

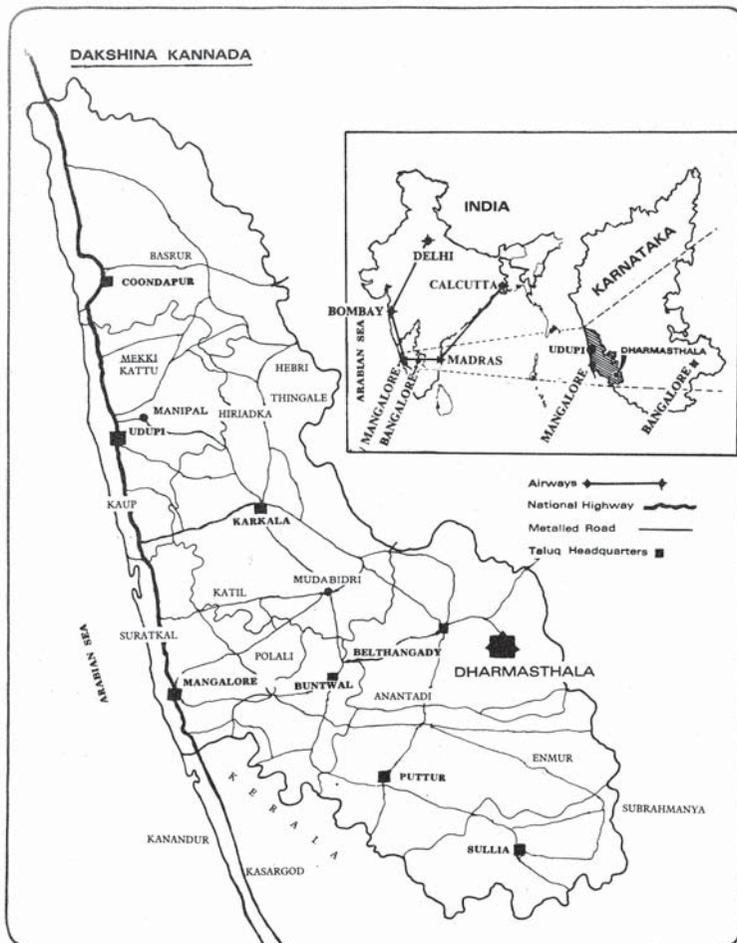
## Bhuta and Daiva : Changing Cosmology of Rituals and Narratives in Karnataka

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journal or publication title	Senri Ethnological Studies
volume	71
page range	51-85
year	2008-03-31
URL	<a href="http://doi.org/10.15021/00002613">http://doi.org/10.15021/00002613</a>

## ***Bhūta* and *Daiva*: Changing Cosmology of Rituals and Narratives in Karnataka**

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The spirit worship of *Bhūta*<sup>1)</sup> and *Daiva* is prevalent in the coastal area of Karnataka<sup>2)</sup> (Map 1). Since medieval times, this region has also been called *Tuḷuva* or *Tuḷunāḍu*, home to people speaking the language *Tuḷu*, forming a unique cultural zone (Bhatt 1975). This paper analyzes the present situation of *Bhūta* and *Daiva* worship under the social change in the



**Map 1** The coastal area of Karnataka  
(Upadhyaya and Upadhyaya 1984)

local context. The main topic is the study of changing cosmology created by the past kingship through oral tradition. *Bhūta* rituals consist of socio-cultural complex and rich oral traditions (Padmanabha 1976; Upadhyaya 1984; Gowda 1990; Brückner 1995).<sup>3)</sup> This study examines the folk concepts of the cosmology, the phases of spirit possession, and the process of long dance sequence, by analyzing the contents of *pāddana*, narrative invocations recited only during the ritual process, to take up the case study of *Baṅṭval Taluk*.

In general, *Bhūta* and *Daiva* rituals of Karnataka are connected to *Teyyam* ritual of North Kerala. They share the same elements and structure such as the type of mediators, the make-up of impersonators, the ritual sequence, the oracles by spirit possession, ornamentation, and dance, but *Bhūta* rituals tend to involve the fierce and strong trance. In recent years, *Bhūta* rituals are undergoing significant transformation into the folk performance in some areas.

This study analyzes the cosmology of *Bhūta* and *Daiva* focusing on the change of the *Bhūta* rituals and discusses the functions and meanings of *pāddana*, narrative invocations, based on the fieldwork in a particular area since 1994.

### ***Bhūta***

*Bhūta* rituals are conducted in small shrines or temples in villages during the dry season between November and April (until May in some areas). These rituals are called *mecci*, *nēma*, and *kōla*. The main spirits are generally called *Bhūta* or *Daiva*. *Bhūta* means “ghost” in Sanskrit. It also includes a derogatory nuance of higher castes who look down on the spirit worship by lower castes. This may be persuasive in some way as spirits of heroes who died unnatural or tragic deaths or those who have drowned. Local people believe the dead spirits are haunting in the area and they are afraid of these spirits.

On the other hand, the Basel Mission, which came to this region in the 19th century, attempted to convert the worshippers by dismissing local rituals and calling them “devil dance,” a remark that had impact on the intellectuals. Generally, *Bhūta* rituals are treated derogatorily by intellectuals and outsiders. However, local people worship ghosts, the dead, ancestors, heroes, animal deities, forest deities, mountain deities, earth deities, and tribal guardian deities. They are important and intimate objects of worship for the locals. In some situations, *Devas*, the god worshipped by higher class, are mixed or coexist with the lower rank deities called *Daivas* or spirits called *Bhūtas*. During rituals, *pāddana* narratives on the origin myth or historical story of the *Bhūtas* and *Daivas*, are chanted before the main rituals, most of which are filled with tragic atmosphere. Often the emotions of envy and grudge are also chanted about, depicting complicated historical background.

The following are some representative *Bhūtas* and *Daivas* chanted in *pāddanas*.<sup>4)</sup>

1. *Bobbarya*: Spirit of the one who died in sea, born between a Muslim father and Jain mother.
2. *Koti Chennaya*: Spirits of hero brothers who died tragic deaths
3. *Kalkuḍa Kallurti*: Spirits of a brother and a sister who were sculptors and whose one

- leg and one arm were cut off by the king.
4. *Pañjurli*: Spirit of a boar born from the incestuous affair between brother and sister boars, which died once but revived.
5. *Jumādi*: Bisexual spirit accompanied by a dumb messenger called *Baṅṭe* (warrior attendant).
6. *Malerāya*: Spirit hunting with bow and arrow in the mountains.

Today, *Bhūtas* are often thought to be the incarnations (*avatāras*) or messengers (*gaṇas*) of Hindu gods, thus the *pāḍdana* songs also tell stories of Hindu gods and their personifications. This phenomenon is called “Hindunization.” The same situation is found all over the India.

### Mediators between Humans and Spirits

The mediators between spirits and humans in the rituals consist of two types. The first type, called *pātri* (Plate 1), *darśan*, or *māni*, serves as a mediator to convey the power of the spirits through possession (*āvēsa*) by using the silver sword (*kaḍtalē*) and the bell as the ritual tools. Often, middle caste members such as *Billava* (toddy tappers) and *Mūlya* (pot makers) inherit their occupations and roles to serve them. *Billava* is also called *pūjāri*, a priest in lower status. In some cases, the relatives of the owners of old houses enshrining spirits are expected to become the mediators through generations. *Pātri* means container, *darśan* means apparition, and *māni* means vehicle. All of these words originate from Sanskrit. The lower or middle classes usually serve these roles based upon the caste (*jāti*) system.



Plate 1 *Pātri*

The second type of mediators belong to outcastes called the *harijan* (scheduled caste, untouchables), such as *Pambada*, *Parava*, and *Naḷike*. These mediators paint colors on their bodies meticulously, put on makeup, dance with gigantic and flamboyant bamboo frame of ornaments (*ani*)<sup>5)</sup> on his back, with anklets (*gaggara*) on his legs and gradually get into trance to tell oracles (*nuḍikatt*).<sup>6)</sup> In some cases, masks (*muga*)<sup>7)</sup> are used. This process is often called *kōla*, a word with multiple meanings such as cosmetics, ornament, transformation, and ritual. The whole ritual is often called *kōla* because the second type constitutes an essential part of rituals. The entire ritual process is also called *ārādhāne* as in the case of *Teyyam* in Kerala. To be exact, the second type may be characterized more as the impersonators than the mediators.

As both types of mediators are believed to have the ability to communicate directly with spirits or deities, they can be called “shamans” in the broad sense of the term. In addition, the former can be called a “medium” who can directly convey the divine power and tell an oracle to the people while the latter can be called a “prophet” or “seer” who can have a sense of power or see the images and hear the voices of spirits indirectly. Moreover, the former can be called “calling type of shaman” as they receive the invitation from the deity through sudden possession, while the latter that can be called “the inherited type of shaman” transmit their power through the kinship tie and training from young ages. In both cases, the mediators go into “altered state of consciousness” (ASC) through the trance, with the former being deeper than the latter. I call this situation “double trance” consisted by two types of shamans. While the former is a type of “possession” whereby the physical body is treated as the vessel of the spirit or deity, the latter attempts to become closer to the spirit by physical expansion using extravagant costume and makeup for the body. The former is “internalization” whereas the latter is “externalization.” Given that the former belongs to lower or middle caste, and the latter outcaste, it can be said that hierarchy affects the basic concepts of rituals, with social order penetrating into the pantheon of *Bhūta* and *Daiva* worship.

Moreover, the former is sometimes called by Sanskrit name, indicating that it is closely related to *Deva* and *Daiva*, the Hindunized deities. In contrast, the latter is closely related to *Bhūtas*, the local spirits, which belong to be the lower class and outcaste. Most *Bhūtas* are invisible spirits, and appear in impersonated forms in ritual. However, hierarchy also exists amongst spirits, and the pantheon of *Bhūtas* are diverse ranging from those who are offered vegetarian food to those who require animal sacrifices. The *harijan* mediators, *Pambada* and *Parava*, are associated with higher-ranking *Bhūtas* while *Naḷike* are related to lower-ranking *Bhūtas*. The mediators of *Bhūtas* are considered the descendents of indigenous people, and without them, the *Bhūta* or *Daiva* ritual could not be performed at local small shrines. At ritual sites, the actual social hierarchy and ranks are temporarily reversed, and high-caste people sometimes pray to the *harijan* mediators. Offerings for the lower-ranking *Bhūtas* are usually non-vegetarian and they often require blood sacrifices, such as biting and eating raw chicken. By dripping blood on the ground, people believe that it is possible to enforce the life force of the human body and bring the fertility of the land. It regenerates the extraordinary powers of the forests. The *pāddanas*, the invocations recited in old *Tuḷu* language at the ritual site, not only invoke the appearance of *Bhūta* and *Daiva*

by telling the origins of the spirits or deities, but also work as an ideology legitimizing the rituals to reconstruct the past.<sup>8)</sup> They learn the *pāddana* by the oral tradition through the hereditary line from ancestors by their kinship tie, so that they can be called the indigenous narrators of the history on the native land, “proto-priests of the land.” However, the mother earth involves the female principles, and after the Hindunization movements, they are considered as Hindu goddesses given the continuity of similar elements. The power of Hindu goddesses is regarded to be *śakti*, and the local female deity *Ullālthi* is identified as *Lakṣmī*, *Sarasvatī*, *Pārvatī* and *Durgā*. The members of higher castes pray to local goddesses or female deities as the incarnation of Hindu goddesses.

This paper analyzes the ritual sequences and contents of *pāddanas* of *Bhūta* and *Daiva*, taking *Balthila* of *Baṅṭval Taluk* as a case study to delineate the cosmology and its transformation under the social change.<sup>9)</sup>

### Classification of Gods, Deities and Spirits

The higher-caste people in the surveyed area classify the invisible supernatural power into several categories. Generally, Brahmins and higher-ranking non-Brahmins pray to *Devas* as the visible Hindu gods in temples and homes, while lower and middle non-Brahmins, such as farmers and craftsmen, have strong faith in invisible spirits or powers of *Daiva* and *Bhūta*. Human body is to be possessed by the supernatural power and spirits to speak oracles, describing past, present, and future events related to an individual or an area. These people wish to resolve their misfortunes and troubles through the oracles and find out some solutions of their various problems. Rituals of *Bhūtas* and *Daivas* serve as a great opportunity for peacemaking in household disputes, and conflicts in a local community are resolved by the instructions of *Daivas* and *Bhūtas*.

