

MAGIC, MYTHS, LEGENDS

MURCHISON TRIBES

Waianwonga Tribe

Spirits of the Dead.

The Waianwonga people believed that their dead (called tchangara) go Mungeri, which is a big hill far away. They do not return after they have gone to Mungeri; but they hover for some time over their own districts before they go away, and when they are finally leaving for Mungeri they make a whistling noise as they go. Tchangara always whistle (wuruin) when they are going to Mungeri, and the wondigulongub (sorcerer) of the local group who hears them, calls out to them, "Nyinda wuruin muna." (You whistle not.)

Winyirdi, a Waianwonga, also stated that the country east and south of the Waianwonga, particularly Yarnderi (Lake Way district) country, is full of tchangara, who kill every yamaji (man) they catch hold of.

Names of ghosts, spirits, amongst the Waianwonga (Wajida) (Most of these come from the north).

Bijil	Jinarundi
Mundang	Manduri
Jangara	Juna
Bajabuga	Budulya

Stone Men

There are several marda yamaji (stone men) called Jibu at Jibun (Waianwonga country) and also on Nyumbaru's barna. The marda yamaji often fight with the yamaji and spear them, but no yamaji can spear the marda yamaji.

Stellar Myths

The buli is now represented by the dark wavy line, near the Milky Way; the clay pan is the Coalsack; the emu adjoins the Coalsack and wavy line.

### Ngaiuwonga Tribe

According to Jal, a Ngaiuwonga, the waiurda (opossum) was a yamaji (man) wijari (long time ago) and had a maruwa (species of bush rat) as his mardungu. They lived amongst the marda at Balu (Ranges) until they became kuga (animals, meat food, etc.)

Yalabiri (emu) was a Ngaiuwonga nyarlu (woman) wijeri, and Kagu (crow) was her mardungu. They turned into kuga also.

Maiamba yalabiri and imeri (long carved flat pointed stick) are in the sky where they were put a long time ago.

The warida jina (eaglehawk's foot) was also put in the sky maiamba time. All bundara (stars) were marda (stones) at one time.

Kardu or Kardunga was a balu (Ranges) yamaji wijeri; now he is the Southern Cross.

Kardu put the buli (snake), kuro (clay pan) and yalabiri (emu) mulba (in the sky). All the yamaji that are now mulba have been put there by Kardu.

The Ngaiuwonga have the following legend :-

Karongu (sun) was balbura (very hot) and had three kada (children), but Malagulju killed Karongu and Wilara (moon) who was her mardung and they fell down and turned into maiamba. Malagulju had plenty nyarlu (women) and wida-wida (ants). He lived in the sky (mulba). The nyarlu could see the young men walking about and they cried for them, but Malagulju kept them all to himself, and he is up in the sky now and the nyarlu are burndara (stars).

Janjibala are men and women who live underneath the ground.

Ngadawonga Tribe

Ngadagurdain, a Ngadawonga, stated that biargo (black cockatoo, red tail) was yamaji, Maiamba time. A warura or bogar (?) laid some eggs and covered them up. Biargo wandi (women) were away in the bush, but presently came back and saw the eggs. They sat round them and lifted the cover up and then all the eggs fell down and broke. The women all fell down too and now they are up in the sky. They turned into biargo and went up bila (skywards) but some remained down on the earth and that is why there are biargo. The biargo who went up bila, now form the constellation Orion.

Yagarongu was a woman, Maiamba time. She came from the east and made all the mili-mili (rock or "ngamu" holes) as she came along, and also made Maiamba barunga (edible creeper seed). She got a big round stone and placed it near the mili-mili and made a fire there and cooked the barunga after she had pounded them up with the marda (stone). Some yurla men came behind and watched Yagarongu breaking up the seed on the round stone and as they watched her the stone sank down in the barna (ground) and baba (water) came up, like the mili-mili Yagarongu had made. This mili-mili is near Minderu. Then Yagarongu went away and all the Yurla were very sorry and stood up and were turned into gum trees.

## Stellar Myths

There are legends connected with the Pleiades which are called Nairi by the Ngadawonga and Waianwonga and with Magellan's Clouds, which are Barla and Tulgardanga and Wanarida (Orion) or Biargo, as Orion is called by some Ngadawonga.

