

VIII 2b

FOOD

Notes from the Eucla  
district

Some tribes will journey to a distant tribe on a killing expedition and having killed they take the body with them, cook what they need on their return journey and bring the rest home to their women and children and relatives.

Wiri wongga (wiri-wiri = big mouthed) fought two and two when on a man hunting expedition. They killed their man (or woman or child) then turned back towards their own group, waited until the victim had been buried and the camp had been moved and then returned and exhumed the corpse and brought it back. It was optional to wear muldharra (murderer's slippers). The wiri killed at night. Mawgun miri (feast of human flesh). Mawgun is the large cutting flint used to cut the meat. Elbows and knees are broken up before cooking.

A human meat ceremony was as follows :- The liver of a dead man was taken out before the body was cooked and given to an elder (kommuru = mother's brother). This was placed on a stone or on bark or grass, kommuru standing beside it. Facing him in a half circle were the young men who were to eat the mawgun. All these held their miru (spearthrowers) across their backs (mirdingga) within the crook of their elbows, thus rendering them unable to use their hands. Kommuru cuts off slices of the kammarndi (liver) and throws it into the wide-open mouth of each young man, who must swallow the portion, however large it may be, without masticating. Should the stomach reject the portion, or should the young man be unable to swallow it without masticating, or should it fall on its way to his mouth, the unfortunate young man knows that his own death is near and that his kammarndi will in turn be cut up for his brothers, for these tribes eat their own dead as well as those of their neighbours. (Nganggari = "doctor").

Babies were given to their little brothers or sisters to eat, especially to growing boys. Should a woman be pregnant and her living baby boys continue strong and fat, then she knows the baby she is carrying is also a boy, for he will not take the fat from his brother. If however the boy or girl gets

thin and weak, then the new baby will be given them to eat and they will thus be given back the fat that the unborn baby had taken from them.

Inya-andhu ate three baby sisters and one baby brother. His mother Janjingu (now blind) gave them to him. Men and women (and sometimes babies) were cooked lying on their faces, except amongst the Kālor wongga, who cooked all their human adult food in a sitting posture. Some babies were laid on their backs on hot ashes. Bones of little babies were burnt, also adults. Young and old were eaten.

Biarn killed her baby at Bookabi (West Coast, S.A.)

Thanguna killed three half caste babies (and one full blooded boy baby which her son Wonggamurna and daughter Nyulongga ate between them.) The half castes were eaten by the group.

Inyuin killed all her babies and ate and shared them. Dōra and Bobburda (boy and girl) were allowed to live as they were born near white settlements, and Inyuin was living with a white man, when Dōra ("Freddy Grey" - white name) was born. Nyālongga and Wonggamurna ate their little brother (Thanguna mother).

Gauera's mother killed all her babies except Gauera, who shared in the food of her brothers and sisters.

Kadadhūna killed all her babies and partook of part of each one. There was "no food for them".

Sometimes the brother or sister became fond of the baby, yet if they continued to fall away, the baby was killed and its flesh cut up and covered with emu feathers or wibia (emu plumes) and placed in the wīrra (scoop) and the boy or girl was given portion until it was finished.

The wiri, kalur or other groups will go a long way to some camp, kill a man or woman, eat part of the flesh, and bring the rest home to their meat-hungry relatives.

Inyuin and all kūgurda were meat eaters.

Eucla district

SEASONS, ROOTS, FOODS, etc.

Kalaru = winter,

Bulbaga = spring

Bardingara = summer

Kanjimula = March fly season  
(November)

Yalalonga = autumn

The kalgula ripens in March.

Ngabula (white ants) are ready for gathering in July and August.

Ngura come next (December), then malgara, then birgala and

guyana come late in the summer.

Nala (edible roots of a species of mallee) are found at all times.

Ngoora, January, February (ripe)

Gooyana, February, March (ripe. Only comes when ground has  
been burnt.)

Mulgara, February, March (ripe)