



Top: Mick McLean Irinjili, Iain Hercus and Murtee Johnny on the trip to Marree, January 1967.  
*Photograph by L.A. Hercus*

Bottom: The Mudlunga or Tji-tji-Ngalla ceremony, photographed by Siebert near Killalpaninna in 1901.  
*Photograph from J.W. Gregory, The dead heart of Australia, 1906.*

## 'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDLUNGA': MEMORIES OF 1901 AND 1902

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One hot January day in 1967 I drove two old friends up to Marree from Port Augusta in a landrover. Mick McLean Irinjili (a Simpson Desert Wanganuru man) was teaching me his language, and Murtee Johnny (a Yandruwanda, from the Strzelecki track) wanted to come home to his hut on the Marree reserve. People around Lyndhurst and Marree had recently claimed that Murtee was 104 years old and the oldest man in South Australia. So Mick and Murtee had a conversation which went something like this:

Mick: "I reckon, old fellow, if you're over a hundred, I must be the same."

Murtee: "I don't know. How can we straighten out which one is older? I've been working on stations for a long time. I've seen you way back in Kanowana."<sup>1</sup>

Mick: "Were you around when that Mudlunga corroboree came through from a long way off, from the Wagaya country?"

Murtee: "Yes. I was only a very young fellow then, not yet through the (circumcision) rules."

Mick: "Yes, I was just a boy then too; I came down with that Mudlunga mob."

Murtee: "Well, we must be the same age then; we're the oldest around here. It was good, the Mudlunga. I remember it, I can still sing it."

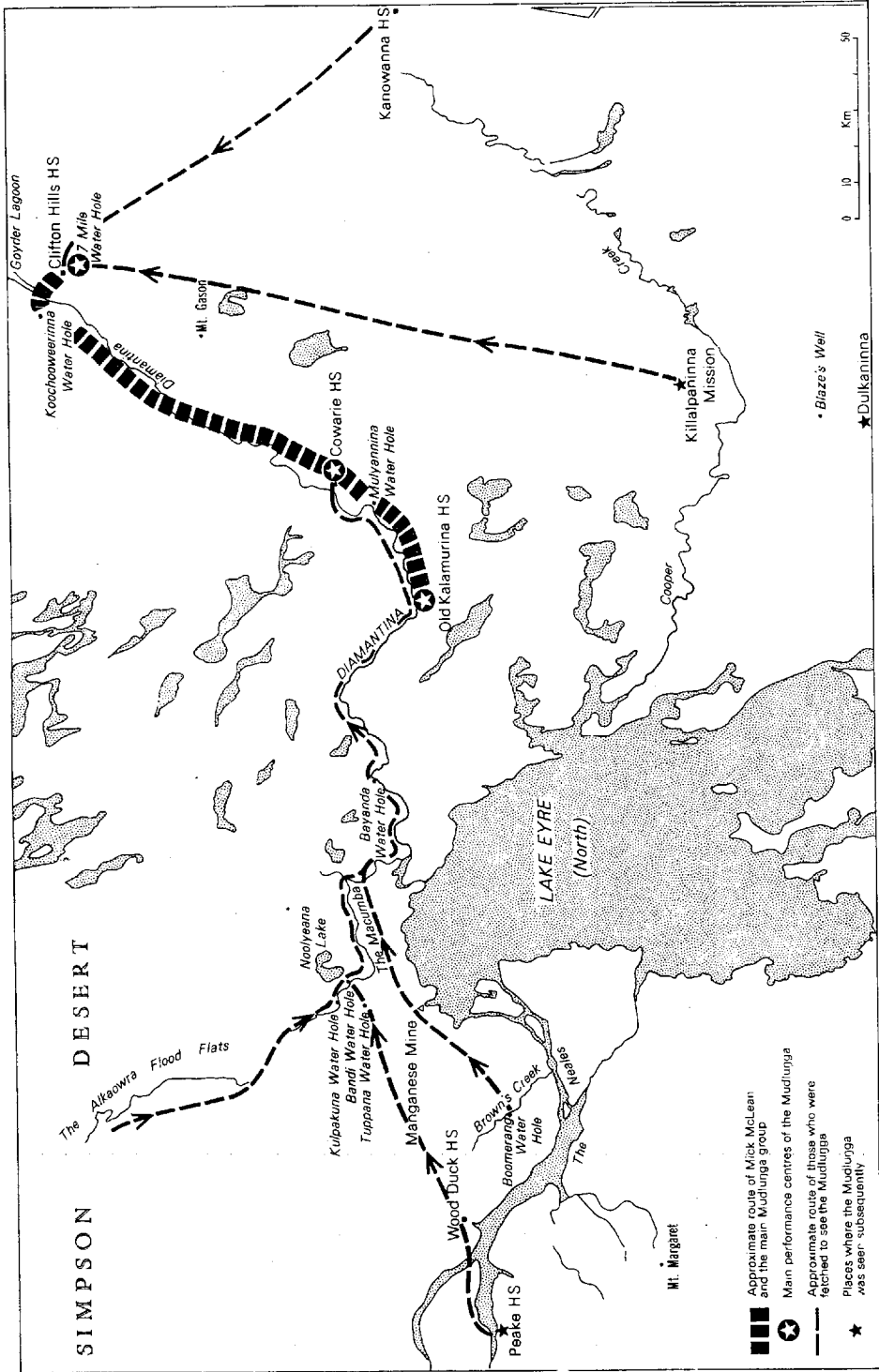
Mick: "Me too."