Wiri the evening star has also a legend and many other constellations are represented in legend and myth. Most of these are, however, forgotten or only vaguely remembered by the natives and it was not possible to obtain a coherent account of any one constellation or star.

A long legend, connected with the travels of some maiamba yamaji who are now turned into curiously shaped boulders or rocks in various places in the Wajari and Ngadawonga districts was regrettably unprocurable, as no one native could remember the entire legend and consequently no consecutive record could be obtained from them; for when gathered together at my camp for its relation, each one quarrelled with the others' rendering and there was no time to sift the contradictory statements made by them.

Barduwonga Tribe (Turada, informant)

The only information obtained was the belief that the following birds were men a long time ago :-

Walau uru	eaglehawk
Kallaia	emu
Malbi	pigeon
Nganardi	turkey
girgi	hawk
Gamba	cuckoo

They apparently believe their dead go northeastward; that all deaths occur through magic; that the mobarn or sorcerers have power to kill or cure; that certain magic ceremonies must be performed to obtain an increase in their totemic animals or plants; that a magic snake dwells in certain deep pools and guards these from unauthorised persons having access to them; that there are evil spirits, whom they name nalba, mindi and nganeri, who have power to injure them; that these evil spirits are distinct from the spirits of dead natives, "ghosts", called kōdi-ōn, who are not malicious.

## THE WELD RANGE OCHRE MINE

In the Weld Range district there is a famous native mine from which the coveted red ochre has been obtained by the wajari (men) of the district for many hundreds of generations.

The approach to the mine, which lies on top of one of the hills, is circuitous and weird. The track winds in and out amongst narrow valleys, which, green and well-wooded as they are, engender a strange eerie feeling owing to the apparent absence of any life in the vicinity. This district once possessed a comparatively numerous native population, but one man now represents the tribe in whose country the mine is situated. Just fore the last turning is passed, there are two dark odd-looking outcrops of iron ore on the steep slope of the last hill before the mine is reached. According to Idiongu, a Burgulu, the last direct owner of the red ochre mine, these two outcrops are two mundang or spirits of long dead owners who are now watching over the road to their mine.

The names of these mundang are Iliri or Jugalgura and Dar-bidi or Miril. Near the hill where these mundang are watching, is a pool called Danganu, where a Jila (mythical snake) sits down with his wife. Jila also guards the mine and climbs the trees in his neighbourhood so that he can see "far away".

The mundang appear to be sleeping on the slope of the hill, but if a strange native tries to pass and obtain or steal the red ochre, the recumbent mundang stand up and face him, and he soon dies. Sometimes one of the mundang visits the mine, and if you camp near the place at night, you can hear him running down the hill, striking his kundi (club) with his miru (spearthrower) in his journey over the path.

When Idiongu, a Kaimera, was born, he was covered all over with duari (red ochre) and was said to have come out of Duari-vaflu (red ochre hole). His father was Bo'ana, a Burgulu, his mother Ilijingu being a Paljeri. When his mother gave birth to him he was covered with duari and the mundang who guarded the place were his friends.

Boana and all his people are now dead, and Idiongu is far away, so, except for the mundang, there is no one now to guard the mine. If a great many natives go together to the mine, they will not be touched or hurt by the mundang, but if only a few go, the mundang and jila will kill them. These mundang are somewhat similar to the janga of the South and ranjee of the north in that they were once living in the districts which their spirits now guard.

The mine has always been held sacred from women and children and was used as a hiding place for the imeri (long carved flat sticks) and other objects used during initiation. These were stored in some of the "drives" or "pockets" of the mine.

Animals, eggs, snakes, birds, etc., all made of, or turned into, stone, may be seen in the mine. You must get the ochre quickly, as, if you are very slow, a big winju (wind) comes along, and you very soon die. If a stick cracks, you will die. There are three springs near the mine, but they are only known to Idiongu. When he visits his home he can go and see Miril and Iliri, who were his ancestors.

Iliri and Miril did not go to the home of the dead; they remained mundang in their district and now keep guard over the mine.

The Weld Range natives believed that Nyjmi (the owl) was the father (maman) of all yamaji (natives).

There are many evil spirits.

The spirits of dead natives are called jocarrin (jocarree Broome word).

