

Northern Kimberley

I cannot find any evidence whatever of re-incarnation, that is, of a child being the re-incarnation of any ancestor immediate or remote, amongst either the northern or southern natives. The ngargalula of the Northern Kimberleys are not the spirits of dead ancestors, for the dead always go loomurn (westward). In Yamminga times (that is, in ancestral times) there were ngargalula. Some Yamminga (ancestors) turned into stone, or into ranjee, or went into the ground, but no grown yamminga could ever have become a ngargalula, nor has there ever been a man born who was supposed to be the re-incarnation of any ancestor whatever. Ngargalula have come from the ground where Lengo, Marral and other Yamminga men and women were turned into stone, or went into the ground, but ngargalula were not re-incarnations of those people. The natives were emphatic upon this point. Ngargalula were jimbin (underground) always. The Northern natives believed that there were three hunting grounds, Jimbin, underneath the surface of the ground or beneath the sea, where ngargalula and their totems reside, kalboo, above the ground where they themselves live, and koorrwal, beyond the sky, where also are natives. The kalboo and koorrwal natives once had communication with each other, a "road" having been made by an immense kalleegooroo (bullroarer), reaching from kalboo to koorrwal. Along this "road" the natives passed to and fro. One day two women who were coming "~~Kalboo~~ way" ^{Koorrwal, from kalboo} had started too late, and camping for the night half way to ~~Kalboo~~ ^{Koorrwal}, they lighted a fire which burned the kalleegooroo in two, and all the natives who were then at Koorrwal had to remain up there, and never afterwards could the Kalboo natives see them or go up to them. The dark spot in the Milky Way is supposed by the Northern natives to be the kalleegooroo, but whether it is the one that was burnt by the women or another, the natives cannot say. ~~A correspondent from Uclia stated that at a certain period of his initiation the boy had to keep his eyes fixed upon the dark spot in the~~

~~Milky Way~~. In the Northern districts, boys are not allowed to look at this spot ^{in the Milky Way} during balgai and balelee time (2 stages of initiation).

The Northern natives believed therefore in three distinct dwelling places, neither of the three having any communication with each other, except through dreams. The prospective father sees the jimbin world in his dreams only. The jalngangooroo ^{ngoooroo} or sorcerer is the only person who sees the koorrwal natives in his dreams, and who has also control of certain ranjee, which are the returned spirits of dead relatives, these ranjee haunting the vicinity of shady trees in the hunting grounds that belonged to them when they were alive. The jalngangooroo believe that they can leave their material bodies in camp, and, assuming a sort of "astral" body, visit not only the Koorrwal natives, but also Kalboo places hundreds of miles away from their own camping grounds, but they did not visit the ngargalula ground, although they see ^{in their dreams} it, and ~~and~~ ^(go) their ^(return) totems there when the season of such totems is over. The dead totems, that is, those that die with the man, do not return jimbin, they go Loomurn (westward) with their owner. These totemic beliefs are only referred to here in order to emphasize the statement that the living natives are not re-incarnations of their ancestors. Perhaps investigation amongst the tribes lying eastward of long. 124° may reveal a system similar to that which Messrs. Spencer and Gillen attribute to the Arunta and other tribes.

The jimbin ground is apparently similar in all respects to the kalboo ground, and one story may here be related to show the beliefs of the natives in the similarity of both countries.

Along the northern coast, past Broome, there are many rock shelters and caves into which the high tides of these northern seas penetrate. Into one of these caves called Koorr-balgoo, Leeberr, a Kaimera, saw a barrumbarra (a large green fish) enter. Leeberr went into the cave after the fish and

speared it. When he had caught the fish, he went to a camping place called Beedaboogun where he sat down and cooked the fish and ate it. After he had eaten the barrambarra, he lay down under a shady tree and slept, and as he slept he dreamed that a ngargalula came to him crying. Leeberr said, "Yunga jeea eebala?" (What is your father?) and the ngargalula replied, "Kaimera, joca eebala ngai." (Kaimera, you are my father.) Leeberr dreamed that the ngargalula followed him home and went into his wife, and when he returned to his camp he told her she would have to carry the ngargalula. (They do not, however, always tell their women.)

A waljooroo (long bean) was growing at the spot where Leeberr dreamed the ngargalula came to him and he saw the waljooroo and gave it to the baby as its own ngargalula totem. As the ngargalula followed Leeberr ^{in his dream} they passed caves and springs and these also were given to the baby as its jalnga. Leeberr was wallee jalnga (fish totem) having many fish as his totems, and some of these he gave to his son, but not until the son had grown up. The baby was born far away from Beedaboogun, but Beedaboogun was its own booroo, and the bean (waljooroo) was its own totem. Kalwarra yoonjoo, "only born there", is the term used when speaking of the place where the boy has actually been born. His own ground is where the father dreamed him. When the boy wanted to increase his totem, he dreamed he was at Beedaboogun and picked up a waljooroo, and biting it, scattered the seeds all about the place and he saw in his dream that the seed grew and a great quantity of waljooroo came up, and then he knew it was his ngargalula totem, and that Beedaboogun was his own booroo. Beedaboogun was part of his father's real hunting grounds. With one or two exceptions, the natives dream the increase of vegetable and seed totems, flesh food and fish totems being usually sung.

Beedaboogun, the place where the father dreamed of the ngargalula, cannot be identified with the "Ranja" of the Arunta (Northern Tribes of Central Australia, p. 446), upon which

so much of the Arunta system of re-incarnation rests. Beeda-boogun was not "sacred" to the individual whose ngargalula came from there, nor did he or his people refrain from eating either the waljooroo found there, or any other vegetable or animal food which might be obtained in the vicinity, and so with all other ngargalula booroo ("countries" or "ground"). There is no word meaning "forbidden" applied to these places.

Beegardain ngooroo (shady places) is the name given to forbidden spots such as (1) trees under which the boy is circumcised, subincised, etc.

(2) certain places haunted by ranjee or spirits of returned relatives.

(3) places where blood drinking is indulged in.

(4) stones bearing some human or animal shape round which legendary tales of "transformation" cling. These are beegardain ngooroo - forbidden places, but no ngargalula are ever seen in their vicinity.

Nēamoo or nēam is the Broome word used for "forbidden food" and applies to the food forbidden to boys and girls until they have reached certain stages in manhood and womanhood. It is also applied to abstinence for a certain period from the totem of a dead relative. Nganjee is the Gascoyne term for forbidden food. Tajjee and jajjee are the Roeburne and Ashburton terms. Ngoolgurt and Woolga are some of the Southern terms.

When ^{old or younger} a man is dying, his ranjee jalnga go away. The noise they make in departing is called "mirrooroo." One ranjee is the spirit of the rain and lightning ranjee and ngargalula are together on the koojangaora. The lightning ranjee is like a "womba" sometimes.

man.