And both began to sing the initial verses of the Mudlunga corroboree just as they had learnt it in 1901.

We know that it was 1901 from published evidence. D.J. Mulvaney has examined the dated evidence for the spread of the Mudlunga or 'Molonga' ceremony in his important discussion of the transmission of ideas in Aboriginal society.<sup>2</sup> This account provides evidence from Aborigines who participated in this process of transmission. Biographical notes about other participants mentioned by Mick McLean and by Ben Murray follow the text material and translations.

1 Kanowana, where the homestead is now a ruin, was an important cattle station in the early part of this century, established by Thomas Elder. The name comes from the Yawarawarga *guna-ŋawa* 'excrement-throwing', i.e. chasing women and children away from a site connected with initiation rites. There is a major site associated with the 'Two Men' initiation song cycle close to the old homestead.

2 Mulvaney 1976:90-92.



The travels of the Mudlunga in 1901-1902.

## 'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDLUNGA'

The Mudlunga ceremony was also called Tji-tji-ngalla by Gregory.<sup>3</sup> This name derives from the often-repeated initial verses. It consisted of a most spectacular dance, described first by Roth.<sup>4</sup> The performers wore unusual head-gear, carried bunches of box-leaves, and also had leaves tied to their ankles. The dance was accompanied by songs in the Wagaya language (spoken to the northwest of Mt Isa in Queensland) which were chanted by the spectators, both men and women.

Mick McLean here describes how it came to be known throughout the north-east of South Australia, an area that formed only a small part of its ultimate range.<sup>5</sup> Speaking in Wanganuru, with a few sentences of English thrown in occasionally, he gave the following account of what happened:

3 Gregory 1906. He witnessed the performance at Peake Station, west of Lake Eyre.

4 Roth 1897:121. This account in no way corroborates the view put forward by Eliade (1968:244-268) and supported by Maddock (1974:3) that the Mudlunga was an 'anti-European ceremony'. None of the people consulted, neither Mick McLean and Murtee Johnny who had actually performed the ceremony, nor Ben Murray and others (May Wilton, Adnjamadana, Flinders Ranges; Granny Moisey, Guṇu, western New South Wales) who remembered seeing it in their childhood, ever described it as anything other than a new and exciting ceremony. The statements that the Mudlunga was 'anti-European' may be traced to Siebert (1910:58-59). But Siebert's wording was cautious:

'Über den Ursprung des Tanzes und seine eigentliche Bedeutung wurden mir aber Mitteilungen gemacht, die die anderen Berichterstatter nicht zu kennen scheinen, ja mit den Angaben Roth's, was wenigstens die Zentralfigur der ganzen Darstellung anlangt, nicht übereinstimmen.'

'With regard to the origin of this dance and its real significance I received information which does not seem to have come to the notice of any of the other people who have reported on the Mulunga. My information does not agree with the statements of Roth, at least in what concerns the central figure of the whole performance.'