Higher castes state that supernatural powers and spirits can be divided into two main types: spirits who are related only with good deeds and evil spirits who do harmful things. Based upon *Atharva Veda*, the Brahmins interpret the former as *Deva gaṇa* and the latter as *Rākṣasa gaṇa*. *Gaṇa* means follower and messenger of the gods under the control of Brahman. However, supernatural forces and spirits sometimes have ambiguity, and the dualism of good and bad is not applied to them. Lower castes are keenly aware of this fluidity and give reliance upon the ambivalent awful powers. Many of them believe that only the indigenous peoples can bring out powers of the mother earth. There are different ideas about the supernatural powers and spirits depending on the social class. Although the concepts of gods, deities, and spirits are overlapping based upon the perception of powers, this invisible world can be divided into the following hierarchical categories.

#### *Deva*

*Devas* are personified gods and goddesses enshrined in temples and shrines. The ritual site is mainly called *mādu* (*māḍa*). Brahmins carry out *pūjā* rituals where offerings consist of purified vegetarian food. Rituals are conducted with *śloka* and *mantra* in Sanskrit. The characteristics of the *Devas* are that they carry out good deeds on people and that they are honest, dignified, fair, and incorrupt. *Devas* represent the highest level of power and

*Ullāklu* in this area is classified as *Deva*. In the *Baṅṭval Taluk* area, *Ullāklu* is the general name given to *Ullālthi* (female deity) and *Ajwar Daivangalu* (male deities, two brothers). They are worshipped in the same way as kings are.

### ***Daiva***

*Daivas* possess some aspects of personified gods and goddesses, but have the strong nature to be spiritual beings. The ritual site is mainly called *stāna* (*sāna* in *Tulu* language). In some places, Brahmans conduct *pūjā* rituals, but their presence is not necessarily required at all the rituals. In some parts of the rituals, the Sanskrit *mantra* is uttered. The *tantric* method is sometimes used for praying, and added with magical acts. Vegetarian food is offered. In some cases, faces of *Daivas* are depicted as tigers and boars, and they resemble *Bhūtas*. They are good-natured deities who punish sins to correct the bad deed or dishonesty.

### ***Bhūta***

*Bhūtas* include spirits of the forests, trees, animals (pig, tiger, boar, ox, snake), heroes who have died unnatural deaths, and people who have died from social injustice. Non-Brahmans worship them at the *stāna* (*Bhūta stāna*). In the case of *Koti Chennaya*, the ritual site is called with a special name, *garadi* (*garoḍi*). Offerings are non-vegetarian, and normally cocks are sacrificed. In the past, pigs and buffalos were sacrificed. In festivals, the coconut liquor (toddy) is offered, and alcohol is not considered a taboo. *Bhūtas* are said to become violent when they punish humans, but perform good deeds very quickly. *Bhūtas* are worshipped among low and middle castes.

### ***Preta***

*Pretas* are spirits of the dead who appear in front of their relatives and families whom they love the most. They do not come to individuals who had no specific relations with them. Offerings are both vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Generally, *Devas*, *Daivas*, and *Bhūtas* are said to be able to control the *Pretas* who are feared for their evil nature of harming human beings.

### **Other Spirits**

These are not objects of worship.

The categories described above are those seen from the perspective of upper class people. People of lower castes and *harijans* have different opinions. However, it is for certain that the concept of gods, deities and spirits exists within the context of class hierarchy. The name of ritual also corresponds to the concept of the hierarchy. The ritual of *Deva* is called *mecci*, and in the *Balthila* area, the *mecci* is often used only for the female deity *Ullālthi*. On the other hand, the festivals of *Daiva* are often called *nēma*, and those of *Bhūta* are called *kōla*. Generally, the meaning of *nēmas* is originated in a series of dances. In *Balthila*, *Ullālthi* rituals are also called *mecci nēmas* as they combine *meccis* and *nēmas*, suggesting that *Devas* and *Daivas* are mixed together. *Nēmoutsava* is also often used,

connected with *utsava*, which is the usual term for annual festival of Hindu temples. After the end of a *Deva* ritual, *Daivas* and *Bhūtas* are often appeased. It shows the order of hierarchy as a ritual sequence.

As for the costumes used for *Daiva*, wild plants such as coconut palm leaves are not used, but plants need to be worn for *Bhūtas*. For example, coconut leaves are wrapped around the waist for *Pañjurli*, to visually symbolize closeness to the wild. *Pañjurli* also includes the nature of the boar spirit, expressing a link with the forest. For the female deity *Ullālthi* of Balthila, the performer does not use coconut leaves because she is regarded as *Deva* and *Daiva*, and the Brahman conducts *pūjā* rituals. *Ullālthi* is originally a female deity worshipped by the local people, but nowadays she is identified as *Lakṣmi* (goddess of wealth and fortune), *Sarasvatī* (goddess of knowledge and education), or *Durgā Paramēśvarī* (goddess of energy, *śakti*), all Hindu goddesses. In October, *Navarātri* rituals are also performed for Hindu goddesses. Basically, they are worshipped by *Durgā pūjā*, conducted in Sanskrit *mantras*. The goddess is said to crush evil spirits and demons into pieces with her swords, arrow and bow, whip, and anklet. The people believe that by praying to *Durgā*, all evil forces will be eliminated, creating a good environment. Brahmins firmly identify *Ullālthi* with Hindu goddesses by tracing the origin of the goddess to *Devi Māhātmya* (8th century). However, the name *Ullālthi* is *Tuḷu*, and includes the elements of the earth god *Daiva* in terms of nature. She has some common character with *Bhūta*, instead of a true *Daiva*. The characters of *Daiva* and *Bhūta* sometimes penetrate into each other or are made into a complex concept. On the whole, *Ullālthi* is floating in the hierarchy between a goddess personified in the form of an idol and an invisible wild spirit.

The mixture of these different characters can also be seen in festivals. In *Balthila*, two major festivals are held annually to worship *Ullālthi*, in December and in March. The rituals performed in December at *Ullālthi mādu* (*Baṇḍāramane*) culminate on a full moon day, following the *śukla pakṣa* (new moon-full moon), lunar calendar. In contrast, the climax day of the ritual performed in March at *Mullar mādu* and *Puncheti mādu* is determined according to the *Tuḷu* calendar based on the *Sankramana* (semi-solar calendar). *Sankramana* is a Dravidian calendar of South India used for *Daiva* rituals. *Ullālthi* rituals in *Balthila* contain both North Indian and South Indian elements based upon the mutual infiltration between *Deva* and *Daiva*.

### Rituals and Royalty

The main deity of the festival in *Balthila* is *Ullālthi* (Plate 2). Her brothers, *Ajwar Daivangalu* (Plate 3), accompany her. *Ullālthi* means the people of the highest rank in *Tuḷu* language. The masculine form is *Ullaya*; the feminine form is *Ullālthi*, and the plural form *Ullāklu* applies to both male and female. People of the highest rank include: (1) royal family; (2) upper-class Brahman; (3) people with good foundations; (4) respectable people; and (5) persons of high virtue, such as scholars. It is suggested that such persons are compared with the top-level deity. In particular, male deities are guardians of the royal family and treated in the same way as kings (*arasu*) living in palace (*aramane*). *Ullālthi* is compared to the queen, as the virgin deity, and a sister to her brother deities.

Plate 2 *Ullālthi*Plate 3 *Ajwar Daivangalu*

The impersonators are adorned with the beautiful ornaments called *kiruvāla*<sup>10)</sup> during *nēma* or *kōla* rituals in which deities appear. The ornaments are the symbol of the old kingship, and are stored at the *mādu*. In *Balthila*, they were deposited in the *Ullālthi mādu*, which is also known as *Baṇḍāramane*. Generally, a *mādu* maintains a high degree of sacredness and purity. In the festival in *Balthila* in March, the rituals are performed at *Mular mādu*, *Ullālthi mādu*, and *Puncheti mādu*. Of these, the *Puncheti mādu* is the most sacred place, for which the entry of women is prohibited for the maintenance of purity.

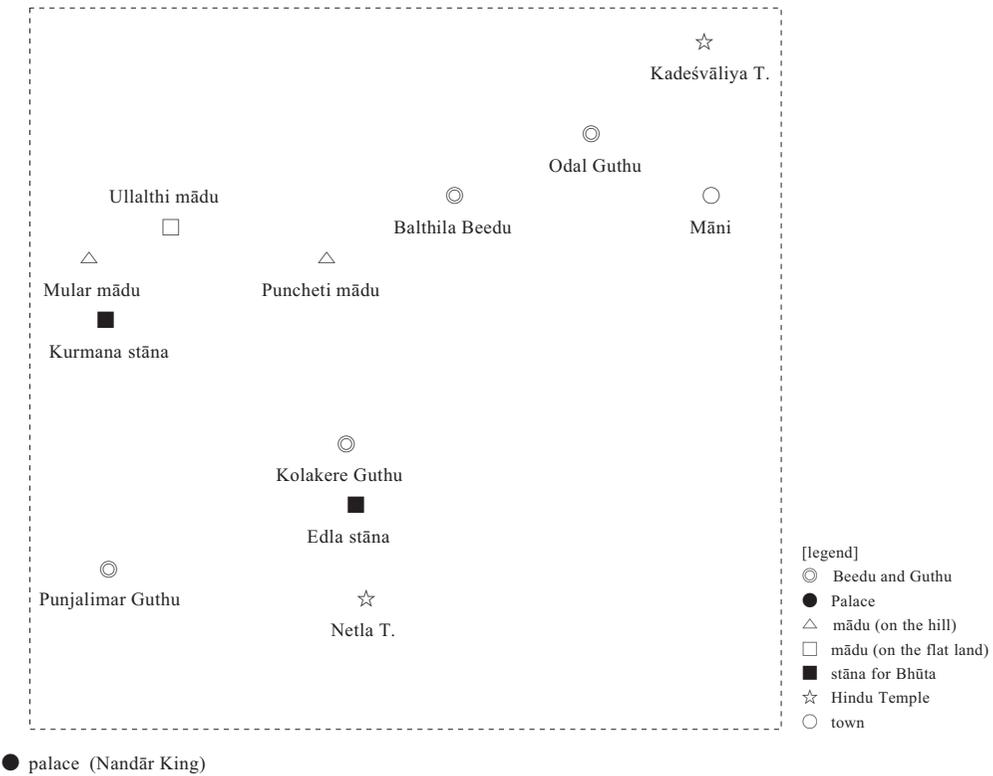
*Ullālthi* is worshiped as a high rank deity all over *Tuḷunāḍu*. The *pāḍḍana* speaks of her tradition and nature as a guardian of the royal family. According to Upadhyaya and Upadhyaya (1984: 54), “she is believed to be the family deity of *Baṅga* king of this area.” Chinnappa Gowda, who has studied the distribution of the palace of *Ullālthi*, states that she seems to have originated in *Baṅgavāḍi* (place of origin), northeast of Mangalore and immigrated from there to the coastal area (Gowda 1990). Her journey is likely to overlap with the actual migration path of the royal family and its descendants.<sup>11)</sup> *Baṅga* is the name of the ruling class of royal family. The shrines of *Ullālthi*, *mādu* or *stāna* are located all over the *Dakṣiṇa Kannaḍa* district, and they are considered the most sacred place in respective areas. For example, there are *mādus* worshipping *Ullālthi* in *Puttur*, south of *Balthila* (between *Māni* and *Subramanya*), *Ananthadi*, *Balnāḍu*, *Kelinja* (in *Okketturu*),

*Viṭṭala*, *Kumbbla* (*Manjeśvara*, Kerala State), *Sajjipa* (west of *Balthila*), *Someśvar* (near *Ullāl*), and *Kanandur* (near *Ullār*). Summing up the oral traditions transmitted by the local people and the *Bhūta* impersonators, the migration route of *Ullālthi* becomes clear (Gowda 1990).

According to the oral tradition in *Balthila*, *Ullālthi* is enshrined in the area that belongs to the *Mogranāḍu* ruled by King *Nandār* (*Nandāvara*) called *sīme*. The royal palace, called *aramane*, is located on the banks of the river *Nētravati*. *Sīme* means region, and its size is expressed in the number of houses.<sup>12</sup> For instance, *Mogranāḍu* was 1,000 *sīme*, the *Viṭṭala* was 2,000 *sīme*, the *Puttur* was 10,000 *sīme*, and the *Kumbbla* was 2,000 *sīme*. Each *sīme* was governed by Jain *kṣatriya* (warrior class) before independence. Although royal power was lost, the *sīme* remains as the festival area reformed in rituals, reproducing memories of royal power and meaning of the symbolism of kingship through the frame of reference of “community between act and narration” of rituals.

