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LANGOOR AND JALBU  
OPOSSUM AND NATIVE CAT  
A Broome Legend

This is the story of how Langoor the opossum got his beautiful soft fur, and Jalbu the native cat got his ugly hair.

In the Yammainga times of long, long ago Langoor and Jalbu were womba (men). Langoor always "ate himself" and always killed plenty opossums as he liked opossum meat better than any other. He used to pluck the bandal (fur) off the langoor he killed, and put it in their stomachs to keep it nice and clean, and when he had gathered a great quantity of fur, he put it on a slab of paper bark (baggal) or in a bark vessel and mixed it up with ashes. Then he beat and beat the ashes and the fur with a firestick to make the fur nice and soft and white. When he had finished beating it he made the fur into Won-dong-oo (forehead bands), koon'dil (arm bands), minjil and jirrji (aprons) and bindi-al (belts). It was Langoor the opossum who first made all these things. Jalbu the native cat was very jealous of Langoor, jealous because his fur was so soft and clean, and jealous when he saw Langoor spinning the fur so easily, for Jalbu had tried to spin his hair into string, but it was too stiff and hard and so he became very sulky, and one day he fought Langoor.

They fought with firesticks, but Langoor had a good crackling firestick of boonderung wood and he hit Jalbu with his boonderung firestick and made Jalbu's hair so stiff and straight that it could not be spun into wondongoo (forehead bands) or any other decorations. Jalbu had a firestick of jaggal wood which he had picked up by mistake and he hit Langoor with the jaggal firestick, but it only made Langoor's fur more soft and white. If Jalbu had picked up a boonderung firestick, Langoor would also have had no fur, only stiff hard hair, but Jalbu picked up the wong wood.

When Langoor hit Jalbu he said to him, "You can't make anything, and you can't sleep in a tree as I can. All the trees I sleep in will always make something, but your baaloo (trees) can't make anything."

Langoor showed the jajjala (Broome district) men how to make wondongoo, koondil and every other fur ornament used during their nooloo (dances, ceremonies, etc.) and always the Jajjala womba (Broome men) made their string ornaments from Langoor's fur and not from any other fur.