According to Siebert's informant this central figure represented a mythological grandmother ('kanini', a Wanganuru word) who in the end swallowed up all whites. The performance Siebert witnessed was supervised by an overweening man named Talatalana, who could speak Wanganuru, though he was probably a Wangamadla from north of Birdsville. His name means 'Seeing' in Wangamadla. As Siebert himself indicates (1910:59) there were features linking this particular ritual leader with the 'Grandmother from the Water'. This leaves little doubt that Roth's view was accurate for the main Mudlunga tradition and that the interpretation given to Siebert was secondary and possibly associated with just one person. Roth's view is confirmed by Mick McLean and Murtee Johnny, who actually danced the Mudlunga.

5 See map in Mulvaney 1976. He cites a 1930 article by Daisy Bates in *The Australasian*. I am indebted to Isobel M. White for further evidence of the rapid spread of the Mudlunga in South Australia:

The *mulunga* arrived at Penong on the West coast in 1915, taking thus 11 years to travel down from the Diamantina. Shortly before the *mulunga* reached Penong the *wandji-wandji* had arrived from the Nor'-west and had been performed at that place.

Bates (1918:165) had not been able to trace the *wandji-wandji* (also called *wanna-wa*) further back in its travels than Laverton but felt sure that it had started in the Kimberley area.

*The Travels of the Mudlunga*

1. bidji-gana ularaga ma!ga n̄ubindja, wařugadi-nařu  
*Paint-PERF history mark head-dress, emu -feather*  
 yaraba ma!ga gudni-n̄đa, argaba, bi!a, wandada-ra  
*above mark place-PRES, ochre, black, down -CAUS*  
 bidji-na.  
*paint-PRES.*

*'I know a great lot of it, but I don't know what it means (because it is in the Wagaya language), but I know the wadni wanga, the words of the song.'*

2. gari-ri n̄urga-ra, yuwu danga-n̄ura gananađa  
*They-ERG know -PUNC, people sit -CONT there*  
*'all them mob travel up and down' -*  
 gari-ri n̄urga-ra Ga!a-mařa -na, gagari gari  
*they-ERG know -PUNC Kalamurina-LOC, these they*  
 maba -yi -n̄đa gari yuga-na, gařu  
*group-ACT- I PRES they go -PRES, there*  
 manda-diga -lugu a!a!i.  
*take -return-HIST finally.*

3. dadla-ma-lugu aņi -na  
*Fear -Vb-HIST us PI EXCL-ACC*

*'he got horns like a bullock',*

ari -na Bob Naylon, gawilja -buřu  
*we DI EXCL-ACC head gear-having,*

bugařa n̄algi-na  
*top-knot temple-LOC*

*'bind'm up like feather duster'*

mađi -ri gařa-na, mududa n̄agari-na n̄algi -na  
*string-INST tie -PRES, like these -ACC temple-LOC*

gudni-ligu bugařa ...  
*put -HIST top-knot ...*

4. yuga-lugu ari -na manda-yiwa-n̄đa yuga-lugu  
*Go -HIST we DI EXCL-ACC take -TR I PRES go -HIST*

'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDLUNGA'

gananaḡa guda -lugu Malja-na  
*there sleep-HIST Mulyaninna-LOC*

'down from where New Kalamurina now is' nurgu-du  
*good -EMPH*

wadlu idni-nura guda wiḡa-wiḡa guda mani-libana  
*land be -CONT water much water take-ANC*

budluga-gu Malja-na.  
*bullock-DAT Mulyaninna-LOC.*

5. buḡa-buḡa-naridji-nana gaḡa -na uga-(g)inda-du  
*Get down -descend-IMM creek-LOC he -DAT -EMPH*
- gaḡa ildjildja nuru dangga-nura guda mani-libana  
*creek soakage other stay -CONT water take-ANC*
- waru ularaga-na not ularaga-na waru  
*long ago history-LOC not history-LOC long ago*
- Minga-wamba guda -dubi-rigu yuga-lugu  
*Minga-wamba water-hole-ALL go -HIST*
- 'fill'm up and go right back to Kalamurina'.