In each *sīme*, *Ullālthi* and *Daivangalu* were enshrined as the guardian deities of kingship by the local people of a specific village. The famous sacred places are: (1) *Balnāḍu* in the *Puttur sīme*; (2) *Kepu* in the *Viṭṭala sīme*; (3) *Paivalige* in the *Kumbbla sīme*; (4) *Uliya* in the *Someśvar sīme*; and (5) *Balthila* in the *Mogranāḍu sīme*. Though the festival day differs for each place, it starts in *Kepu* and ends in *Ulliya*. On the other hand, Hindu gods are also worshipped in the same area, and there are royal Hindu temples inside the *sīme*. The royal temples of each area are: (1) *Sri Mahāliṅgeśvar* (*Śiva*); (2) *Sri Pañcālīṅgeśvar* (*Śiva*); (3) *Sri Anantheśvar* (*Viṣṇu*); (4) *Sri Somanatheśvar* (*Viṣṇu*); and (5) *Sri Narasiṃha Swami* (*Viṣṇu*), otherwise known as *Kadeśvāliya*. *Ullālthis* as royal guardians of Jains were treated as the highest deities of the land, coupled with Hindu gods and assigned to specific areas to create a spiritual union and establish the authority of royal power, thus forming a fluid complex of Jainism, Hinduism and folk belief there. Most Jain kings were great patrons of Hindu temples.

In the case of *Mogranāḍu sīme* (Map 2), there are four important old houses such as *Guthu* and *Beedu* presiding over rituals. They support the maintenance of shrines and the performance of rituals by economic aids as major landowners. They were *Odal Guthu* (near *Māni*), *Punjalimar Guthu* (near *Netla*), *Balthila Beedu* (*Kalladka*), and *Kolakere Guthu* (*Kalladka*). They were locally influential people and sub lords of the kings. In the past, all were Jains, believers of Jainism. In *Balthila* and *Kolakere*, they belonged to *Ballar*, Jain royal family living in *Beedu* house, and in *Odal* and *Punjalimar*, they belonged to *Baṅga*, followers of Jainism and influential lords living in *Guthu* house. *Kolakere* is thought to have become Hindu under the rule of *Konkanis*, migrants from the north between the 17th and 18th century (family name *Prabhu*). *Kolakere* also followed another two sub *Guthus* (*Bolanthur Prabhu* and *Karingāna Kamath*). Local old families are described in *pāḍḍanas*, which tell the story of how deity came about and settled down in each area. The important old houses are mentioned as “families loved by deities” in each area. The authority and legitimacy have been established by reciting the *pāḍḍana*. Even today, when royal power has been lost, the descendants of this influential house are required to contribute donations and participate in rituals.



Map 2 *Mogranāḍu sīme* (Balthila and the surrounding area)

## Jainism and Hinduism

There are two main Hindu temples in *Mogranāḍu sīme*: *Kadeśvāliya* and *Netla*. The main gods of each temple are *Viṣṇu* (*Narasimha*) and *Śiva*. *Kadeśvāliya* has dominance. In *Kadeśvāliya* one day before the annual festival (*utsava*), the royal ornament called *kiruvāla* is brought to the temple by the procession, which looks like the behavior of royal family. The *pātri*, mediator, accompanies them. In an early morning, the impersonators, *Pambada*, perform the *Ullālṭhi nēmotsava*. After this ritual, the cart festival starts in the temple. This means the *Daiva* dance is performed prior to the main festival of Hindu god, *Deva*. Normally, the *Daiva* is enshrined in the night after the Hindu temple festival is over, but in this case is carried out before the temple festival because *Ullālṭhi* is of the same rank as the main Hindu god of the temple, *Narasimha*, having been incorporated into the Hindu pantheon. *Daiva* returns to the storage place of ornaments before the cart festival starts on the next day. The process and sequence of rituals express the respect to the indigenous deity based upon the legacy of *Ullālṭhi* being the guardian of the Jain dynasty.

Looking at this situation, Jainism and Hinduism did not oppose each other, and though each had their own flexible character, Hindus gradually replaced Jains. However, today, the *Konkani* people who fled from the Portuguese invasion 300 years ago and migrated from Goa to this area are the most influential. *Pāddanas* recited at the ritual in *Balthila* mention that *Kolakere* is the birthplace of *Ullālthi*. *Ullālthi* has gradually changed her character from the royal deity in the local Jain dynasty to the pan-Indian Hindu goddess becoming a part of the Hindu pantheon. This transformation and syncretization can be shown in the *Kadeśvāliya* festival. *Ullālthi* has the highest power in any dynasty. The royal family dominates an influential position confirmed by the prayer for the king, who is the supervisor. In most of royal temples, *Ullālthi* or *Daivangalu* is worshipped. The *Ullālthi* is respected and supported by the people living in the regions of the former dynasties. However, *kiruvālas* return to their respective *mādu*, and are not kept at the Hindu temples. This signifies that the Jain royalty is deeply related to local rituals.

However, with the spread of the Hindu influence, the participation of the Jain royalty in Hindu temples became mandatory. Even today, *Ullālthi* recalls the memories of the dynasty through the annual festival performed by the people living in the political area called *sīme*. Rituals, in which all residents in the *sīme* participate, invoke the intimate link between the royal family and cosmology of kingship, as they serve castes roles to carry out “duty to the king.”

### Inside and Outside

In the past, kings presided over the festivals of Hindu temples in wide areas and the annual festival of local shrines in small areas to reconstruct the social order. By doing so, the people were able to recognize the unity with the dynasty. Today, royalty has ceased to exist in this area, but the castes play the various roles in annual festival to portray “return to tradition.” In such cases, the possession called “double trance” has a significant meaning. In *Balthila nēma*, the local spirit (*Dhūmāvati*) first tells an oracle through the mediator called *pātri*. For the *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar* who appear next, the *Pambada* of *harijan* impersonators with the excessive ornaments and masks (*muga*) depict an extraordinary image. This transcendence invokes a sense of continuity with the king and a link with the divine world. Gold-silver ornaments and masks symbolize the king. As the guardians of the king, *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar* have the character of externality, and actually, the impersonator, *Pambada*, comes from outside the village. In contrast to this, the *pātri* who becomes possessed and speaks oracles are transmitted by the locals, such as *Billava*. They usually speak the oracles of “spirits haunting a house” such as the *Dhūmāvati* and *Pañjurli Bhūta* who reside in specific historical houses (*Beedu* and *Guthu*) in the *Balthila* area. *Dhūmāvati* is the guardian spirit of the home of *Kolakere Guthu*, and today, it is the bodyguard of the great deity *Ullālthi* while *Pañjurli* is the guardian of *Ajwar*.

Generally, the theme that local spirits (*Bhūtas*) are subservient to outside deities (*Daivas* and *Devas*) is repeated in the *pāddana* narrative invocations. Therefore, *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar* are taken to represent deities who have come from outside the land. The “double trance” by *pātri* and *Pambada* can connect inside and outside or innerness and externality

skillfully by the spiritual expression utilizing the ambiguity of possession. Sacred power of *śakti* is sometimes conveyed to *Pambada* by the sword or the hand by *pātri* in *kōla* or *nēma*. Today, local spirits, *Bhūtas*, are regarded to be the followers or guardians of outside dieties and gods, so that the pantheon in the area is consisted of multilayer expression. Following the *pāddana* recited at the ritual site in *Balthila*, the old house deity in *Kolakere* becomes a guardian of *Ullālthi*, and *Dhūmāvati* takes *Bañtes* as his followers. This means that *Bhūta* is controlled by *Daiva* and that *Daiva* becomes a guardian of *Deva*. There exists a hierarchy with the lower classes incorporated as the followers of the upper class.

Hindu temples are far more complicated. At the *Narasimha* in *Kadeśvāliya*, prior to cart festival of the main god *Narasimha* (*Viṣṇu*), the *Ullālthi nēma* is performed. Then after the festival of the main god, all kinds of *Bhūtas*, such as *Dhūmāvati* and *Bañte*, *Kallruti* and *Kalkuḍa*, *Mahāmayee*, and *Sarabhūta* (1,000 *Bhūtas*) are worshipped as *nēmas*. In this context, the rituals on the whole are composed of *Daiva—Deva—Bhūta*. Though possessions do not take place in the Hindu festival *utsava*, they are essential to the *nēma*. The festivals of this temple are called *nēmotsava*, where mutual continuity has become clear. The hierarchy and ranking of gods, deities and spirits, from *Deva* to *Bhūta* via *Daiva*, in this region infiltrate with the hierarchy from royalty to the public. It also becomes duplicate, and they are adapted into the social dynamics in the form of upper and lower classes, controller and controlled, master and follower through the condensation movement in rituals. The function of maintaining power by the externality of the kingship has been maintained in a different form.

### The Origin of *Ullālthi* and the Journey to *Balthila*

The narratives on the mythological birth of *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar Daivangalu* are recited in the *pāddana* during rituals. There are two occasions of recitation: the first time is in the process of make-up by introductory part and the second time is in the stage of the possession by full version. The following story is reconstructed by the narrative invocations by *Pambada* impersonators with the explanation by local people. The content consists of the story on the origin place of deities, descriptions of a long journey from the mountains (Western *Ghaṭs*) to the coastal area, and the incidents on the route to *Balthila* (Map 3).

*Ullālthi* is the incarnation (personification) of *Durgā*, and the *Ajwar* brothers that of *Śiva* or his sons. *Śiva* assumes various forms and serves to destroy evil spirits and demons, while the *Ajwar* brothers are followers (*gaṇas*) and destroy the evil with the same powers as *Śiva*. *Ullālthi* is *Kanyā Kumāri*, and is seen as a virgin goddess.<sup>13)</sup> When praying to *Ullālthi*, worshippers chant “Oh, goddess of *śakti*, *Kanyā Kumāri*, we greet you with *Śiva śakti* (*Ajwar Daivangalu*) wearing ornaments of worship in bronze and silver.”<sup>14)</sup>

*Ajwar Daivangalu* brothers were born on earth to establish the *dharma* (*darma*), canon or order and destroy evil forces. Called *dharma devatā*, they are said to bring justice and charity and to protect righteousness and truth. *Ajwar* brothers like to hunt on horse with bow and arrow.<sup>15)</sup> Filled with a tender heart, they love peace and have the kind heart of a child. Upon reaching adulthood, they are said to bath in *Gaṅgā Kundam* (tank of the sacred



personality, the elder brother was calm and kind, and physically strong. Although the younger brother was short-tempered, he was also physically strong and lively.

At age seven and a half, their faces and bodies had fully matured. They had moustache and beard, for which they would summon the barber to come and shave for them. When their assistant summoned their barber *Binnana Gara*, the barber is said to apply water to their left cheek and milk to their right and shave. The two would also instruct the barber to draw the face of an evil spirit called *Brahma Rākśasa* on their back, and the sun and moon on their chest.<sup>19)</sup> With their mature, godly nature and looks, the brothers wore gold crowns, silver clothing, silver armor, gold jewelry and anklets, looking like warriors.

The story goes that one day, the brothers hear voices from the sky saying, “You are the children of *Śiva*. Leave your mountain and go towards the coastal area. There, build *dharma*, and become *dharma devatā* (god of justice and mercy). Receive as offerings *Dooop* and *Deep*, smoke,<sup>20)</sup> and do not favor animals and birds as offerings. Ride elephants and horses. People will respect you this way. Redeem sin, and obtain reward from honest and good people. I am your mother. We will meet at the house of *Kolakere* of *Mogranāḍu*.” Hearing this message from god, the brothers are filled with joy. God gives them everything, and they are filled with the satisfaction of being able to set up *dharma* in many places. They are also delighted to be able to meet their mother. For this reason, the *Ajwar Daivangalu* brothers decide to leave from *Gaṅgā Kundam*. The mother of this land, *Gaṅgā Matha*, is worshipped as *Kanyā Kumāri* (virgin bride) at the sacred place, *Dharmastala*. Today, *Ullālthi* (in the form of *Kanyā Kumāri*) and *Ajwar Daivangalu* (in the form of *dharma devatā*) are enshrined here as *dharma devatā*.<sup>21)</sup>

In their journey to the coastal area to establish *dharma*, the *Ajwar* brothers pick roads on the eastern side, which they think are the most powerful. The god presiding over that area is *Subramaṇya Swāmi* (snake god),<sup>22)</sup> and he opposes the *Ajwar* brothers by building a formidable castle for defensive with black stones and iron pillar. Praying to their mother *Gaṅgā Matha*, the elder brother rides an elephant and the younger a horse to climb the *Ajjer* Mountain. They find the citadel and the elder brother shoots an arrow. The citadel collapses and the three *Kalaśas*<sup>23)</sup> tumble over. Upon realizing that he is the son of *Śiva* and is obliged to welcome him, however, *Subramaṇya* invites the brother and gives him the throne in respect. Meanwhile, the younger brother has also shot an arrow, which breaks the main pillar of the *Subramaṇya* temple into three, and it crushes to the ground. *Subramaṇya* also invites the younger brother and offers him the throne. However, the two brothers do not stay with *Subramaṇya*, take the three *Kalaśas* and three pillar pieces instead and move on. In the 30-day festival held at *Subramaṇya* temple each year, *pūjā* is carried out for *Ajwar* and the *Bali Padu* ceremony is held.

