

In the Nyitting times of long ago, two goombar dwerda (big dingoes) travelled north from Balbarup. They walked a long, long way and at last came to a thick scrub. As they came nearer they heard a great noise coming from it, and quickly and quietly creeping in among the bushes they looked through the branches and saw two nyungar (men) throwing boomerangs and playing with them and shouting to each other in play.

The two dwerda rushed out upon them and dwerda mama (father dingo) caught the biggest nyungar and ate him, and dwerda nangga (mother dingo) ate the other nyungar.

Then they went on travelling, but in a little while they both began to feel the nyungar scratching and scratching inside them, scratching and fighting so hard that the dwerda had to kardil (vomit them out of their stomachs).

As soon as the nyungar were kardiled, they changed into two white stones like a woggal's (magic carpet snake's) eggs.

After they had vomited the two men, the dwerda were so glad to have their stomachs quiet again that they ran round and round the kwongan (plain). By and by they began to feel thirsty and looked about for gabbi, but there was no water anywhere on the plain.

"We must find water," said Mama dwerda, "let us dig for some. I will dig yabbaroo and koggara (north and east)."

"Gwabba," (all right, good) said Nangga dwerda, "but I will dig my way," and she dug waddarn-al-dalongin (along the road to the sea).

Mama dwerda dug deep and deep and deep but he could find no water and he lay down beside the dry hole, tired and thirsty and sulky. Nangga dwerda dug a long, long tunnel and at the end of the tunnel a great spout of water jumped up at her and played about her. "I've got the gabbi, I've got the gabbi," she cried out as she jumped and played with the water she had found.

"Come and drink," she called to Mama dwerda, and Mama came and drank of the water in the tunnel that nangga dwerda had dug, and when they were filled they said, "This is Nyeerrgoo gabbi. The nyungar we ate did not like us and so they would not stay

inside out stomachs. Now we will make a law that no nyungar shall fetch water out of Nyeerrgoo beeda (vein, hole, tunnel) unless he first takes off his noolburn (hair string belt), his woggari (forehead band of human hair string) and his ngulyambidi (nosebone) and no yogga (woman) must go into the tunnel unless she takes off her booka (kangaroo skin cloak). They must go in with nothing on them but their own skins and when they reach the water at the end of the tunnel the men must strike it with their marra gobbul (hand stomach = palm), and the women with their goordeen or yorla (wooden or bark scoops) and the water will then follow them to the ta (mouth, entrance) of Nyeerrgoo beeda and there they must drink and fill their vessels."

Then Mama and Nangga dwerda changed into janga bwal-i (spirit stones) and sat down one on each side of the ta (mouth) of Nyeerrgoo. If any nyungar broke the stone the water would come out and splash over him and he would die. The spirit (janga) of the dwerda went into the stones and watched men and women as they came to the water of Nyeerrgoo. If the janga saw anything on their bodies, they howled and howled in the ears of the offenders till they died.

It was the mother dwerda that found the water.

By and by two men having mulgarguttuk (thunder magic) named Binjeri and Jirgabbi came to Nyeerrgoo water and they saw the janga dwerda inside the stones. They sat down beside the stones and the janga dwerda told them how they had brought the water to Nyeerrgoo and the law they had made for men and women. Binjeri and Jirgabbi said to the janga dwerda, "We will keep the law you made and we will make all our people keep it. You will be our borunggur (elder brothers - "totem") but it was nangga dwerda that found the water and so the mother dingo will be our borunggur."

And all the Bibbulmun living round the kwongan/<sup>(plain)</sup>where Nangga dwerda had found the water were mother dingo totemists, and because the waters of Nyeerrgoo which the dwerda yogga (woman dingo) had brought were sweet and good, they did not eat mother dingoes, only father dingoes.

After Binjeri and Jirgabbi had given the jangga dwerda's message to their people they died and went to Kuranhup-Nyeerrganup, the land beyond the western sea where all the dead Bibbulmun go.

For a long time the Bibbulmun kept the law. They ate mama dwerda, but they did not touch the mother dingo or her puppies. One day a nyungar who had been out hunting all day and had caught nothing was coming back hungry and sulky to his kala (fire) when he suddenly came upon a mother dingo suckling her two little puppies. "I am hungry and must eat," he said, and he hunted ngangga dwerda away and caught the two little female puppies and ate them.

When ngangga dwerda saw him eat her puppies she gave a great, great howl, so loud and so big that it was heard in the farthest kala (fire) of the dwerda. Then she called aloud to her puppies and they answered her by howling inside the nyungar. He was terribly frightened when he heard the puppies howl inside him, and he ran away fast and fast, trying to get away from the ngangga dwerda, but she followed and followed, howling and calling to her little ones.

And presently the nyungar heard a great trampling and looking over his shoulder as he ran he saw dwerda, dwerda, filling the kwongan (plain) and all running towards him.

Dwerda mama and Dwerda yogga had heard the mother's cry and they were all coming to help her. The nyungar ran and ran and ran, the water pouring down his face and covering his eyes, and the little puppies calling louder and louder to their mother.

