

ABORIGINAL STELLAR MYTH

THE LEGEND OF THE TWO BROTHERS - Magellan's Clouds,
the Southern Cross and the Pointers,

In the dhoogoorr or dream times of long ago the mulba (men) of Willilambi (Twilight Cove) lived in great fear and trouble. Walja the eaglehawk who lived Kaiali (north) was their enemy and whenever he came near their wommu (fire, hearth, home) he shouted at them, and every time he shouted a wandi (boy) died, and when he broke a branch off the baru (sandalwood) a wandi died, so that the Willilambi men had no boys for yirganu (initiation) gatherings.

They tried to spear Walja but their spears were too soft and would not pierce the hard skin of Walja. Also they were in great and constant fear that Walja would break the warda (big tree) which grew near Willilambi and which held up the sky, for if the warda were broken the sky would fall down and darken the earth and all the mulba and baru (meat food) would be killed.

There were two big brothers, Badhu-wudha (right-handed) and Kurulba (left-handed) who were goonming-arra (friends) of the mulba and they were very sorry to see the walja killing the wandi with their shouting and branch breaking. One day Badhu-wudha sat down by Willilambi gabbi and said to the mulba, "We will kill the walja who are killing and eating your wandi and when we have killed them we will show you how to make good hard spears so that by and by you can spear all the walja that come to your wammu."

The two brothers had very strong spears (naldhara), hard and smooth and with very sharp points, and they made a great wind come and while the wind was coming over the koondan (plain) they made a big fire and hid in the warda (trees) near by. Darkness came along with the magia kaiali-nil (north wind) and Walja and his yaggulu (woman) and two wandi came in the big wind and sat down in the nimda (shade) under a tree. Walja said, "Wommu ngannain (my home)" and he and yaggulu and wandi sat down to eat, and after they had eaten they slept, hiding themselves among the leaves of the tree.

Badhuwudha and Kurulba were watching them and presently Badhuwudha crept and crept quietly under the warda that held the sky up, for if he had gone quickly he might have broken the warda.

Badhu and Kurulba came close to the sleeping walja. They had their kajji and warden (spears and spearthrower) ready, and right-handed Badhuwudha threw his naldhara at M'malu Walja (father eaglehawk) and left-handed Kurulba threw his naldhara at yaggulu walja (mother eaglehawk). M'malu and yaggulu walja cried out and flew away with the naldhara sticking out on each side of their bodies.

By and by they came back for their wandi and Badhuwudha caught hold of the kajji and they held them and held them until the walja were nalba (dead) and went madu madu (up high, on top). The two walja wandi were very frightened and hid in the warda, but Badhuwudha brought them out and killed them on the koondan (plain). They they said to the Willilambi mulba, "There is your baru (meat). Cook it and eat it."

The name of the place where walja were killed was Gooilgamba and their bones are now bandong (stones, rocks) and may be seen scattered and strewn about Wommundo (Eyre's Sandy Patch).

Then Badhuwudha made a great many bunggal trees come out of the ground, and he took the wood from these and showed the Willilambi mulba how to make bunggal kajji and bunggal warden, and said, "Now you will always have good strong kajji and warden that won't break, and you will no more fear walja. I give the bunggal to the Willilambi men."

The Willilambi mulba were very glad and the jilbi (old men) said, "Our wommu is bunggal wommu now and we are brothers of the bunggal. We will carry the ngwan (shadow) of the warden inside us so that it will tell us when walja are coming, and all the Willilambu mulba became bunggalaum (aum - contraction of wammu) and were always able to kill and eat walja.

And the old men made yinmas (long carved boards - Spencer's churingas) and burbing (bullroarers) and the walga (markings) on the yinmas were the heart, ribs, stomach and entrails and tail of the walja. No waljaum could make kajja gunna from the bunggal, for it was moodiji (forbidden) to them, and belonged to bunggalaum only.

By and by, when they had made the Willilambu mulba yaddoo (good, all right), Badhuwudha and Kurulba went up into the sky where they have been sitting down since dhoogoorr times, Badhuwudha at one side and Kurulba a little distance away. When Willilambi bunggalaum died, Badhuwudha stretched out his right hand and took them up to his wommu and when yaggulu and wandila and wanyila died, Kurulba reached down his left hand and drew them up to his wommu. When a bunggalaum dies, they make him very bright and clear so that the bunggalaum will not be frightened, and the long right hand of Badhuwudha and the left hand of Kurulba can be seen stretched down to catch and bring the bunggalaum to bubulu (brothers) wommu.

White men call Badhuwudha and Kurulba Magellan Clouds, but the Willilambu mulba know they were the two big brothers, right-handed and left-handed, who saved their wandi from the wicked walja.

Walja came from kaiali and they also went up to the sky where walja and yaggulu and their two wandi are now the Southern Cross and the Pointers.

In the days before the white men came, the bunggalaum of Willilambi were a great group (yangarra), having so many boys and girls amongst them that the daughter of a Bunggalaum man was betrothed in infancy to the son of the bunggalaum man's own sister (first cousin marriage). Their little boy babies always came to their father first, bringing their kundi with

them, and while the father beat his woman with his kundi, the baby boy went inside her. Little girl babies came to their fathers with their kandula (digging sticks) and their M'malu either beat yaggulu with the kandula, or threw water over her, and while he was doing this, the girl baby went inside her.

The once great and numerous family group of the bunggal-aum are now all dead, except two men, uncle (mother's brother) and nephew (sister's son) who wander to and fro along the white man's tracks. Willilambu water is orphaned water, and Willilambu wommu is no more a home. Here and there in hidden places are the yinma and burbin of the dead bunggalaum, but these will soon rot and die for there are no jilbi to visit the sacted places and to grease and rub and pay reverence to the yinma, as they did in the old days. The spirit of the yinma vanished with the death of their dhoogorr owners, and only burna walgaji (wood, carved) remains.