

SPIRITS

There are three kinds of ranjee :-

- (1) The invisible ranjee or spirit or soul, which is within a man, and which enables him to dream of ngargalula who will eventually come to him as his children.
- (2) The ranjee or spirit of the thunder and lightning, which may take male or female shape, the male shape usually controlling forked lightning, the female manipulating the sheet lightning. Sometimes more than one ranjee will be seen in the lightning. Both male and female ranjee are left-handed (ngalgarraman).
- (3) The ranjee or spirit of a dead native which, instead of going to Loomurn, returns to its own ground, haunting certain shady places on that ground. Sometimes these ranjee can be controlled by a jalngangooroo belonging to the same booroo.

The last named ranjee were real womba at one time, the ranjee booroo being his real booroo and visible, unlike the ngargalula booroo which is jimbin (underneath) and invisible to all except in dreams. You avoid the ranjee booroo because it is ranjee beega (ranjee's shade), but you may walk over the ngargalula booroo. There is a decided difference in the native mind between the ranjee booroo and the ngargalula booroo. Ranjee booroo is kalboo (above ground) and is known and visible to the natives living in the district. Strange natives inadvertently trespassing on such ground (always forbidden) are punished with sickness and death, and all home people, except jalngangooroo, avoid the vicinity of the ranjee beega. In all the beega ranjee booroo, the name and class of the man who died and changed into a ranjee are known to the old people belonging to that district, and some special jalngangooroo who is "brother stock" to the beega ranjee has always a prior claim on its services. The voice of the beega ranjee is called lanbagoon, and sounds like the tapping of hard wood.

The ranjee beega of the north is similar to the winnaitch places of the south. They need not always be shady trees or places. They are called by various names : Meerijool goombara (or Koombara ranjee or haunted rocks (to be avoided); Minjooroo baaloo (magic or ranjee trees); and ranjee beega (shady places) etc. Whatever the name of the place may be, the ranjee of the womba who died "sits down" there. It assumes the form and belongs to the class of the womba whose ranjee it is, and just as at Weld Range and other places, when strangers approach the ranjee beega or Minjooroo baaloo, the ranjee of the place rises up, stands facing them for a moment, looks at them angrily, and they die very soon afterwards.

Minjooroo baaloo is a meerijool tree in the bush beyond Walaning. All home people go near this tree, but far away Boorong, etc., must keep away from the tree. A "far away" Kaimera woman, ignorant of the locality, once went near the minjooroo baaloo and died shortly afterwards; the ranjee had looked at her and killed her. When the home people pass this place, the ranjee turns its back upon them, but even they must not go too close or they will get dardal (sick).

The ranjee of a beega is always a man. He is "kin" to the ranjee of the thunder and forked lightning, the lightning ranjee also taking the shape of a man, but there is this important difference between the two : the ranjee beega was once a man, while the ranjee of the thunder and lightning has always been a spirit which assumes the form of a man at times. The ranjee of the thunder is a yamminga ranjee. When the thunder is heard, the ranjee is coming out, and when the lightning shows, that is the ranjee. The beega ranjee is the spirit of a jocarree womba (dead man), haunting certain spots. The lightning ranjee gets up lallurn (summer) time, and can travel far; the beega ranjee cannot leave his booroo and is there through all the seasons.

The jalngangooroo have a certain control over the lightning ranjee in that they can sometimes stop the lightning, by catching it with their left hand, and they also have control over the beega ranjee who is one of their own ancestors, but they have no control over the ngargalula who inhabit the jibin booroo.

Koorrabarlbul is the name of a place in the pindana (bush) which is the booroo of a jandu ranjee (female spirit). The jandu ranjee is sulkier than the womba ranjee. There is no water in the pindana or be'ra'bul (inland) where the jandu ranjee sits down. She, however, belongs to the water (wo'la jaggoo) and is lammar malma and babbagoonoo (white haired and light brown in colour.)

In some districts this jandu ranjee appears to be identical with the sheet lightning female ranjee. Sometimes she will bring too much rain, and when this happens, the jalngangooroo womba catches the jandu ranjee and takes the moon'deragool (rope with which she pulls the lightning to and fro) from her, and pulls the mirrooroo (magic) out of her ears, and puts tchoorogoorong (snake magic) inside her to make a proper jandu of her. He then leads her to his booroo, catching her by the wrist, but she usually disappears from him before he reaches the camp, and he finds his hands empty. Occasionally two or three jalngangooroo catch the jandu ranjee and make her all right, and will bring her to the camp where their own jandu are. She stays with the women for a few days and then disappears and is not seen again until the sheet lightning comes. She is often heard making a crackling noise (called barr'bagoona) and then she flashes the lightning (wal'nge'ree) all round the sky.

"Barr'bagoona ying'in'ya wo'la immering," ("The noise says rain is finished,") is the remark the old men make when they hear the thunder receding in the distance, and see the sheet lightning hovering round the horizon. If a jalngangooroo catches hold of the wal'nge'ree and holds it down with the left hand, it will not hurt any one.

"Wal'neg'ree marra marrin" is an instantaneous flash showing where the jandu ranjee or womba ranjee have begun to play the lightning. The beega ranjee is the sole guardian of the jeer-ungoo mai (jamwood seed) of which mention has previously been made. These beega ranjee were ~~generally~~ were generally jalnga-ngooroo when they lived, but instead of going to Loomurn, they turned into ranjee, and came back to haunt certain places on their own ground. They are the "bogies" of the natives, and their cry of "min'jala ranjee!" or "Look out! see ranjee!" is sufficient to scare a whole crowd of men, women and children.