

MOOLANU THE FIRE-STEALER

One day Dhoogorr Mama (ancestral father) of Ilgamba Gabbi (Bight Head Water) said, "Maalu and Kallaia (great red kangaroo and emu) smell the fire and run away. We will get Moolanu the carpet snake to hold our firestick and keep it alight while we go hunting."

Mama went to Moolanu and asked him to "look out" for their fire and when they brought back kooga (meat) they would share it with him. Moolanu said, "Yaddu", (good, all right) and so the next time they went hunting they left their firestick with Moolanu. When they returned with Kallaia and Maalu kooga (kangaroo and emu meat) there was no sign of Moolanu and no fire. He had stolen the fire and taken it away to his own ngoora (camp).

Dhoogorr Mama was very angry and said, "I will send Walja (eaglehawk) to bring back our fire and to spear Moolanu."

Walja started off but he came back after going only a little way and said his arms were tired. Then Dhoogorr Mama sent Kaang-ga (crow), but he got tired and only went a little way. Mama then told Yang-guna (white cockatoo) to go and steal the fire, but Yang-guna began to feed and would not go.

"Let Miribilyardi (little falcon) go," said Tham'u (grandfather). Miribilyardi got up quickly and went a long way, and by and by he saw the fire and Moolanu lying asleep beside it. Miribilyardi came close up, quietly, quietly, so that he should not wake Moolanu, and when he came quite near he lifted his spear and speared Moolanu and brought the fire back to Dhoogorr Mama.

Mama then made a song about Miribilyardi and Nung-ga (men - Bight term) always sang the song when making a fire after good hunting, and no nung-ga ever killed Miribilyardi because he brought back their fire from Moolanu when Walja and Kaang-ga and Yang-guna had refused to go for it, but

they killed and ate eaglehawk and crow and white cockatoo
wherever they found them.