The brothers are then met and welcomed by the goddess *Kali* near *Uppinangadi*,<sup>24)</sup> which is the meeting point of the two rivers *Kumāra Dhara* and *Nētravati*, and travel forth together with soldiers to *Kodipadi* and then to *Kedila* with the pillars. At the *Bajaru Gudde* here, they bury treasures (gold coins). The elder brother stays at nearby *Kailāru* while the younger brother stays at *Kedila* where he meets *Dhūmāvati* (female *Bhūta*) and *Malerāya* (male *Bhūta*). The ritual called *valasari* (moving back and forth) is held there. They then

see a beautiful *Liṅgam* shining brightly in the thick dense forest on the other side of the *Nētravati* River. This was *Mahatobhar Chintāmaṇi Narasiṃha Swāmi*, and they erect the *Narasiṃha* temple for worshipping it, put up the base of the three pillars and perform a festival. The *Śivaliya* temple of *Kadeśvāliya* enshrining *Narasiṃha* is the first Hindu temple of the *Mogranāḍu sīme* (although it is a *Viṣṇu* temple, *Śiva* is also worshipped). *Narasiṃha* gives the elder *Ajwar* brother the *Odal Guthu* of *Baṅga*, the most respected family in this area and leaves. Since then, the people of the *Baṅga* family are required to participate in the *nēma* of the elder *Ajwar* brother.

Upon traveling even further, they come upon *Balthila Beedu*. At that time, this area was ruled by a famous Jain family, *Ballal*. The family treats the brothers as kings by setting up a *mañca* (wooden bench) on the right side of the *cāvaḍi* (entrance hall). The brothers are said to have stayed here and established *dharma* through families in the area. According to the tradition of the *Ballal* family, the eldest son has to place an oil lamp on the *mañca* and pray to the house guardian spirits even today. *Mañca* is an altar hanging in air, and a place where the sacredness of ritual tools is maintained. *Balthila Beedu* comes to belong for the younger *Ajwar* brother. In the annual *nēma* festival, it is a custom for the two brothers to perform the *valasari* ritual.

Meanwhile, *Pañjurli* starts from *Dharmastala* and travels towards the west. *Dharmastala* is a sacred place near *Baṅgavāḍi*, where *dharma* can be established. It is also sometimes called *Kudama* (providing a mother). *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar* are enshrined here in the form of *dharma devatā*. The *Nelliayadi Beedu* governs this area. The *Beedu* guardian deity, *Aṅṅapa Pañjurli*, starts heading towards *Balthila Beedu* to serve as the guard of *Ajwar*. The *Ajwar* brothers meet *Pañjurli* in *Ari Majajalu*. Later, the local people constructed a *stāna* (place of worship) for *Pañjurli* here.

In an attempt to test *Pañjurli*, the younger *Ajwar* brother asks him to hunt together. *Pañjurli* decides to make a gigantic wild boar appear at *Eri Male*.<sup>25)</sup> *Eri Male* belongs to *Kundaya Daiva*, and this place is called *Kundaya Birkola*<sup>26)</sup> even today. Halfway through, the younger *Ajwar* brother meets with *Subramanya* in *Shambhuru*. They worshipped him. In *Eri Male*, *Pañjurli* departs towards the east, while the *Ajwar* brothers, on the opposite side, call out “*kajo, kajo*.” This is the signal for hunting dogs to catch animals. When a wild boar appears, they chase it and move up the hill on the opposite side called *Sulla Male* (near *Māni*). While heading towards *Aare Betty*, the brothers meet a different *Daiva* called *Gudde Cāmuṅḍi*.<sup>27)</sup> Then in *Sulla Male*, they find the wild boar. The elder brother acts first, taking out his arrow. The younger brother also takes out an arrow and shoots it. The wild boar on receiving the two arrows falls onto the ground on his side. The two brothers start arguing whose arrow has killed the boar. *Pañjurli* says if they continue arguing like this, he would return to *Kudama*. The elder brother then declares he would never use his arrow nor hunt in the future. In the current *nēmotsava* (dance scene), the elder brother holds his arrow and bow, but does not go hunting. In the *nēma* of the younger brother, he goes hunting with his bow and arrow.

The *Ajwar* brothers depart together with *Pañjurli* in the direction of *Balthila* in search of boar. They take a rest at *Kudure Bettu* and continue their search at daybreak. This place is called *Bolpodi* (place where the sun rises). They then reach *Yelthimar* (which means to

wake up and travel). *Pañjurli* is given *Baṇḍāramane* (place to deposit the ornaments such as sword and bell) and is called *Kurmana*. *Kuru* means seat, and *mana* means rice field.<sup>28)</sup> They continue their journey to find the dead boar under the *thogate mara* tree near *Mularu*.<sup>29)</sup> To celebrate the success of their hunt, the elder *Ajwar* brother establishes *Mularu* as the place of festival (*mādu*). This is the current *Mular mādu*. Also eager to get a favorite place and wanting to have his own festival venue, the younger brother builds his own *mādu* in the rocky mountains on the other side. This is called *Puncheti mādu*, which means the place full of anthills with many white ants. The other interpretation of the word *Puncheti* is the place full of flowers.<sup>30)</sup> At the foot of the mountain a paddy field is called *Khamprabail*, (meaning the place where meat is prepared). The soldiers bring the dead boar to *Dande Maru* adjoining here. The meat is cooked in the rice field next to it. That place is called *Masadi Maru*; the soldiers celebrate their successful hunting by eating the boar meat. As the excitement becomes noisier in the feast, the *Daiva* called *Duggālaya* (personification of the goddess *Durgā*) living in the adjoining *Ginde Gudde* hills wakes up in anger and causes thunder, challenging *Ajwara* and *Pañjurli*. When the younger brother shoots his arrow, *Duggālaya* runs away to *Netla*. As *Śiva* is called *Sadha Śiva* (last *Śiva*) here and takes the form of a *liṅgam*, *Duggālaya* clings onto *Śiva* and hides behind its back. *Ajwar* and *Pañjurli* who are chasing *Duggālaya* encounter the *Daiva Gilkinthaya* (with a nose shaped like a parrot) and *Maleraya*<sup>31)</sup> at *Goltha Majalu* halfway through their chase and are received by them. Here, a ritual called *nēmotsava* is carried out for these gods over two days. There is a separate *mādu* for *Ajwar* and *Gilkinthaya*. *Goltha Majalu* is a large area belonging to the *Kolakere* family.

Upon reaching the *Netla* temple, *Ajwar* and *Pañjurli* discover the *liṅgam* (symbol of *Śiva*) and *Duggālaya*. *Śiva* appears before *Ajwar* and commands them not to hurt *Duggālaya*. *Śiva* then tells them that their mother *Ullālthi* (*Kanyā Kumāri*) is at a place nearby called *Kolakere*. The *Ajwar* brothers rejoice and install the head of the pillars they brought over from *Subramanya* to the *Netla* temple to enshrine *Śiva*. *Punjalimar Guthu* is ruled by Jains, *Baṅga*, so that *Pañjurli* is given a small front room, *cāvaḍi*. This house is to be the home of the younger *Ajwar* brother. The *Ajwar* brothers and *Pañjurli* proceed to the *Kolakere* house and spend the night at *Serinthi Kottiya* on the way. They find a brightly illuminating place, and upon reaching this place, they see a beautiful young girl who looks like a bride sitting on a *mañca* (swing). This is *Ullālthi*. She calls them “brother” because she is a young girl called *Kanyā Kumāri*.<sup>32)</sup>

Since that day, they became *Muver Ullāklu* (three *Ullāklu*, two brothers and younger sister) instead of *Ullāklu* (twin brothers). At that time, the Jains, *Ballal* has ruled *Kolakere* house. The guardian of the home was *Dhūmāvati Daiva* accompanied by *Baṅṭe* (dumb).<sup>33)</sup> The *Ajwar* brothers ask *Ullālthi* to go to *Balthila* with them, and *Dhūmāvati* decides to accompany *Ullālthi*. When *Ullālthi* arrives at the house, she blesses *Ballal*, and tells them that she will always be at the *Kolakere* house in mind, and should they ever have problems and difficulties, they should call her and pray to overcome their turmoil.

At that time the *Ballal* family consists of eight brothers, the oldest being *Sri Mahisekara Ballal*. One night, the goddess *Devi* appears in the dreams of the *Ballal* family, and tells them that *Ullālthi* was born in this family and all her wishes should be obeyed.

Since the *Ballals* were Jains, they were not obligated to follow orders given in dreams. Later, the family suffers financial difficulties as well as illnesses, and an astrologer is required to ask what should be done. The astrologer *Basarithaya* is invited from *Someśvar* near *Ullāl*, south of Mangalore. Upon approaching *Serinthi Kotiya*, he sees white anthills under a jack tree (place where there are snakes). *Basarithaya* possessed by deity tells an oracle. He sticks his hand into the white anthill (normally, such courage is not seen due to fear of snakes) and finds an iron sword. Saying that this is a proof that *Ullālthi* was born in the *Kolakere* family, the astrologer tells *Ballal*, “When *Lakśmi* appears, pray to her and your troubles will disappear.” They believe in this humbly and do as *Basarithaya* says. The iron sword is called “king’s sword” and is stored at the *Kolakere* house as the proof of *Ullālthi*’s birth.<sup>34)</sup> *Basarithaya* was a believer of *Ullālthi*, so when he died, *Ullālthi* is said to have taken his body and given him the rank of *siddhi puruśa* (incorporation with god).<sup>35)</sup> Today, the *Kolakere* family is required to participate in *pūjā* for *Ullālthi*.

The main guardian deities of the *Kolakere* house were *Raktheśwari* and *Dhūmāvati* (both female deities) before the appearance of *Ullālthi*. After the birth of *Ullālthi*, family members start to pray to her, and the social status of the *Kolakere* family increases. After arriving of *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar*, *Ballal* takes a dislike to *Dhūmāvati* and decides to chase her out of the house. *Ullālthi* tells them that *Dhūmāvati* is not a normal *Daiva* and *Ullālthi* is taking the form of a female deity to stay at the *Kolakere* house, so believe in *Dhūmāvati*. However, the *Ballal* is not persuaded. *Dhūmāvati* then transforms into the goddess *Durgā* and kills the evil spirit *Dhūm Rākśasa*. To oppose this, *Ballal* calls a *tantri* (person with the power to control spirits) from *Nileśvara* (Kasaragod, Kerala), who casts a tantric spell based upon the *Atharva Veda* and traps *Dhūmāvati* inside a small copper container. On his way back to *Nileśvara*, the *tantri* stops at *Okkethur* to perform the night ritual. He ties the copper container to a branch of a tree and goes to bath. The *Bañṭe* of the *Kolakere* house, knowing that his master *Dhūmāvati* has been taken away, goes to *Okkethur* in the form of a parrot and cuts the rope tying the container to the tree. *Dhūmāvati* is set free, and together with her guard *Bañṭe*, cuts off the head of the *tantri*. They return to the *cāvaḍi* (front room) of the *Kolakere* house, and *Dhūmāvati* orders *Ballal* not to call the *tantri* of *Nileśvara*<sup>36)</sup> to the *Kolakere* house and not to use the copper container for prayer rituals. Then, *Dhūmāvati* together with *Bañṭe* kill all *Ballals*. They throw away the sword used for this into the rice field called *Karthale* (rice field of sword).