6. Malja -ru yuga-lugu guda -rugu Gawari,  
*Mulyaninna-ABL go -HIST water-ALL Cowarie,*
- Gawari -ri yuga-lugu gaḡu guda -lugu Gugura-na  
*Cowarie-ABL go -HIST there sleep-HIST Gugura-PROP*
- Gugura-ru yuga-lugu Widjiwidjini  
*Gugura-ABL go -HIST Widjiwidjini*
- 'I never got tired'
- bangiḡa anda yuga-lugu, uda yuga-lugu  
*happy I go -HIST, then go -HIST*
- Widjiwidjini-na. gadi dani-li, biḡa-yi -naru  
*Widjiwidjini-PROP. Meat eat -HAB, hit -ACT-PLUP*
- rabidi, dalga, gabiḡi, gadni  
*rabbit, bandicoot, goanna, frill neck*
- biḡa-na-yi -gana, naḡabili-wa-lugu gari-na  
*kill-Sp-ACT-PERF, relax -TR-HIST they-ACC*
- nunda-ḡa 'ah gabiḡi biḡa-ḡu naḡabili-na. wida  
*tell -PRES 'ah goanna kill-IMP relax -NP. Leader*
- baḡa Yaḡuyandi musterer madabuḡa.  
*great Yaḡuyandi musterer old man.*

7. Widjiwidjini-ri yuga-lugu gaļa -ņa guda -lugu  
*Widjiwidjini*-ABL *go* -HIST *creek*-LOC *sleep*-HIST  
 'past Mt. Gason' gaļa -li yuga-lugu gaļa bangi-ņa  
 'past Mt. Gason' *creek*-ADV *go* -HIST *creek side* -LOC  
 gananađa guda -yiwa-ņa.  
*there sleep*-TR -PRES.
8. ugaliri yuga-lugu gaŗu guda -yiwa-lugu wara -ņa  
*Then go* -HIST *there sleep*-TR -HIST *where*-LOC  
 Gudjuru -ņa (Gudjuru, that's 'Two Well')  
*Koochooweerinna*-LOC  
 ugaliri yuga-lugu wana-wana mudlu -ņana uga  
*then go* -HIST *early sandhill*-EL *he*  
 yuga-ga, wana-buŗu, gari nananađa.  
*go* -PAST, *word-having, they here.*  
 'you know when you go through the Clifton Hill Gate,  
 there's a bit of a sandhill, Potato Tin Sandhill,  
 Bunarugana'
- guni-guni-ņa-yiwa-lugu wiđa guda-yiwa-lugu.  
*camp* -Sp-TR -HIST *boss sleep*-TR -HIST.
9. gaŗu wiļa-wiļa, uljuļa njuđu anduna gagu  
*There multitude, woman too, my sister*  
 Midla-Gadjiwana gadinari mudlu -ņa  
*Nose -Turning other side sandhill*-LOC  
 guni-guni-ņa-yiwa-ga aņi, aņi waru  
*camp* -Sp-TR -PAST *we* EXCL, *we* EXCL, *long ago*  
 gaļa -ņa guda -yiwa-ņaridji-ņa gaļa bidla  
*creek*-LOC *sleep*-TR -*descend*-PRES *creek name*  
 Bunaruga-ņa  
*Bungaruga*-PROP  
 'white fellows call'm "Potato Tin".'
10. guda -yiwa-ņa, oh, muyu nyu, wana-wana gari-ri  
*Sleep*-TR -PRES, *oh, day one, early they*-ERG  
 igi -ņa -gi mudlu -ņa budluga-ņaru  
*drive*-PRES-EMPH *sandhill*-LOC *cattle* -manner  
 igi -ņura gari-ri; muyu naŗu yaraba wana-ņura  
*drive*-CONT *they*-ERG; *sun this high rise* -CONT

'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDLUNGA'

gari nura-na -ma-yiwa-lugu ganaṅaḍa gaḷa -na -du.  
*they camp-LOC-Vb-TR -HIST there creek-LOC-EMPH.*

11. ganaṅaḍa-na yuwu wiḷa-wiḷa danga-nura  
*There -EL people multitude sit -CONT*

Dirba -guli -na. aṅi yuga-ga gaṛu  
*Lagoon-waterhole-LOC. We EXCL go -PAST there*