Ngabboongana is a female spirit, belonging to the sea, who makes a noise like thunder. She is like a half caste in colour.

Sometimes a jillem (native) will catch a ngabboongana and bring her to his camp. When she is there he lights two fires and makes breealjee (smoke). The ngabboongana lies between the two smokes, which are on either side of her and while lying between them she changes colour and becomes a real nallil (black woman). After that she is the wife of the man who caught her and put her in the breealjee.

Yarralallil is a female spirit who wears a forehead band "like a necklace of kangaroo teeth" which rattle as she runs. She spears natives with a long wooden spear and generally knocked them on the head; after cooking them she ate their brains. (Koongoolin = brains). She used to take boys away to a dark hole on the top of a hill and fatten them up and eat them.

Jarranyinee may be either a male or female spirit which had horns like a bullock. It catches the natives on its horns (bandaral = horns). It digs a long hole or burrow through the ground "like a tunnel" and catches men, women or children and puts them in the tunnel and eats them.

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Waiawonga

Ngaiuwonga

Ngadawonga

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Stellar Myths

The bull is now represented by the dark wavy line, near the Milky Way; the clay pan is the Coalsack; the emu adjoins the Coalsack and wavy line.

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The Ngadawonga state that Mala gali galia first brought fire to the yamaji. He was a yamaji Maiamba time. He brought the fire to Nyingari and put it in the bush at Minderu wila (Minderoo Creek or river).

NgajagurdainNgadawonga TribeWARIDA AND KAGU (Eaglehawk and Crow)

(How the Warida obtained Water)

Yererdāduna waridal kāgungu. Warida wonga, "Baba dala?"  
 "Waji baba," kago wonga, waji ngada minu nyina.  
 Yardaduna wongi jindingu naualdu ngalunda dā burdininda,  
 yarad, unga nanda, "D, ala baba?" Waji wajin miarna kagu  
 yardaduna kagogu waridala, yardaduna dala baba? Kago da burdina  
 waridal waji baba, ngada minin nyina. Kago waringa baba.  
 Kaga baba nganad, anu, Kago nyina nuni. Nyinarangaianu  
 buga boguna windongu waridala duna kago yanaji nyina yana  
 bugu wogalgo. Balu yanajina nyina yanabo. Buga wogalgo.  
 Balunga juna mulagardilu dunanda nud, a o yuga  
 Malagoinya nguragui nyina ana bau.  
 Nyinaranguna bugu wogulga nanunda ngada wanan bunaga. Warida  
 moburn winda duna kagu yanaji nyinarongana buga wogurna  
 Ka! ga! ga! ga!  
 Buga nungunda baba wogarna windongu baba bugarnangan wilagui.

Translation not given.

Stellar Myths

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Gunabirding was the only moburn yamaji in the Milguin district, his magic being situated in his stomach or breast, from which he drew it through his breath. He breathed short quick puffs, and catching between his fingers, sent them in the direction of the enemy. Gentle or rough massaging for internal complaints accompanied by an application of magic in the above form. When making rain Gunabirding made no change in the magic employed. Going into an open space or on top of a hill, he takes the magic from his breath and distributes it towards the points of the compass.

Most of the elders amongst the Yun tribes profess to be medicine men or sorcerers.

Notebook 8, P. 84

Yangulngundi, informant

Babba jarramura, rain pearlshell (or mijarrba).

Yangul first puts it between his teeth and puffs out with his breath waving it in his hand towards all the points of the compass. He also put it edgewise in a cleared place at Kaiagarina.

Wajungu (Wurdalba) at Manguru, and sings

Mijarba yurin baba jaramurra

Mijarrba yurin jaramurra.

Jaal calls inna warria, and imeri.

Maiamba yalabiri and imeri in the Dark Patch.

Jaal found his baby boy at Ngagulga in a bimara there, maiamba. He went out and shot three kangaroos and left them, then he saw three eaglehawk. He got back to the kangaroos and took the leg from two and then turned towards the third, and near a tree he saw something white and it looked like a wabbaru, ptilotis (?). He then saw what looked like a little boy in the trees. He fixed the legs of the kangaroo to a tree and sent Iliwi to get the meat and when she went to get it the boy went into her mouth.

Show bambooroo to Jimmy who will show it to Iliwi who will give it to Nguiguri.