After this incident, the *Kolakere* house is filled with nothing but women from the *Ballal* family. Today, even though the *Nileśvara tantris* have the greatest authority in this area, they are not allowed to enter the home of the *Kolakere* house. The *Ballal* family of *Kolakere* was now left only with women, resulting in considerable debt. This is because the eight brothers of the *Ballal* were killed, and their fortune, money, and notes were wrongly used for revenge. The women, thinking it difficult to maintain the traditional *dharma* of the *Kolakere* house, therefore ask the king of the *Nandār*, the ruler of *Mogranāḍu sīme*. At that time, the *Prabhu* family of *Konkani* people migrated from Goa and they engaged in large-scale business. This area was a prominent business market during this era, and the *Prabhu* family served the *Bañṭval* palace as the trade minister. To rebuild their economic situation, the *Ballal* family borrowed a large amount of money mainly from the *Prabhu*, but they

could not pay back. The king settled the debts to the *Prabhu* in the form of 6,000 murrāh (228 metric ton) of rice harvest. The king also ordered the *Prabhu* to stay at the *Kolakere* house and carry out rituals to pray to the king's *Deva* or *Daiva Ullālthi*. At that time, the land owned by the *Kolakere* family ranged from the *Pāne Mangalore* near the bridge of *Nētravati* river in the west, to *Suruku Mary* on the road to Bangalore in the northeast, and to *Veera Khamba* on the road to *Viṭṭala* in the southeast. Though the *Prabhus* were Hindus, they constructed the new house and changed the Jain *Beedu* to Hindu style. However, they still worship old *Daivas*. The *Kolakere* house has three rooms for rituals, in which they enshrine their gods on a swing altar called *mañca*. The first room, called *cāvaḍi*, enshrines *Dhūmāvati* and *Baṅṭe*. The second room is for *Ullālthi* and is used to store gold and silver ornaments for the festivals. The third room enshrines the statue of *Narasimha Swāmi*. All three of them are considered the guardians of the house.<sup>37)</sup>

With passing time, the *Prabhu* house also encountered financial difficulties as well as health problems in the family. Upon consulting an astrologer, they told that *Ullālthi* asks to perform the ritual by daily *pūjā* conducted by a Brahman *archak*. The *Prabhus* thus go to King *Nandār* and ask a Brahman family to serve as *archak* for worshipping *Ullālthi* and the *Munar Bhat* family is selected to perform.<sup>38)</sup> They are of the same kinship group as the Brahmans living in Palanir. The land assets of Palanir are given to this family to maintain livelihood, and *pūjā* is carried out even today. *Ullālthi* rules the *Kolakere* house and *nēma* needs to be performed as the annual festival. During festivals, at this time, the *Kolakere* family carries out all preparations, and the members are required to participate and make contributions.

Concerning the festival site, *Bhaṅḍāramane* (storing place for the ornaments in the middle) is selected for *Ullālthi* on the way of journey to *Balthila*. This place is also called *Ullālthi mādu*. It is located between *Mular mādu* (festival site of the elder *Ajwar* brother) and *Puncheti mādu* (that of the younger brother), between the *Kolakere* and *Balthila* houses. Nowadays daily *pūjā* is performed here. In festival some ornaments are carried out by the *Kolakere* house and the people follow the orders of the Brahman priest *archak*. The *Nēmotsava* festival for the three *Ullākḥus* as the *Puduvār mecci* is carried out at *Bhaṅḍāramane* every December.

### Analysis of Oral Traditions

*Pāḍḍanas* are recited only during rituals, and deities or spirits (*Daiva* or *Bhūta*) manifest themselves through narratives. The impersonator such as *Pambada* is gradually possessed while chanting them. They tell an oracle by the first person. The meanings of words are important, and it is believed that direct contact with *Daiva* or *Bhūta* is possible only through the old *Tulu* language. Today, they are recited and narrated by *harijans* such as *Pambada*, *Parava*, and *Naḷike*, but originally, these people were considered the native inhabitants. They transmit the oral tradition of rituals and *pāḍḍana* by hereditary line from their ancestors as a profession. The following can be pointed out the various aspects of the cosmology based upon the contents of *pāḍḍana* beginning from the stories of the birth of deities and spirits, ending on the establishment of the ritual in *Kolakere* house, which form

the core of rituals.

### Origin

Both *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar* were born without parents and their stories revolve around “abnormal birth” as spirits and personification of god. Through a mythical narration that the male deities are a twin and the female deity the mother as well as the sister of the male deity, the secular orientation of gods appearing from the natural world to the human world in search of their mother is emphasized. Supernatural aspects such as the miracle birth in the palace and the rapid maturing of the two *Ajwar* brothers into adulthood are narrated, indicating strongly the idea of god’s will to appear in the human world. Although triggered by the feminine principle, the motive is said to be *Śiva*, demonstrating the history of Hindunization.

### Meaning of Migration

The *Ajwar* brothers migrate from the mountains to the coastal area by the intention of god *Śiva*. They have bows and arrows for hunting animals indicating character of deities for hunting gatherer in the forest, and their personality has the ambiguity of being both calm and violent. They are seen to be changing from the deity of hunter-gatherers to that of warriors saved to the royal family alongside the migration. This demonstrates to be becoming the guardian deity of *kṣatriya* who is of the warrior class subject to the Jain royal throne. They also show the transformation from the guardian of hunting and slash-and-burn agriculture of tribes living in the mountains to the guardian of the paddy field agrariculture of the peasants living in the flat land. By the way, the route of moving of deities and spirits is marked with historical migration of *Ballal* and *Baṅga* who are the leaders of the Jain kingship, which is originated at their homeland of *Baṅgavāḍi*. *Baṅgavāḍi* is the origin place of *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar* and is the sacred area of Jainism located in Western *Ghaṭṣ* range.

### Establishment of Ethics

New type of faith expansion can be searched on the narration about the incident in each spot and particular area to be penetrating new moral values by the concept of *dharma*, especially through justice and humanity (compassion). This also coincides with the establishment of the kingship and political space in each area, such as *sīme*. The elder *Ajwar* brother is told not to hunt (*ahiṃsā*, not to kill life) on the journey, and advised to become a vegetarian (not to eat animals and birds). *Ullālthi* has taken the place of the guardian deity of the old houses, *Beedu* and *Guthu*, and the guardian god or deity of the kingship, *Rājan Daiva*, has taken the place of the deity or spirit supported by kinship group, *kula devatā*. *Ullālthi* has been worshipped in an even small region, *sīme*, as well as extensively in *Tuḷunāḍu*. The *sīme* continued as the important festival unit based upon the memory of local dynasty. After the colonization and independence, the power of the royal family has collapsed, and the rituals are performed by the local people with the descendants of local property owners belonging to *Baṅṭ* caste.

The main cultural stream is Hindunization. There exists Dravidanization and Sanskritization, and overall, the penetration of Sanskrit culture centering around Brahman

living on flat lands is gradually growing stronger. The penetration of the custom of practicing daily *pūjā* is the manifestation of Sanskritization. In such transformations, *Dharmasthala*, the sacred pilgrim place may have an important role to fuse heterogeneous cultures, such as Hinduism and Jainism, *Daiva* and *Bhūta*. There are four *Dharma Daiva* here; *Kalarkai*, *Kalarahu*, *Kanyā Kumāri*, and *Kumāra Swami*. An old house called *Nelyadi Beedu* performs rituals.

The importance placed on the concept of *dharma* can also be seen not only in *Bhūta* rituals of the coastal area of Karnataka (*Dakṣiṇa Kannaḍa*) but also in the *Teyyam* rituals of North Kerala (Malabar). In *Teyyam* the guardian deities of local areas, castes and the extended family (*taravad*) are enshrined. All the main deities of *Teyyam* are called *dharma devatā* enshrined together with lineage deity, *kula devatā* and *para devatā*. Considering the establishment of the ethics, we need the comparative perspectives on the political history and cultural movement in the wide area.

### **Change into Hinduism and Konkanis**

The changes from Jainism to Hinduism are narrated extensively in some parts of *pāḍdana*. In this case it should be called the changing continuity of beliefs and practices instead of the conversion in modern academic meaning.

In *pāḍdana*, one of the motives of *Ajwar* migration conducted by lie in his mother's words from the heavens: "Let's meet at The *Kolakere* house in *Mogranāḍu*." This symbolizes the reorganization of the narrative centering round the *Kolakere* family who changes from Jainism to Hinduism. Although the main theme is "journey to find mother," *pāḍdana* call the old family of Jains as the "houses loved by the gods." As foreign deities settled down in various places, they would finally be led to converge in the *Ullālthi* rituals at the *Kolakere* house. As for the *Kolakere* house, the gradual process of internal turmoil is narrated, with male members killing each other and all perishing, and finally, the process of their change from Jainism to Hinduism is suggested. The "switching of guardian deity" with the birth of *Ullālthi* was a decisive factor. In the background of *pāḍdana* lie multi socio-cultural changes. The narration about the last *Ballar* that only female remained is important, and this seems to be the handing down of the influence of the matrilineal decent adopted by *Ballal*. Later, Hinduism has taken the place of Jainism and the kinship system has changed into the patrilineal descent.

The motive power of this socio-cultural change was the *Konkanis*, the immigrants from Goa to the south engaging in trade activities. They were very proud people calling themselves *Gowda Saraswath Brahman*. The *Konkanis* bought off land from the Jain landlord with big money and their economical power has expanded into inland areas. Their historical development is narrated in *pāḍdana*. Their patrons and mentors were the Jain royal family who served as mediators between Jainism and Hinduism. Eventually, *Konkanis* have changed local rituals and the deity worship based on female principals into Hinduism, but they also had the duty to worship Jain guardian deities and land deities.

### Conflict between Extraneous and Native Deities

In *pāḍdana*, the encounters and conflicts with extraneous deities, *Ajwar* brothers, with numerous native deities and spirits are narrated on their journey to various places. Encounter with deities or spirits are *Dhūmāvati*, *Malerāya*, *Narasimha*, *Gudde Cāmuṇḍi*, *Pañjurli*, *Kundāya*, *Duggālaya*, *Baṅṅe*, etc. most of them are native and indigenous but some are Hindu deities. Eventually, extraneous deities, *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar*, are ranked higher than native deities, who become their guards, followers, and guides. In the native words, *Daivas* and *Bhūtas* are ranked lower than *Devas*, gods. However, these deities have a character of ambiguity of being both good and bad, as narrated by the story of the *Ajwar* brothers asking that the barbers draw the evil spirit *Brahma Rākśasa*<sup>39)</sup> on their backs. Their nature is therefore fluid. The conjunction is *Daiva*, which is neither *Deva* nor *Bhūta*, an intermediate concept. In addition, the deity *Rājan Daiva* connecting with a king was also extensively used, being incorporated hierarchically.<sup>40)</sup> Eventually, the main deity is embedded in Hindu form of rituals, *nēmotsava*, and *pāḍdana* represents the legitimacy of current rituals. In the *nēma* of *Ullālthi* at *Balthila*, the *pātris* of *Dhūmāvati* and *Pañjurli* always become possessed and tell oracles. Together with the oracles by *Pambada* later, it appears that here lies the hidden theme of “listening to the voices of the land” through the both native and extraneous deities.

### Snake Worship

Considering the contents of the *pāḍdana*, *Subramanya* has a significant meaning as an opposing force on the journey to the coastal area. However, characterized as a snake god, it is said to be placate and soothing. Though conflicting, the *Subramanya* temple is located at the hill area connected with *nāga bana*, a cobra forest in which many snakes are living. *Prasāda*, offerings for devotees, is soil taken from anthill as favorable place for *nāga*, and it is believed that those praying for getting children will become pregnant by eating this soil. This idea links to the *nāga sampige* tree liked by snakes found in the birthplace of *Ajwar*. *Pāḍdana* narrates on the discovery of the iron sword of *Ullālthi* at an anthill, and the white anthill called *Puncheti mādu* is a sacred place for *Ullālthi nēma* in March. The name *Ullālthi* itself may mean “female snake” by local interpretation. Lying in the base in this area is the belief in *nāga*, the cobra, ruler of the land who brings forth regeneration and fertility. The fear of *nāga dośam* or the cobra disorder, especially women becoming infertile is very strong. As *Ullālthi* is the guardian deity of royalty, her narrative does not include tragedy, but it has some aspects of the darkness of the human mind, which relates with characteristics of *Bhūtas*.

### Rituals

The explanations of ritual process in the *Balthila* area are provided as follows. In the end, I will discuss the important points in detail.<sup>41)</sup>

## Rituals centering around *pūjā*

### 1. Daily *pūjā*

*Pūjā* is a ritual carried out by chanting *śloka* and *mantra* and by making offerings to gods and deities. *Ullālthi* appears as a *Deva*, and a *pūjā* is carried out daily by the Brahman engaged by *Balthila Beedu* as the *archak* under the cooperation of his family. In the past, the ornament (*kiruvāla*) was placed inside the inner sanctuary of *Ullālthi mādu* (*Bhaṇḍāramane*), worshipped, and prayed regularly. However, to ensure the safety of precious gem stones and valuables, these were moved to the house of *Balthila*, and today, it is still prayed on a *mañca* inside a special room. Here, the ritual is performed as *Durgā pūjā* using Sanskrit language. The ritual style of daily *pūjā* and the participation of Brahmans are clearly the effects of Sanskritization and Hundunization.

### 2. *Sankramana thambila*

*Daivas* and *Bhūtas* are enshrined only on special days of the year, but in some places regular rituals are carried out once a month. The *Sankramana* is a celebration day in the month. It is based on the zodiac calendar, but normally it is around the 16th, 17th, and 18th day of the month on the western calendar. The ritual is carried out in a form called *thambila*. Specific offerings called *panivara* are used. This consists of jaggery, puffed rice, coconuts, betel nuts, betel leaf, areca nuts, areca nuts flower on a banana leaf, and offerings are served to three *mādu*s in *Mogranāḍu sīme* (*Ullālthi mādu*=*Bhaṇḍāramane*, *Puncheti mādu*, and *Mular mādu*). It is normally carried out at night. Finally, the *Balthila Beedu pūjā* is performed. This is mainly participated by *Balthila Beedu* and *Kolakere* families. It is of the Dravidian form of ritual.

