

VII
3a
[17]

1

ABORIGINAL STELLAR MYTHS

One often wonders if the route along which certain aboriginal myths and legends may be traced is an indication of the old route traversed by the progenitors of the tribes possessing these myths, in their journey from the northern points of entry to the various waters beside which they settled in the long ago. Aboriginal bondage to tradition still survives, and tribes, now far apart, whose very dialect has changed in the centuries, possess myths and legends whose similarity is evidence of tribal unity in some far-off time.

Especially is this the case in the stellar myths of the aborigines. Our "Zodiac" is known to them as a "Dhoogorr yuara", a winding road of the dream times, along which stars and constellations now travel that were once men, birds, beasts and reptiles, metamorphosed into stars because they brought fire or water, victory, or some special benefit or relief to the tribe or group that translated them into heavenly bodies. Good and evil persons and creatures have been transformed into stars, but I have not yet found in any group a myth of the Deity or "All-Father" such as the Pundjil or Baiamai of eastern tradition.

The circumcised hordes who possessed almost two-thirds of the continent at the time of white settlement brought many quaint myths with them, or originated these during their journeys southward, eastward and westward, through the centuries. Sun, moon and stars figure in the legends of these circumcised people. Curiously enough, Jupiter and Venus, both males, are associated in a myth covering a large area of South and Western Australia, from Eucla towards the Mann and Petermann Ranges and from the Bight to a point almost to the Southern border of the Northern Territory. Near or far as these planets may be as they travel over their appointed track, they are Katta kudnarra (heads two), having no bodies, but always following one another along the "dream road" which they themselves had

had made after their translation.

One myth (with slight and unimportant variation) was obtained from the surviving members of the Willilambi (Twilight Cove) group, and also from some border area (S.A.-W.A.) groups, and others whose waters were west and north-west of the Central and Border Ranges.

(P. 5 follows on here)