Mudlunga igi -na. Maudie Naylor Agawiliga anduna  
*Mudlunga take-NP. my*

gagu gaṛu danga-lugu, nuyu-na widji -na  
*sister there sit -HIST, one -LOC become-PRES*

aṅi Dirba -guli -na nura wiḷa-wiḷa, malga  
*we EXCL Lagoon waterhole-LOC camp multitude, not*

njari-njara Mudlunga awaḍa waḍni -wa-lugu.  
*little Mudlunga this follow-TR-HIST.*

12. ganaṅaḍa '7 miles, what they call, we call 'm'  
*There*

Naṛani-na, Mudlunga waṛa -lugu gaḷa -na; gaṅa  
*Naṛani-PROP, Mudlunga dance-HIST creek-LOC; man*

wiḷa-wiḷa Mudlunga wadni nani-na dinbaru,  
*multitude Mudlunga song see -NP fresh,*

andi -li nani-na, wadni maṛa, andi -li nani-ligu.  
*first-ADV see -NP, song new, first-ADV see -HIST.*

13. muyu bargulu bargulu nuyu danga-yiwa-lugu.  
*Day two two one sit -TR -HIST.*

gari-ri nunda-ga gumbira-gumbira-ru Namani,  
*They-ERG tell -PAST dead -dead -ERG Ngamani,*

Yaluyandi, Garaṅura, Nuḷubuḷu 'not too many'  
*Yaluyandi, Garangura, Ngulubulu*

Wanganuru, anduna mabu gari-ri manda-diga -na,  
*Wanganguru, my mob they-ERG take -return-PRES,*

uda.  
*now.*

14. maḷga gudni-na wadni-gu, argaba-ru, malja-ru,  
*Mark put -PRES song -DAT, ochre -INST, kopi -INST,*

yalgiri-ri bidji-ga.  
*gypsum -INST paint-PAST.*



15. njinda-buřu daŋa -ŋɔa gari, dja!ba  
*Bush -having stand -I PRES they, stick*  
 bařa-bařa-buřu 'poor old buggers' anduna mabu,  
*long-long-having my mob,*  
 ŋama!a gari  
*pitiful they*

gũdjĩlǎ bǎnǎ wǎlǎmbǎlǎyĩ

gũdjĩlǎ bǎnǎ wǎlǎmbǎlǎyĩ

- dja!ba bařa-bařa-buřu daŋa -ŋɔa, gadla -buřu  
*stick long-long-having stand-I PRES, foliage-having*  
 gařa-ŋa irdja waya-ŋɔa -lugu.  
*tie -PRES noise wish-I PRES-HIST.*

gurĩlǎ wǎdjǎ wǎdjǎlǎ

nĩdjǎri gǎlǎ wǎdjǎlǎ

Mudlunga wadni.  
*Mudlungga song.*

16. danga-lugu muyu ŋuru -ŋa daŋa -na-ŋaru; uda  
*Stay -HIST day other-LOC stand-Šp-PLUP; now*  
 yuga-lugu gari Bula-rugu 'ration day, Government  
*go -HIST they Bula-ALL*

flour that time' gari-ri ganaŋaɔa-ŋana-ru  
*they-ERG there -EL -ABL*

wiřa-ŋda 'plenty bullock meat' gadi budluga  
*get -PRES meat bullock*

dani-wa-lugu 'damper' dani-wa-lugu didi  
*eat -TR-HIST eat -TR-HIST tea*

bunda-lugu danga-lugu.  
*drink-HIST stay -HIST.*

17. gari wanga ŋawi-nina 'ah aŋi yuga-bara  
*They word hear-IMM 'ah we EXCL go -HORT*  
 manda-yiwa-lugu gagari-na Gudna-ŋawa-ŋana, nanaŋaɔa  
*take -TR -PURP they -ACC Kanowana -EL, here*

'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDLUNGA'

wařa -la -lugu.  
dance-ALT-PURP.

'Tom Naylor's mother and Jackie Hughes's mother  
they were bigger than us, you know'.

anduna gagu -bula Darba-nangada mangařa gadjiwiri  
My sister-two, Darba-nanggada girl big

Bina-winma 'she got two names' Mada-duru-duru.  
Bina-winma Mada-duru-duru.