### 3. *Ullālthi mādu pūjā*

The New Year is celebrated at *Ullālthi mādu* on the *Viśu*, New Year day (April) based on the *Tuḷu* calendar. This is a characteristic of rituals performed in this region. Other festivals are *Gaṇeśa Chaturthī* (*Sona* month, August), *Navarātri*, *Durgā pūjā* (10 days), *Dasara* (October), as in the case of normal Hindu temples under the great influence by Hindu main culture. However, even in these *pūjā* rituals, the mediator of *Dhūmāvati* and *Pañjurli* (*pātri*, *darśan pattu*) participate, bringing swords and bells to the *Ullālthi mādu*. The mixture of *Deva*, *Daiva* and *Bhūta* rituals are characteristics of *Ullālthi mādu*.

### *Mecci, nēma and kōla*

The main festivals are called *mecci*, *nēma* and *kōla*. These are rituals accompanied by dance performance two times in a year at difference places on different schedule. The first one is performed in December; the second one is performed in March. The festivals are held at three *mādu*s, *Ullālthi mādu* which enshrines *Ullālthi* (center flat land), *Mular mādu* which enshrines the elder *Ajwar* brother (hill in the west), and *Puncheti mādu* which enshrines the younger *Ajwar* brother (hill in the east). Considering the dual symbolism, female deities are enshrined in flat lands and male deities in hills. The *Puncheti mādu* forbids women to climb up because of the sacred hill. Local people say that *mādu* is the

special name of the place used for power of high level such as *Ullāklu*. The three *māḍus* are well maintained, purified, and kept holy. In these festivals, the story of the birth of the *Rājan Daiva* and the process enshrined are narrated by *pāḍdana*. The sequence of the festival and contents of rituals are followed.

### 1. *Puduvar mecci nēma*

The festival in December is called *Puduvar mecci nēma*. *Puduvar* means harvest and *mecci* means festival. Its purpose is the offering of new rice to deities. This festival, called *mecci*, is considered particularly important. It is performed at the *Ullālthi mādu* (*Bhaṇḍāramane*), and financial support and donations from the *Kolakere* family is regarded as the duty. This is narrated by *pāḍḍanas*. In some verses of *śandhi*, traditional song, *Ullālthi* is born into a *Kolakere* house. The *Puduvar mecci nēma* started when *Ullālthi* came to the *Balthila* before the arrival of *Konkani Purabu* family. The *Balthila* house is said to have contributed land to the *Kolakere* house to maintain the rituals. Even today, representatives from the *Kolakere* and *Balthila* houses attend the rituals, but *pūjās* are run based on grants from the *Kolakere* house.

Strictly speaking, the contents of *nēma* are defined as “resolving problems by listening to the prayers of devotees through dance,” and *mecci* means “event which entertains divinities.” The festival of December is also called *nēmotsava*. There are various discussions and opinions on *nēma*; *Ullālthi* is the highest form of female deities, and her *nēma* is also called *mecci*. *Mecci* is used only for *Ullālthi*, and *nēma* is used for *Daivas*. *Mecci* mainly works for gods, while *nēma* works for the public. *Nēma* comes from the Sanskrit word *niayama*, whose meanings extend to practice, rules, control, procedure, and discipline. It is said to have formality and regularity. In rituals, the roles of the people are set according to specific castes. *Pāḍḍanas* and *śandhis* narrate about the origin of the various *Daivas* and *Bhūtas*. The *nēmas* concretely describe how to carry out the dialogue with impersonators (oracle men), the procedure of performances for *Daivas* and *Bhūtas*, the technique of understanding difficult context of oracles, and how to interact with devotees. In particular, the *pāḍḍanas* are narrated only in the ritual site within particular time. They are passed down through generations by the oral tradition, and exercise of imagination by power of words.

*Puduvar mecci nēma* is performed at midnight on the day of *Menghaśira Pūrṇimā* (full moon day).<sup>42)</sup> As *Ullālthi* seems to be *Deva* or god, it is carried out according to the lunar calendar. On the other hand, the *Daiva* and *Bhūta* rituals are normally performed according to the *Tuḷu* calendar based on the semi-solar system, *Sankramana*. The festival in March is based on the latter. December rituals are strongly influenced by Sanskrit culture, and are incorporated into the Hindu pantheon. In contrast, March rituals are conducted to *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar* and are said to have strong *Dravidian* cultural elements from South India. In case of the December festival after the main *nēma*, all local *Bhūtas* such as *Dhūmāvati* and *Pañjurli* as well as all other *Daivas* and *Bhūtas* participate to be enshrined.

Eight days before the full moon day, the banana tree near the *Ullālthi mādu* is symbolically cut, and from this day to the first day of the *nēma*, the people living in the 1,000 *sīmes* of *Mogranāḍu* need to observe taboos, and other festivals are prohibited in this

area. From this day, the impersonators (*Pambada*) stay near *Ullālthi mādu* and cook for themselves. They are not allowed to bring in food from elsewhere. Day and night, they have to obey several rules. To maintain sacredness, consuming alcohol and meals containing meat and fish is prohibited, and women are not allowed to come close. The observance of taboos to keep fasting before the rituals is thought to lead to the success of the festival.

At an auspicious time of an evening on full moon day, the ornament, *kiruvāla*, is carried from the altar of the *Balthila* house, placed on the palanquin. The people bring the *kiruvāla* and the flags, and the procession moves with bands and pipes alongside the rice fields, and they arrive at the ritual site. The *kiruvāla* is kept inside the shrine at *Ullālthi mādu* (*Baṇḍāramane*).<sup>43)</sup> The flower *pūjā* and *pañcākajjaya pūjā* start during midnight, and offerings such as jaggery, puffed rice, cardamom, and coconuts are made. *Ullālthi* ornaments and masks are covered with flowers.

People gather around 9 P. M. The *pātri* of the *Dhūmāvati* gets into trance by shivering with sword and bells to tell oracles. In addition, the *pātri* of *Pañjurli* also participates. However, the *pātri* of *Pañjurli* has died many years ago, and the position is currently vacant. After *pūjā* is carried out inside the sanctuary of the shrine, the people come out from the inner sacred space to outside led by the Brahman, and make the procession toward the large *aśvatha katte* (pipal tree with a platform) in front of the shrine, where they perform *katte pūjā* at the root of the tree. *Kiruvāla* is placed on an alter that looks like a chair under the tree and the people pray. It is believed that all gods and goddesses gather there. The vicinity of the tree and the path to wells are lit with oil lamps. Devotees with lamps in their hands receive their blessings from the *pātri* of *Dhūmāvati* (in the past, *pātri* of *Pañjurli* was also there). Along with the beating of the drum (*tembare* and *chenda*) and the sound of pipes (*nāgaśvaram*, *kombu* and *shank*), local people go round the tree and sing devotional songs, *bhajana*, several times. The *pātri* blesses the people with lamps in their hand and return. The *pātri* comes back in front of the tree and presses the oil lamp against his chest to flaunt that his chest has miraculously not been burnt. After this, the ornaments are placed on the palanquin, and returned to the shrine of *Ullālthi mādu*. *Deva* and *Daiva* bless the people, and the *kiruvāla* is returned to the sacred *mañca* inside the shrines. In this festival, trees, stones, wells, and springs are also enshrined, as a form of thanking and worshipping the fertility of the land.

The *Pambada* impersonator makes preparations to make-up his face and his body spending more than two hours. During the preparations *pāddana* continued to recite in some years ago, but this custom has lost recently. After this, he wears the cloth for *nēma* and decorations with the help of others. After completing, they start to recite the *pāddanas* in tune with the rhythm of the drum, and narrate the mythological history of *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar Daivangalu* in old *Tuḷu* language. In other regions, the story of the long journey have been narrated one by one, and after telling the arrival to the current festival site in *pāddana*, the impersonator has been possessed. This indicates that the *pāddana* is the process to the appearance of spirits and deities, confirming that the power of the words cause the trance. In recent times, however, the chants are becoming more and more abridged.

Prior to *nēma*, *Tantra pūjā* is performed by Brahman at the *Ullālthi mādu*. Basically, it follows the *śaiva sampradaya* system and is primarily performed for the main deity and *gaṇas* (followers of the main god). This ritual is performed for the *gaṇa* of *Ajwar Daivangalu*. It is called *mahā pūjā*. When the ritual ends, lights are turned on, and the *Ullālthi nēma* starts. *Pāḍdana* is recited as a whole. This is the important process for becoming possessed. When the dancers stand up, a small hand torch illuminates their ornaments *kiruvāla* such as mask, chest plate, and anklets. The performer is given five lit sticks (*divtige*). This signifies the highest form of respect for *Ullāklu*. *Ullālthi* seemed to be *Deva*, and the ritual carried out differs from those of *Davia*. *Ullāklu* differs from *Daivas* and *Bhūtas* in that the ritual of placing flower offerings on the betel nuts leaf is carried out first. Gestures displaying the appearance of spirits are carried out and graceful dance continues.

The impersonator continues to dance as the offerings to the *Ullālthi* in a manner that resembles ascetics. During *nēma*, they are not allowed to drink or eat, indicating strong characteristics of asceticism. In *nēmotsava*, dancers paint their face with color (yellow or red), dress up like kings, wear jewelry, hold a sword, and speak like gods. In the dance, the impersonator tells that *Ullālthi* has appeared and is very close to his body. The devotees pray to and worship the impersonator as a deity. People inquire about their problems and ask him questions to get answers and good advise. They are encouraged by the deity with words of encouragement and consolation, and get a reliance of their life. It is believed that the real power of the *Ullālthi* lies in his ability “to talk . . . to us by entering the dancer’s body.” After the ritual ends, the devotees are wished well, their complaints are dissolved, solutions are instructed, and finally, *prasāda* is distributed for the good health. The people



Plate 4 Blessing

line up at the outer precinct of the shrines of *Ullālthi mādu* and go round by the procession with the impersonator several times. *Ullālthi* presses the torch on her chest and boasts that he is not burnt.

When the *Ullālthi nēma* ends, a special blessing is presented to *Balthila Beedu* and the *Kolakere* family whose house was ruled by *Ballar* in *Mogranāḍu sīme*. Nowadays, *dhrada purpa* (giving courage symbolically with good will) is given to the *Prabhu* of the *Kolakere* house (Plate 4). *Palanir Bhat*, Brahmans, give *purpa* to people with high level of authority, which indicates the superior position of the *Kolakere* house. *Būlia* is given to other old houses, *Odal Guthu* and *Punjalimar Guthu*, which were ruled by *Baṅga*. *Būlia* is the offering of sandalwood paste and jasmine flower on banana leaf.

After *Ullālthi nēma* is over, *Ajwar Daivangalu nēma* starts, first of elder brother and then of the younger one. In the *nēma* of the younger *Ajwar* brother, the gestures of hunting the boar with bow (*biru*) and arrow (*pagari*) are acted out. Re-enactment of mythological state narrated in *pāḍḍanas* is performed, indicating the combination of the myth and ritual as a folk performance. After the *nēmas* of these three *Ullāklu* (*Ullālthi* and *Ajwar* brothers), the fourth *nēma* is performed. This is the *nēma* of astrologer *Basarithaya* who predicted the appearance of *Ullālthi* in *pāḍḍana*. This is the *nēma* of *Bhūta* in which the impersonator paints the face white with sandalwood paste. It evidently indicates the characteristics of offering to the dead spirit. After this, two *Bhūta nēmas* are performed. In case of *nēma* of *Pañjurli*, the impersonator wears the coconut palm leaves around his waist creating the wild atmosphere. *Pañjurli* takes the food (*āvāra*) during *nēma*. *Dhūmāvati nēma* is performed in short time. Both of them are enshrined as *Bhūtas* of the earth land. All rituals end after 3 P. M.

The *kiruvāla* of *Ullāklu* is placed on the palanquin and returned to the *Balthila* house. A purification ritual, *śudhi kalaśa*, is carried out inside. The *pātri* of *Dhūmāvati* returns to *Edla stāna* near *Kolakere*,<sup>44)</sup> while that of the *Pañjurli* returns to *Kurmana stāna* in those days, because *Dhūmāvati* is the guard of *Ullālthi* and *Pañjurli* that of *Ajwar*.

