

(A Legend of Jirr-ngin-njan (Broome))

x In the Yamminga time, which was the time of long, long ago, Warragunna the eaglehawk was kogga (mother's brother) to Jindabirrbirr the wagtail and Joogajooga the northern pigeon.

Every day the three went out hunting for gurbaiju (honey of native bees). The bees were so very tiny that only the sharp eyes of the boys could see them as they flew to the hollows in the trees with their gurbaiju. Sometimes Jindabirrbirr caught a little bee, and taking a small piece of white down he attached it to the bee's back with a drop of blood drawn from his arm. It was then easy to follow the small white mark on the bee as it went to its nest in the hollow away up in the high trees. When they found the nest the boys would call their uncle to climb up and get the honey, for then they could not climb so high or so well as their kogga. Warragunna went up the trees the boys pointed out to him and he always found a great quantity of gurbaiju in the hollow, most of which he ate, sending down only le-da ('bee's fat') and ooba (bees' eggs) and a very, very little portion of the gurbaiju to the boys.

Jindabirrbirr and Joogajooga were greatly surprised to see such a small portion of gurbaiju come from the big trees, and so much leda and ooba, and they would find more and more big trees with the bees' nests so large that when they listened they could hear the many many bees putting the gurbaiju in their nest high above them in the hollow of the tree, and they would say to their uncle, "Kogga, here is a tree with much gurbaiju," but Kogga always ate the honey and only gave them the bees' fat and the bees' eggs.

Warragunna got very fat and strong through eating so much gurbaiju, and though the boys found many, many trees with much gurbaiju, their uncle would say, "Only leda and ooba and a little gurbaiju here", throwing it down to them. They got tired of looking for big trees which held so little honey and they said,



"We will hunt langgur and koordi and Kogga will kill them for us."

Warragunna again went hunting with them and when the boys found a langgur or koordi hole they called to their uncle to kill it for them. Warragunna would come along and kill the langgur and koordi, but he ate all the fat ones and only gave the thin and "no good" ones to the boys, and he got so sleek and fat that at last the boys began to suspect him. Jindabirrbirr said, "Kogga must have been eating all the honey and now he is eating the fat langgur and koordi and is only giving us the lean and no good ones. How shall we punish (yanni bing) Kogga for not giving us our proper share of the food we find?"

And Joogajooga said, "Come with me and I will tell you how we can punish Kogga for cheating us."

When they had come to some good koordi ground, Joogajooga made a deep hole like a koordi nest and he said to Jindabirrbirr, "You get a hard stick and make it needirr (sharp pointed)" and when this was done Joogajooga stuck the stick firmly into the bottom of the hole with the point upwards and the boys went back to camp.

Next day Warragunna and the boys again went out together. They walked on and on until they came to the koordi hole they had made. Warragunna saw it and went over to it and put his foot down quickly and hard to kill the koordi. But there was no koordi there, only the sharp pointed stick, which ran up through Warragunna's foot, and his foot swelled and swelled and swelled and made him very sick. Warragunna cried aloud with the pain, but Jindabirrbirr and Joogajooga were glad to hear him cry, for they said, "He has been cheating us all the time and when we found good honey and fat langgur and koordi he took all the honey and all the fat meat and gave us only the bees' fat and bees' eggs and thin, no good meat." And they sat and listened to Warragunna crying, and were glad.

By and by they heard him calling out, "Koordurwain, Koordurwain (native companion)!" Koordurwain was a sorcerer and Warragunna was calling to him to come and take the sharp pointed stick out of his foot.

Koordurwain was in a far away camp, but being a sorcerer he heard Warragunna calling to him, and he came at once and



pulled out the stick, but as soon as he pulled it out, water came rushing out of the hole in Warragunna's foot and the water ran and ran from out the foot until it made the river that is Baalaburuk close to Minaring. Warragunna died and his nimbai (foot) went up into the sky where it is called the Southern Cross by white people, but all Jajjalabooroo womba (Broome district men) know that it is Warragunna's nimbai and when the Talloorgurra (Elders) told the story of Warragunna and Jindabirbirr and Joogajooga to the children in the soft starlight, the story was told only at those times when Warragunna's foot was in a certain place in the sky, when the children could look at it (for there are certain parts of the sky that the children must not look at) The story was told so that boys and young men should know that a bad uncle was punished for cheating them of their lawful portion of the food they found.