Mudlunga nawi-danga-nura Mudlunga  
Mudlunga hear-sit -CONT Mudlunga

igi -nura uda wadni yuranga danga-lugu  
drive-CONT now song knowing sit -HIST

ganangada-nana, 'after they seen that wadni Mudlunga'.  
there -EL,

18. 'They been waiting for that Gudna-nawa mob'

danga-da wandi-nanga -da anduna anja njara,  
sit -PRES wait -CONT S-PRES my father young,

anduna widiwa ani wařa -nda ani mabu,  
my cousin we EXCL dance-PRES we EXCL mob,

ani a!uwa wi!a-wi!a Jim Naylor Arbilindiga  
we EXCL child multitude Jim Naylor Arbilindiga

gabiři ularaga Adnaldjawara-nana, Adnaldjawara  
goanna history Adnaldjawara-EL, Adnaldjawara

uga-guna wadlu:  
he -POS country:

yădă nădă djădî

ălăbîdălbănă

Arbilindiga-wadlu ba!u -ma-nda gaņa gadjiwiri,  
Arbilindiga-ground clear-Vb-PRES man big,

'but half woman half man' ani danga-da wadni  
we EXCL sit -PRES song

wařa -nanga -da, danga-da. Namani wi!a-wi!a  
dance-CONT S-PRES, sit -PRES. Ngamani multitude

danga-nura madabuđa gari.  
sit -CONT old man they.

19. madabuḍa waduḅuru, anduna mabu, yuga-ḅura  
*Old man other, my mob, go* -CONT  
 Gudna-ḅawa-rugu Yawarawarga-guna wadlu -rugu  
*Kanowana* -ALL *Yawarawarga*-POS *country*-ALL  
 Mudlungga maba -ḅa-diga -lugu, 'just like  
*Mudlungga collect*-Sp-*return*-PURP,  
 mustering!'
20. wadni-rigu digi -ligu maba -yiwa-na gari  
*song* -ALL *take back*-PURP *collect*-TR -Sp *they*  
 bardjaḅa guru mabu, Naḅani -na, ganaḅaḅa;  
*all stranger mob, Old Lagoon*-PROP, *there*;  
 'they know one another, but we are a stranger to  
 them' bardjaḅa wiḅa-wiḅa  
*all multitude*,  
 'big fellows, tall fellows too'.
21. bardjaḅa yuranga-ma-na, 'and we went on then,  
*All knowing*-Vb-PRES,  
 finish'. digi -lugu, digi -ḅa  
*Return*-HIST, *return*-I PRES  
 Gaḅa-maḅa-rugu-I'gi digi -ḅa ḅuḅa-rugu  
*Kala-murina*-ALL-FIN *return*-I PRES *camp*-ALL  
 wadili-rigu; bangiḅa digi -lugu digi -ḅa  
*own* -ALL; *glad* *return*-PURP *return*-I PRES  
 danga-lugu.  
*stay* -PURP.
22. nadaru yuga-ḅa Mudlungga wadni-buḅu yuga-na  
*After go* -I PRES *Mudlungga song* -*having go* -NP  
 Gawiri-'gu -I'gi Madla-mirga-rugu manda-yi-gana  
*Cowari*-ALL-FIN *Dog* -*Hole* -ALL *take* -TR-PERF  
 Gilalba -ḅana -gi -di.  
*Killalpaninna*-EL-EMPH-EMPH.
23. anda yuga-ga, gari yuga-ga manda-yi -digi -lugu,  
*I go* -PAST, *they go* -PAST *take* -ACT-*return*-PURP,

'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDLUŅA'

wařa -la -lugu, 'bring'm back there again to Cowarie,  
dance-ALT-PURP,

big mob Diyari, biggest mob again' danga-lugu  
stay -PURP,

uljuřa gari njuřu.  
woman they too.