## 2. Festivals in March

In March, festivals are performed at *Mular mādu* and *Puncheti mādu*. The dates of the festival are decided by the *Sankramana* calendar, suggesting that the objects of worship are *Daivas* and *Bhūtas*. At the *Puncheti mādu* and *Mular mādu*, a flag-hoisting ceremony is conducted at the start of the festival before the *nēmas*. This flag-hoisting ceremony is mainly to show respect for the *Ajwar Daivangalu* brothers and *Rājan Daivas* likened to kings. They have high status, and the *Ullālthi* is their sister. The flag-hoisting ceremony is not performed in the rituals in *Puḍuvar mecci* in December. The March festival is a combined ritual of *Ajwar* and *Ullālthi*.

In March, the annual festival of *Ajwar Daivangalu* starts two days after the end of the *Netla Śiva* temple festival of the *meena māsam*. This festival schedule demonstrates the relationship between Hindu god (*Deva*) and local deity (*Daiva*). After the end of the annual festival, *Kadeśvāliya Narasimha (Viṣṇu)* temple festival starts. Six days after the first day of *meena māsam* (March), banana trees are cut in *Mogranāḍu sīme*, and the eighth day is the start of *nēma*. Prior to the annual festival, buffalo race (*kambala*), cockfight and *ceṇḍu* are

conducted. The *ceṇḍu* is a type of football game in which the people of *Mogranāḍu sīme* kick a ball made of coconut fiber and skin. It is said that this game originated from the story in which the goddess *Durgā* (also *Ullālthi*) kills an evil spirit with the help of *śakti*, and plays with its head. The ball itself resembles the head of the dead spirit. To the *Ajwar* brothers, the ball means the head of the wild animal, which they caught during their migration. There are two interpretations: the one is from the *purāṇic* mythology of Hindu god, and the other from local narrative presented by *pāḍḍana*. *Ceṇḍu* enacts the myth and the narrative as a folk performance. The game is played in a place called *valasari Gedde* where a peculiar motion is enacted based upon the *pāḍḍana*. It is a rice field extending out in front of the *Khamprabail* festival site, which has been, threshed the paddy after the harvest. Kickoff of the ball starts after prayer by the *Palanir Bhat*. The players are divided into two groups, and the game is played in the same way as football. The group shooting three goals first wins. When the game ends, the old person of the *Kolakere* and *Balthila* houses is going round on the rice fields with many people. *Ceṇḍu* is played for three days during the festival each year.<sup>45)</sup>

On the first night of the festival, the ornaments (*kiruvālas*) of *Ajwar Daivangalu* and *Ullālthi* are placed on a palanquin by *Balthila Beedu* and brought to the *Ullālthi mādu*. The *pātri* of *Dhūmāvati* goes along with the procession. The *pātri* of *Pañjurli* also must join with it, but nowadays the new *pātri* does not come out. The *kiruvālas* are placed inside the sanctuary of the shrine of *Ullālthi mādu*. After *pūjā* is carried out, food is served to the queues of people. At 9 P. M. the palanquin is moved towards *Mular mādu*.

The *nēmas* are started with that for *Mular mādu* that is dedicated to the festival site of the elder *Ajwar* brother. Upon reaching the *mādu*, a *Nandi* flag-hoisting ceremony is performed to express that the *Rājan Daiva* in honor of king and *Ajwar Daivangalu* embody the power of *Śiva*, because *Nandi* bull is the vehicle of *Śiva*. The *kiruvālas* of the *Ajwar* brothers are brought into inside the shrine. *Kiruvāla* of *Ullālthi* is placed in a palanquin. The wind instruments (*srti*, *nāgasvaram*) are sounded 13 times, *bhajana* is sung and the palanquin is carried around the shrine, after which *kiruvāla* of *Ullālthi* is placed inside the shrine of *Mular mādu*. The two *pātris* (now only one) start to tell oracles and their *bandāras* are placed outside. They take a rest until midnight, and then the *mecci-nēma* of the elder brother is performed, followed by that of the younger brother, and that of *Ullālthi*. It continues to the dawn and ends in the afternoon of the next day. The flag is lowered in the evening on that day. The *kiruvāla* is returned to the palanquin, and brought to the *Puncheti mādu* at the festival site of the younger *Ajwar* brother.

On the second night, the *kiruvālas* of *Ullālthi* and the younger *Ajwar* brother are taken from the palanquin, and the *Pambada* performer wears the ornaments of the younger brother, and performs *valasari* (ritual of moving back and forth). After oracles are spoken at the top of the *Puncheti mādu* hill, the performer and palanquin follow the brother's *nēma* down the 128 steps, and go to the festival site in front of the *Khamparabail* rice field. Fireworks are lit and *valasari* is carried out where they have descended. The dance expresses the hunting loved by the younger brother as narrated in *pāḍḍana*. The performer moves back and forth several times. They shout "*kajo, kajo.*" This is a signal to hunting dogs to catch animals. The *pātri* of *Dhūmāvati* and *Pañjurli* are positioned at both sides of

the younger brother during *valasari*. The five torches provided by the *Kolakere* family are placed near the palanquin, and after the ritual is completed, all performers climb up to the *Puncheti mādu*, and *prasāda* is distributed. The ritual ends in early morning on the third day.

On the third night, two *nēmas* are performed for the brothers. These are called *kere nēmas* (*nēmas* of well and reservoir). These rituals re-enact the birth of *Ajwar* in the *Gaṅga Kundam* (*Gaṅga Matha* lake) located at their birthplace *Baṅgavāḍi*. First, the *kere nēma* of the elder *Ajwar* brother is performed. The *nēma* starts in the middle of the night. Lamps are lit on both sides of 128 steps, and excitement peaks as they walk down the stairs. Oil lamps are also lit around *aśvatha* trees, and the pond at the side of the *Khamparabail* rice field is also decorated with electric and oil lamps. The *pātris* of *Dhūmāvati* and *Pañjurli* go to the end and both press the torches against their chest to show miracle power. The old men of *Kolakere Guthu*, *Balthila Beedu*, and *Palanir Bhats* try to appease them through words of encouragement.

Finally, they return to the *Puncheti mādu* on top of the hill, and distribute *prasāda*. The ritual is over after they listen to complaints and troubles of the devotees and provide answers. The next *nēma* is carried out after an interval of two hours, and *kere nēma* is repeated in the same way for the younger *Ajwar* brother. This ends in the early morning. Before each *nēma*, *tantri pūjā* is performed for the *gaṇa* of *Ajwar Daivangalu* based on the *Śaiva sampradaya* system. On each night, 16 *thambilas* are prepared for the *Mular mādu* and *Puncheti mādu*. Half of the food prepared for each *nēma* is placed inside the temple as offerings (*bali*). Ghee is placed on top and camphor flames are burnt. *Bali* is a symbolic form of offerings to *Daivangalu*. These offerings consisting of bananas, betel nut, areca nuts flower are placed inside a bronze container.

On the fourth night, *Ullālthi* is only performed. In the midnight, *Pañcākajjaya pūjā* is performed where devotees offer many flowers, after which *Ullālthi nēma* starts. The *kiruvāla* of the *Ajwar Daivangal* is placed in the palanquin. Only during *Ullālthi nēma*, five torches are brought near the dancer to express great respect. The silver mask (*muga*) is placed on top of bamboo frame fixed to the head (*aṇi*). It looks like a headgear. The procession proceeds to the *katte* to perform *pūjā* and carries out *kere nēma* at the pond. After the *kere nēma* is repeated several times, fireworks are lit and hymns are sung by devotees to pay homage to *Ullālthi*. *Ullālthi* returns to the *Puncheti mādu* on top of the mountain, and *prasāda* is distributed to everyone. The problems of the devotees are listened to and blessing prayers are given for good health. The old men of *Kolakere* and *Balthila* receive the offerings of *dhrada purpa*, ending the event.

After the *Ullālthi nēma*, the flag is lowered promptly. After this, the *nēmas* of *Pañjurli*, *Dhūmāvati*, and *Basarithaya* are carried out in the same fashion as the *Pudvar mecci*. When the night comes, the *kiruvāla* is placed in the palanquin, and brought to *Balthila* where a purification ritual called *śudha thambila* is performed.

## Analysis of Rituals

### Agricultural Rituals

The basic features of rituals can be seen in the *Puduvar mecci nēma* performed after harvest in December. This is the agriculture ritual in which new crops are offered to deities. The festival in March also falls in the second harvest time of rice, which can be reaped two times a year. Often, the sides of rice fields are used as festival site after harvest, where peasants express a feeling of gratitude and pray for good crops in the next season. They vow a wish of good health of the family, together with the power of the mother earth, especially recreation of fertility. Worship of wells and fountains is also strongly related to agriculture. The period between November and April is the dry season suitable to perform the festivals, and agricultural off-season is a time of enjoyment for peasants.

### Recreation of Myths

The origin myth narrated in *pāddanas* is recreated in the mind of people through enactment of performance in ritual. Of the *nēma* performances, the younger *Ajwar* brother repeats the *valasari* as performance of the hunting. In *kere nēma*, the birth of *Ajwar* is re-enacted near the pond that is made to look like the birthplace, *Gaṅga Kundam*, narrated in *pāddana*. In the *ceṇḍu*, a football game is performed as to the eradication of evil spirit in the myth. In addition, generating power of the recitation of *pāddanas* works to become possession and give the expression for the impersonator to play by the body. The migration pathways narrated in these *pāddanas* overlap with the appearance of deities, and in some areas, it is even linked to possession. Reciting origin myths, the people pray for the rebirth and revitalization of the mother earth. The narrations also include details of way of life in those days, reawaking memories of the past and history.

### Drawing out the Powers of the Mother Nature

*Katte pūjā* and *kere nēma* are rituals of trees and water. In festival time the nature such as mountains, forests, trees, big stones, ponds, rivers and rice fields are usually enshrined. The story of *Ajwar* demonstrates that mountains and hills as their origin place, where they get a great power from the water, mountains and lands sustained by the mother nature. The locations of sacred sites “*mādu*” show aspects of mountains and hills being male principle (*Ajwar*) and flat lands being female principle (*Ullālthi*). The liminality between mountains and flat lands culminates when *Daiva* goes down the 128 steps from the *Puncheti mādu* where women are forbidden to climb up the hill. The combination of mountains and flat lands serves as the basis for representing the nature and the universe.

### Reorganization of Historical Experience

The core supporters of rituals consist of four old houses and their families such as *Guthu* and *Beedu*. There remain vestiges that these families functioned as the sub lords of kings in the age of Jain kingdom. The territory of rituals is called *sīme* under the political space, and inside this territory are two royal temples, one each for *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*. The four old houses are made up of two *Ballars* and two *Baṅgas* who used to be linked to royal

families of the past. Today, there are not royalties, and their descendants have no special authority, but royal memory continues to live in the practice of rituals and chanting the narrative invocations, *pāddanas*. Reforming historical experience by linking past and present, kingship and royalty can be said to function as the basis for “community between act and narration.”

### **Condensation of Complex Nature of Various Values**

Rituals integrate complex values such as Sanskrit and Dravidian cultures, Hinduism and Jainism, and Brahman and non-Brahman elements aesthetically. Major festivals are held based on the lunar calendar and semi-solar calendar, resulting in various mixtures of views on divinities and rituals. The relation between caste and outcaste or tribes provides even more complicated interpretations than that between the upper and lower castes of society. The meanings of expression using excessive ornaments called *kōla* conducted by harijans are the performance integrating the multi-layered cultures through transcendence to access to the memory of kingship. Anyway, in the rituals the daily social order of caste is reversed temporarily or hidden. This can be said to become across social functions by symbolic messages.

### **Transformation of Rituals**

*Bhūta* and *Daiva* rituals are undergoing rapid changes in recent years. Rituals are extensively incorporating entertainment elements, whereby performances are fun to watch. The occasions to use trumpets for musical instruments are increasing and musicians are reorganized into the style of brass bands, introducing the use of trendy songs and movie sound tracks for music. *Bhūta* and *Daiva* rituals, which are increasingly influenced by urbanization, are being transformed “from possession to folk performance,” and rural rituals will probably not be able to avoid these influences. As seen in the case of *Balthila*, kingship as a sustainer of rituals has collapsed, and even Jains, who were great patrons of the rituals, have abandoned the principle of social structure such as matrilineal descent system, influenced by social change. Land management for rituals is now entrusted to operations of committee and trustees participated by the normal people. In particular, reformations of law systems such as the land reform act have destroyed land ownership, which had served as the financial foundations of the *Guthus* and *Beedus*, making it difficult to continue rituals. Amidst such trends can be seen movements to separate *Bhūta kōla* from ritual context and to show it on stage. Such movements are however quite weak compared to those for the *Teyyam* rituals of North Kerala (Malabar). In the case of *Teyyam*, there are disputes that ritual is art or not in some areas, connected with the political movements of the communist party and Indian People’s Party (BJP), and politics is playing an increasingly stronger role. In the 1990s, antagonism was born between the communist group, which were trying to convert rituals into stage performances with the support of the lower class and the BJP, which were trying to build a ritual saving society by protecting cultural value. Controversy has not progressed to such extents in the coastal area of Karnataka. Compared to *Teyyam*, *Bhūta* consists strongly to keep the possession and do not

want to change the schedule from midnight to daytime. This poses as a barrier in movements from rituals to stage performances, and the *Bhūta* rituals are too complicated and synthetic to be used as the cultural resources of Hindu nationalism.

