakkala:ti habba* on the Monday following the new-moon day after sighting the crescent. On the Sunday prior to the *Sakkala:ti* Monday, is celebrated the *Ka:ppu habba*.

On the *Ka:ppu habba* day, people go into the forests and bring the shoots of *Ka:ppu* plant. At about 4:00 p.m., they go in a procession chanting “*hau kau*” to the *devva mane* and throw the *Ka:ppu* plants on the roof of the temple. Then they go to their houses and throw *Ka:ppus* on their rooftops. *Ka:ppu* is a natural insecticide and is believed to protect the house. Even though most people still get the *Ka:ppu* from the forests, the practice of using *Kongu ka:ppu*, a bunch of *Ve:ppilai* and other plants from the plains, is on the increase.

On the *Sakkala:ti* day, *di:vige* is lighted in the *Devva mane* and *pu:ja* offered at about 4:00 p.m. Then, a *ko:lam*, of edible flour is drawn in the front yard of the temple. The flour *Ko:lam* is supposedly for the insects to feed on. Afterwards, they disperse chanting “*hau kau*”. Once this “*hau kau*” sound is heard from the temple, *ko:lams* are drawn in the yards of the houses.

For the last forty or fifty years, taking out the *Ma:rgazhi* round-up (procession) early in the morning, starting from the *Devva mane*, covering the entire village on all the thirty days of the *Tai* (Tamil *Ma:rgazhi*) month is in vogue in Athigaratty village. On the concluding day, the arrival of the new month (Tamil *Tai*) is celebrated with much fanfare.

Since the Badaga festival season starts with the *Ka:nikke* or *Dodda habba*, all the temples in the village are white-washed immediately after the *Sakkala:ti habba* and before the *Dodda habba*. The sanctum sanctorum of the Mahalinga and the *Devva mane* temples, are washed with white clay, not limestone, that too by the *Pu:ja:ri* himself. White-washing with limestone solution or colour-washing is done for the other walls of the temples. Only after the temples have been white-washed, the individual houses were cleared of the soot and white or colour-washed. The post *Sakkala:ti* season was suited for this purpose because it was an off-season for agricultural operations. During the other months, people were neck-deep in agricultural operations and it was well nigh impossible for them to maintain their houses.

All agricultural operations in the village, be it sowing or harvesting, has to be done by the individual households only after the necessary ceremonies have been performed in the village temple and also in their respective *dodda manes*. As already mentioned, the ceremonies in the *Dodda manes* take place three or four days after the corresponding ceremony is over in the *devva mane*.

In summary, there are twelve Badaga months: *Ku:dal*, *A:la:ni*, *Nalla:ni*, *A:ni*, *A:di:re*, *A:di*, *A:vani*, *Peratta:di*, *Dodda di:vige*, *Kiru di:vige*, *Tai* and *Hemma:tti*. We had a brief look at the festivals falling on each of these months:

It is clear from a careful analysis of these festivals, how intimately the lives of Badagas were intertwined with nature and the seasons. The agricultural seasons follow the natural seasons of rain and shine, and each agricultural operation of Badaga community was done only after dedicating it to the Gods. Thus religion and livelihood were inseparable in lives of olden



days Badagas. Not only that; they had separate festivals for each of the natural forces known to them and they worshipped them as Gods, like many Hindu communities. They worshipped land during *e:r matto:du* and *e:r u:du:du*. They worshipped water in the form of Goddess *Gangamma* during *Gangamma habba* and *Gourabba*. They worshipped fire on *Kenda habba*. They worshipped wind and gale during *Dodda habba* and when they prayed for rains. Thus almost all the five *pancha bu:tas* were worshipped. Nature worship and a life at peace with mother nature were the hall-marks of the blissful lives of Badagas.

[Unlike other villages, the rituals involving Kurumbas in agricultural operations like *de:ido:du* and *ari kattodu* were not observed in Athigaratty]