24. gari danga-lugu, gari yuda diga -nana, malga  
They sit -HIST, they already return-IMM, not  
gaŋi: danga-lugu waya- ŋa, missionary-rigu  
too much sit -PURP wish-I PRES, missionary-ALL  
diga -lugu Gilalba -rugu, 'they're belonging  
return-HIST Killalpaninna-ALL  
to missionary, had to get back to learn this school'.
25. gari diga -ŋa, aŋi -du malaru  
They return-I PRES, we EXCL-EMPH however  
maba-yiwa -ŋa; gari wanga yani -ia -mindja-ŋa  
collect-TR-I PRES; they word speak-ALT-REFL -I PRES  
'aŋiri yuga-ŋa gagari-na manda-diga -lugu.'  
'we INCL go -I PRES those -ACC take -return-PURP.'
26. alađa gari yuga-na manda-diga -lugu Daba -na,  
Ready they go -PRES take -return-PURP Tuppana-PROP,  
Arabana mabu manda-diga -lugu, wiřa-wiřa  
Arabana mob take -return-PURP, multitude  
manda-diga -lugu.  
take return-PURP.
27. gari yada yuga-ŋa manda-yiwa-lugu  
They again go -I PRES take -TR -PURP  
Birgili -ri, wađunuru yuga-ŋa gařu -ru  
Boomerang Hole-ABL, other go -I PRES there-ABL  
manda-yiwa-lugu. 'they did get'm'.  
take -TR -PURP.
28. manda-diga -na Algawira-nana; idni-nura na,  
Take -return-PRES Alkaowra-EL; lie -CONT camp,

gari ibali diga -gana! madabuḍa bula-ru 'ah  
*they earlier return*-PERF! *Old man two* -ERG 'ah  
diga -na-u nura-rugu, dadni-na gagari-na!  
*return*-NP-EMPH *camp*-ALL, *leave*-NP *those* -ACC!

29. yada diga -lugu gari; 'them two Mudlunga men trying  
*Again return*-HIST *they*;

to catch up with George Kempe's mob from the Peake,  
they been camping along the Galbagana',

digi -lugu, 'that's how I saw George Kempe at  
*take back*-HIST,

Cowarie'.

30. anda danga-nura gananaḍa Gawiri -na, gari  
*I sit* -CONT *there* *Cowarie*-LOC, *they*

manda-diga -na 'we came from Cowarie to meet  
*take* -*return*-PRES

those fellows'.

31. Mudlunga gari-ligu yuga-na, wana-wana  
*Mudlunga see* -PURP *go* -PRES, *early*-*early*

wanga -yiwa-lugu anda njuḍu Mudlunga mida-ma-lugu.  
*come up*-TR -HIST *I also Mudlunga link*-Vb-HIST.

32. nuyu-na widji -ligu bangida, mabu wiḷa-wiḷa,  
*One* -LOC *become*-HIST *glad*, *mob multitude*,

ani -guna mabu ani Gawiri -nana, gari  
*we* EXCL-POS *mob we* EXCL *Cowarie*-EL, *they*

guru -wili; adu anja yambana-na:  
*stranger-like*; *I* ERG *father ask* -PRES:

'indjali-nana wagaḍa, Andigirinja'?  
*'where* -EL *this*, *Andigirinja*'?

33. 'wagaḍa aniri -guna nananaḍa-nana gaḷa -nana  
*'This we* INCL-POS *here* -EL *creek*-EL

Bandi-nana Wanganuru, Wangarabana gananaḍa-nana;  
*Bandi*-EL *Wangganguru*, *Wangarabana there* -EL;

ani nuyu-na danga-libana, aḷa.  
*we* EXCL *one* -LOC *stay* -ANC, *true*.

'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDLUNGA'

34. danga-da warada nuru gari wadni-na uda  
*Sit* -PRES *this* *other* *they* *song* -LOC *now*  
nunda-yiwa-na. gari walda widji-nanga -na  
*teach*-TR -PRES. *They* *scattered* *become*-CONT S-PRES  
anda diga -nura Gawiri -'gu ani Bob Naylon  
*I* *return*-CONT *Cowarie*-ALL *we* EXCL  
Gala-gada-na ani diga -nda anja -rugu  
*Gala-gada*-PROP *we* EXCL *return*-I PRES *father*-ALL  
ama -rugu danga-lugu gananada, gari George Kempe  
*mother*-ALL *sit* -HIST *there*, *they* *George* *Kempe*  
wanga-diga -na garu uga gadji-nanga -nura.  
*rise* -*return*-PRES *there* *he* *turn* -CONT S-CONT.
35. alali bardjana diga -nanga -da Arabana mabu  
*Finally* *all* *return*-CONT S-PRES *Arabana* *mob*  
Yadiya-nana gurawana ularaga, Algawira-nana,  
*Peake* -EL *rain* *history*, *Alkawara*-EL,  
 'poor buggers', anduna mabu, malga nuru  
*my* *mob*, *not* *other*  
dana -nda!  
*stand*-I PRES!