Historically speaking, rituals have been changing constantly. In the case of *Balthila*, the *Kolakere* family has served as a major factor of change from a broad perspective, and people related to this family hold the key to its future. Now the old man of *Kolakere* keeps the status of the chief official of the shrine (*mukutēśvar*). At the beginning, *Kolakere* was ruled by Jain *Ballal*. Today, it is controlled by *Konkani Brahmans* from Goa called *Gowda Saraswath* with the family name of *Prabhu*. They not only promoted Hindunization but also changed the social structure from matrilineal to patrilineal descent, bringing about massive changes such as creating the language community of *Konkani* in the *Tuḷu* language society. The *Prabhus* are working as talented business merchants under royal protection, and are said to have settled down in the inland area through rivers as far as 300 years ago. They are believers of *Vaiṣṇava sampradāya* (religious center is *Udupi*) worshipping *Madhva*. They started to worship *Daiva* after coming to *Kolakere* and became involved in Dravidian style rituals, which today coexist with Brahman rituals. Such subtle complexities are narrated in *pāḍdana* by various stories on the origin of deities, migration route, and incidents to encounter in local areas. Moreover, there is evidence that the *pāḍdana* of *Balthila* and its vicinity have been remade by the authority conducted by the *Prabhus*, because of the central position and a leading role of the *Kolakere* house to establish the *Ullālthi* cult. For instance, according to *pāḍdana*, *Ullāklu* and *Daiva* called the *Kolakere* house *Jananda Beedu* (birth house), because *Ullālthi* was born in this family. The expression of “*Jananda*” (birth) shows us a central role in rituals and means standing at the peak of social authority. It looks like that an appearance of *Ullālthi* demonstrates the evidence to make an accomplishment of this movements.

From the various aspects of rituals, several characteristics can be seen. For example, the silver anklet (*gaggara*) treated as sacred and used for *Ullālthi nēma* is deposited in *Kolakere* house. The *Kolakere* family provided an oil torch with five flames for *Ullālthi*, for which ultimate respect was paid. In addition, the *Kolakere* family provided a place to store treasures called *Bhaṇḍāramane* (*Ullālthi mādu*). They are also the ones who engaged with *Palanir Bhat* family to perform *pūjā*. *Pāḍdana* mentions that of the four representative families of *Mogranāḍu sīme*, *Ullālthi* loved the *Kolakere* family the most. In every generation, relatives of *Kolakere* are expected to become the *pātri* of *Dhūmāvati*, the guardian deity of the house, who needs to perform the *nēma* rituals even today. The *pātri* of *Dhūmāvati* functions as the mediator with *Ullāklu* and *Bhūta*.

One day the *pātri* possessed by *Ullālthi* said,

“*Ullālthi* says, I enjoyed my stay in the Birth House (*Jananda Beedu*) *Kolakere* as a bride (*Kanya Kumari*) in that house. I will protect the family of *Kolakere* House by keeping them in my protection. The *Krishna Prabhu* family has to do *dharma* and I support to any extent to uphold the *dharma* and *Prabhu* family. After the *nēma*, I will be back to *Kolakere* at all times. My subordinate *Dhūmāvati* is always posted there to look into the affairs of *Kolakere* House. We will protect the *Kolakere* family from any calamities with our flame power.”

By accumulating such narratives, all the story converging to the *Kolakere* family should be formed. As a result, the power of *Prabhu* progressed to grow. Ironically, no one lives in the *Kolakere* house now. The *Prabhu* family has moved to Mangalore to get higher income, their descendents work at companies, and some are said to have gone to the Gulf countries for work. Today, rituals are presided by a key person of the *Kolakuru Prabhu Trust*. Born in Mangalore in 1945, he became the manager of a steel company in 1981, but after the bankruptcy, he started teaching at a business school near Mangalore city. He then migrated to Bangalore in 2000 to work in the IT industry. Today, he teaches as a professor at the MBA department of The Oxford College of Engineering. In this way, rural rituals are closely linked to globalization.

As society undergoes intense changes, the *Kolakere* house goes to decline, but, in one of the inner rooms, *Daiva* and *Bhūta* are enshrined on the *mañca* quietly. *Dhūmāvati*, the guardian deity, is also alive. It is indeed the “House of the *Bhūta*.”

Some descendents come to the house to put the lights everyday to perform their traditional duty. Only during *nēmas* festival would those related come together to display their authority by gaining the right to be the first receiver of offerings, *prasāda*. Elderly persons of the *Kolakere* house are also required to attend the *Ullālthi nēmas* in the December festival, *Puduvar mecci*, at *Ullal mādu* and March festival at *Puncheti mādu* and *Mular mādu*. The custom of sharing the costs together with the *Balthila* house continues even today. This collaboration appears to be the remnants of the fact that the two families were once from the same *Ballal* family, indicating that historical continuity is maintained. During the *nēma* period, the head of the *Kolakere* house is required to maintain his own authority by providing cash to farmers and workers. Rituals also serve as the place for the redistribution of wealth. *Deva* and *Daiva* rituals appear to become more and more flamboyant through the inflow of money economy as villages reinforce their ties with cities. On the other hand, the collapse of the social infrastructure is widening internal rifts. The meanings of royalty and kingship have played a role in slowing down such turmoil to a certain extent. However, the rift between economy and society is growing wider and wider, and delicate strained relations wavering between the two extremes of rural community and global society are starting to show signs of accelerating changes in rituals.

## Notes

- 1) *Bhūta* is a Sanskrit term. It is normally called *Buta* in *Tuḷu*.
- 2) This area is also called *Dakṣiṇa Kannaḍa* (South Kanara).
- 3) The excellent research on *Bhūtas* worship has been conducted by Chinnappa Gowda (1990, 2005).
- 4) See Upadhyaya and Upadhyaya (1984) for a brief introduction.
- 5) The headgear and make-up style have influenced on the *Yakṣagana* dance in the coastal area of Karnataka.
- 6) The speech of *Daiva* is called *nudikatt* with the special nuance.
- 7) The masks are made of silver and sandalwood. A few years back, these were made of areca palm spate.

- 8) A good analysis on *pāddana* is presented by Brückner (1993, 1995).
- 9) A simple outline of this region is provided in the photo collection by Pais and Vincent (2000). The articles on folk customs and *Bhūta* worship are collected by Upadhyaya (1996) and Rao and Gowda (2003).
- 10) The *kiruvāla* (pl. *kiruvalau*) means ornaments used for *Daiva* and *Bhūta* rituals. The contents include the idol of deity, sword, hand mirror, mask, and chest shield. These look like the royal treasures deposited in the palace.
- 11) The king of the Hoysala dynasty divided South *Tuḷunāḍu* into 15 areas and entrusted governance to the king of *Baṅga*. It is said that *Ullālthi* was enshrined in each area (Upadhyaya and Upadhyaya 1984: 54). They considered that the worship of *Ullālthi* might have started in the 12th century. According to a legend, *Ullāya* and *Ullālthi* were born in golden place of *Konga* country. They descended down the Western *Ghaṭṣ* and came to the *Baṅga* kingdom” (ibid: 54).
- 12) In medieval times, land was divided into *maidan* (area), which was divided into *sīme* (region), into *hobli* (a group of *magne*), and into *magne* (villages) in this order.
- 13) *Dhūmāvati* is the female deity as the same as *Jumādi*. However, *Jumādi* is regarded as hermaphrodite in some area (Brückner 1987). The relation between *Ullālthi* and *Ajwar* is mother and son, sister and brother. The concept of pair of sister and son can be found in *Bhūta* worship. The discourse that *Ullālthi* is called a virgin goddess is a Hindu concept.
- 14) The *kiruvāla* has been stored at the *Ullālthi mādu* (*Baṅḍāramane*). Today, they are deposited at *Balthila Beedu*, placed on *mañca*. The Brahman *Palanir Bhat* family prays them everyday. The bronze statue and silver bow and arrow are the *kiruvāla* of *Ajwar Daivangalu*, and silver masks and chest plate are those of *Ullālthi*.
- 15) At the end of the *nēma*, a younger brother of *Ajwar Daivangalu* goes out hunting with bow, arrow, and sword.
- 16) This is located near the sacred place of Jainism in *Baṅgavādi*.
- 17) In the ritual for *Ullālthi*, a well on the side of a rice field in *Khamprabail* resembles this pond.
- 18) This is *Ajjer-da-daivangalu* based on the *Ajjer* mountains, another name of this area, which then became *Ajwar Daivangalu* (*Ajjer* changed to *Ajwara*, and then to *Ajwar*).
- 19) Today, this figure is depicted during *nēmas*. *Brahmā* is also called *Bermeru Bhūta*. It differs from the *Brahma*, one of the three main gods of Hinduism.
- 20) Camphor, *agar*, is an offering for deities. It burns to let out smell and smoke.
- 21) *Dharmastala* is a famous pilgrimage place. Today, palace, Jain temples, Hindu temples and *Bhūta stāna* coexist here. Originally, four types of *Dharma Daivas* were guardian deities here. Later, *Aṅṅapa Panjurli* was added. *Panjurli* is normally a *Bhūta*, but is regarded as a *Daiva* here.
- 22) A snake god is enshrined here. This is identified with god *Murkaṇ* in Tamil *Nāḍu* today. This is still an important sacred place now.
- 23) This is a festival tool similar to a pot, placed at the rooftop of the temple.
- 24) This place is famous for 1,000 *liṅgam* temples. *Śiva* temple is called *Śahasra Liṅgeśvara*. A sacred place is located at merging point of two rivers.
- 25) This is located near *Nari Kaombu* and *Shamburu*.
- 26) This means the place of meeting *Kundaya*, so that the encounter is important.
- 27) This is a *Daiva* of the hill. She is said to have a female power of land called *ādi sakti*.
- 28) The *pātri* of *Panjurli* in *Ullālthi* rituals normally appeared from amongst the people of *Kurmana*.

- This practice has been lost since the old *pātri* died away.
- 29) *Murlaru* is the compound word made up of *mula* (beginning) and *uru* (place).
  - 30) Nowadays, the festival in March starts on the top of a hill, which has 128 steps getting down to the flat area.
  - 31) This is the powerful guardian deity of hunting in the mountains. There is a famous shrine in *Padnur of Viṭṭala*. It is enshrined together with two silver idols of *Ullālthi*. The *Malerāya* shrine in *Kepu* is also famous.
  - 32) *Kaṇṇyā* means bride, and *Kumāri* means young girl.
  - 33) Relatives of the *Kolakere* house are expected to become the *pātri* of *Dhūmāvati* in every generation.
  - 34) Today, it is kept at the *mañca* of the *Balthila* house, and a *pūjā* is carried out everyday.
  - 35) Even today, after the three main *nēmas* are over in the annual festival, the fourth *nēma* is performed for *Basarithaya*. This is a *Bhūta* by the impersonator with applying sandalwood paste on the face.
  - 36) The descendants of Kannur king are living in the royal palace.
  - 37) This is the good example to enshrine *Bhūta*, *Daiva* and *Deva* at the house.
  - 38) *Munar* is located near *Konaje-Ullāl*.
  - 39) This spirit itself is also extensively worshipped as a *Bhūta* in *Tuḷunāḍu*.
  - 40) Other *Rājan Daivas* are *Koḍamanatāye* at *Uppinangadi* and *Todakukkinar* at *Kanandur*.
  - 41) Refer the report on the *Balthila* area in detail (Kolakuru Prabhu Trust, 1996).
  - 42) Most of all the *Ullālthi nēmas* are held in the midnight, but in case of *Kadeśvāliya*, the *nēma* is performed in the early morning.
  - 43) Today, all *kiruvālas* and other gold and silver jewelries are kept in the *Balthila* house for safety. They were originally kept at the *Ullālthi mādu* (*Bhaṇḍāramane*).
  - 44) Even today, the *mañca of Dhūmāvati* is set in *Bhaṇḍāramane* in *Edla*. *Ullālthi* orders *Ballal* to prepare a *Bhaṇḍāramane* for her and carry out the daily *pūjā*.
  - 45) The same game is carried out in a rice field, *Baki Meru*, before *Balthila Beedu* on the New Year day called *Viśu*.

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