

## Chapter IV

### EUCLA MYTHS

#### HOW MEL-MEL AND KALINGUR FOUND FIRE

Once men had fire, and could cook every sort of meat (duru) with it. They never used to take the firesticks with them, for the trees and all the bushes had fire in them.

One day they went hunting, and coming home at nightfall, they threw the game down beside the fire, and presently put it on to cook. When it had time to cook they went to pick it up, but it wasn't cooked at all. It was quite raw. The fire would warm their hands but it wouldn't cook meat. Then they looked about and found jinna (tracks, footprints). "These are the people who took the fire," they said. They could not eat the raw meat and had to give it to the juju (dogs). Then they waited a little time to think what they should do. They examined the tracks and found they were those of Biruin yagulu (mother bandicoot) and her two wandi (boys), and then knew who had taken the fire.

The bandicoots had gone ngalguin, far away, with the fire. Yarda or walja (eaglehawk) went away to try to get the fire back from them, but he returned in the afternoon without it.

Then Mel-mel (like a hawk) and Kalingur came up and said, "All you fellows gather together and stay in one place." So the people sat down and let the sun warm them.

Mel-mel and Kalingur flew high up, high up, and saw the fire a long way kaiali (north). It was "yugai jiman", (standing straight up, like a spear). Kalingur went far up; as he didn't want Biruin to see him, for if she did she would take the fire and throw it in the water. Biruin did not see them, and Kalingur quickly got the fire spear and threw it a long way. It burst and everything caught fire, all the bushes and trees and grass. Kalingur then killed Biruin and her boys. ("Nundu walyi, yula burda" - you are no good, go down in the hole) and put her and the boys in a hole with wiba (ants) beside them. "Now you fellows have got fire," said Kalingur to the natives, and he went away and was Kalingur.



Another Version of the Fire Story

(Eucla district)

Biruin (like a rat, marsupial, bandicoot?) had fire but wouldn't give it to anyone. He put it in the ground beside a long pole and whenever anyone came along, he threw it into the water.

Tharndu (hawk) wanted to get the fire, so he got some bushes and held them in front of him as he came towards Biruin. While he was a long way off, Biruin's two boys saw him and said, "M'malu, who is that man?" "No man there," said Biruin, "only bushes."

By and by the boys saw Tharndu moving again and they said, "Yagga, look." Biruin looked again and said, "Warda," (bushes).

Kallingur then came from a long way away and before Biruin saw him, he caught Biruin by the ngarra (middle). Biruin caught up the fire and tried to throw it in the water, but Kallingur caught it up just as Biruin was throwing it, and put it in all the trees. Then he hit Biruin with club and broke his kambu (backbone) and he told Biruin he must always dig holes in the ground and eat only ants and live in the hole. He must never steal the fire.

Then Kallingur killed Biruin's wife and sons with his club, and after that, he and Tharndu, who was his friend, went away.