At last he came to a great tree and he climbed up to the very top where he thought the dwerda could not reach him. But the dwerda came running until they reached the tree, and they all sat round it until no jilap (grass) could be seen, only dwerda.

The puppies' mother sat close beside the tree calling to her puppies, who called back to her without ceasing.

Presently she began to dig at the roots of the tree just as the ngangga dwerda in the Nyitting times had dug for the water of Nyeerrgoo. The other dwerda watched her for a little while, and then they all began to dig round and round the tree, making the same sort of beeda (tunnel) that ngangga dwerda was making, and before the sun "went inside", the big tree fell with a great loud noise, and the nyungar fell and was splashed about like water, but the little puppies got up and went over to their mother.

Now far away from Nyeerrgoo, the great hole that the dwerda

dug can be seen and all round about the hole are little red pebbles which are the blood of the nyungar which was splashed about into little drops because he broke the law which janga dwerda (spirit dingoes) had given to Binjeri and Jirgabbi.

Monnop ("dog walking by itself") and his sister Beenaran ("dog digging") were the last two dingo totemists of Nyeerrgoo gabbi, and when they died, the stones that held the spirit of the dwerda at Nyeerrgoo split and broke, and the janga came out and followed Monnop and Beenaran to Kurannup-Nyeerganup, where all the dwerda borunggur (dingo totemists) had gone before them.

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NYEERRGOO GABBI

In Nyitting time there was at Nyeerrgoo a spring which was at the end of a sloping cave or tunnel and any <sup>for going to the country</sup> kalleepgur who went to fetch water from this spring had to take off their bwokka (kangaroo skin cloaks) and every ornament on their bodies and leave these some distance from the opening and go into the cave absolutely naked. Then when they had reached the spot where the spring was they had to pick up a stone and strike the water with it and as soon as they struck the water it rose and rose up and the water-bringers dipped the vessel in the rising water and filled it as they ran back to the entrance. If the water overtook them as they ran, they would die.

Two dwerda (dogs) were guardians of this cave water and they watched to see that those who went into the cave obeyed the injunction laid upon them and entered the cave quite naked and without ornament of bone or string or teeth or shell.

One day some moorurt (relations) of the Nyeerrgoo yungar came on a visit and went out hunting with the kalleepgur. They caught many kangaroos and many other game and on their return to camp, one of the young men who was very hot and thirsty ran into the spring without taking off his string belt, although he knew of the injunction, but in his thirst he paid no heed to it. He drank of the water and went to his fire which was in the bachelor portion of the camp, for in all camps the young bachelors must keep apart from the married people and have their own fire and shelter.

He sat down and waited for the food that would be sent to him from those to whom he had given the game he had caught, and by and by when he had eaten he lay down to sleep. Presently he heard two dogs howling and he sat up and said to the young man who lay on the other side of the fire, "What are those dogs howling for?" "I don't hear any dogs," said his friend. "Two dogs are howling quite close, where are they?"

Then the other young man knew that the janga dwerda were boogur (angry) with him for disobeying the injunction laid upon them and that it was not real dogs which he heard howling, but the janga dwerda of Nyeerrgoo.

The young man called to the dogs, "Stop howling, stop howling," but they howled unceasingly and the young man became hot and dry and weak. He moved away from where he had made his fire and went to the end of the row where the young men slept with a fire between each one. There he lighted his fire and sat down but the dogs howled again close in his ear and he was frightened and jumped up and ran away but though he could not see the dogs, their howls always followed him wherever he went. All the night and all the next day and the next, their sharp howls smote his ear, and when the third sun had come the young man was dead, for that was how the dogs punished those who did not follow the injunction, they howled and howled until the jungar died. The dwerda cannot bark like a white man's dog, they can only howl.

When white settlement came to Western Australia, Bishop Salvado instituted a Roman Catholic Mission for the Aborigines of the Nyeerrgoo district, which he called New Norcia <sup>after his brother's Norcia</sup> and once in the early days of his mission when he had been hunting with the natives they came near Nyeerrgoo Gabbi. All were thirsty and wanted water. The Bishop said, "There is water, go and get it." "No," they said, "we fear to go there." "Well, why should I not fear, too?" said the Bishop. "Nothing will hurt you," said they, "you are janga (spirit, 'white man')." "Very well," said the Bishop, "I will go," and he took a conch shell from one of them and went towards the water. The natives followed him in single file, but did not enter the place with him. When he came out, he gave them all to drink and turned

away from the water towards the mission. Now instead of walking in single file behind him they walked in front so that should the dwerda become angry, they would punish the Bishop who had gone to the spring without taking off his clothing.

If when going through the tunnel the bwokka burt yungar (naked native) accidentally touched the sides of the cave at the end of which the water lay, he immediately called out in a quick, sharp tone, like a dwerda, "Kel-ya! kel-ya! kel-ya!" and the dwerda hearing did not harm him, but if anyone deliberately touched the sides of the tunnel, they died.