*Translation*

1. They painted on the markings for that corroboree, they put on a head-dress which had emu-feathers (tied up) on top, they painted themselves with red ochre and black manganese<sup>6</sup> and (glued on) down feathers.  
 I know a great lot of it, but I don't know what it means (because it is in the Wagaya language), but I know the words of the song.
  2. They had got to know it, the people staying there — all that mob had been travelling up and down (in Queensland) — they had got to know it (the Mudlunga) at Kalamurina, they had assembled in a group and gone (up north) and they had ultimately brought it back with them,<sup>7</sup> (the Mudlunga).
- 6 *bila* 'black' refers to manganese dioxide ores which were used extensively for decoration. The main source of manganese dioxide in the area was a quarry below *Guguygana*, the lowest waterhole on the Koorakarina Creek on the west side of Lake Eyre.
- 7 The most likely area to have been visited by the Wangayuru was the Middle Diamantina, where Roth reported the *Mudlunga* in 1896.

3. They frightened us all – they had horns like a bullock – they frightened us two, Bob Naylor and me, they had this head-gear, this top-knot. It was tied up on top like a feather duster, they tied it up with hair-string and it bulged out above their temples.
4. They went, and they took us two with them, we went and camped at Mulyaninna, down from where New Kalamurina now is. That used to be good country,<sup>8</sup> with a lot of water: people got water for bullocks at Mulyaninna (in those days).
5. We got down, descending into the creekbed (of the Diamantina), and we stayed at another soakage. At one stage long ago – not really ages ago, not in the dream-time, but in whitefellow time – people used to get water at Minga-wamba,<sup>9</sup> fill'm up (their water-bags) and go right on to Kalamurina.<sup>10</sup>
6. We travelled from Mulyaninna to the Cowarie waterhole and from Cowarie we went to camp at Gugura. We left Gugura to go to Widjiwidjini. I never got tired, I was happy to go. So we went to Widjiwidjini; we ate meat, we killed rabbits, bilbies,<sup>11</sup> goannas, and also frillneck lizards we killed. We would settle down to have a rest for a moment and they (the old men) would give us the order 'go and kill some goannas and then you can have a rest!' The main ritual leader was an old Yaluyandi man – he was like a musterer.
7. From Widjiwidjini we went along the creek, the Diamantina, and we camped past Mt Gason. We followed the Diamantina along the bank, we camped there overnight.
8. And then we went and our next camping place – where was it now? – it was at Koochooweerinna, that's 'Two Wells'. Then we set off from there, but one man from the sandhill country (the Simpson Desert) went (ahead) early with a message. We camped again: you know when you go through the Clifton Hill Gate there is a bit of a sandhill, Bugaruga, white people call it 'Potato Tin Sandhill'.

8 Before the impact of rabbits really came to be felt, the vegetation in the Simpson Desert was according to all accounts much more luxuriant than what it is now. Several major floods have changed the whole aspect of the bed of the Diamantina, and many deep waterholes have been silted up and have turned into a shallow saline channel.

9 *Minga-wamba* was a Carpet Snake site on the lower Diamantina, below New Kalamurina. There is a particularly spectacular red sandhill just above the waterhole.

10 In this area at the turn of the century Aborigines were employed for nominal wages for precisely this task of carting water and also carting equipment like troughs. Mick McLean was able to locate and show us near the sacred site at *Bayanda* on the Diamantina the remains of an old trough, some six feet long, which his father had carried on his back all the way from Old Kalamurina, over thirty-five miles by the only feasible route.

11 Rabbits were plentiful in the Lake Eyre Basin by this time, but they had not yet completely replaced the smaller marsupials, among which the bilby or rabbit-eared bandicoot (*Macrotis lagotis*) *dalga* was the most important.

'HOW WE DANCED THE MUĐLUŃGA'

9. There was a vast crowd there (summoned by the message), women too, including my sister 'Nose-Turning'. We camped overnight on the other side of the sandhill. That was a long time ago. We camped where a little creek comes down. We call that creek BuŃaruġa too, and white fellows call it 'Potato Tin'.
10. We slept there overnight, just the one night, and then early in the morning they made us walk along the sandhill, they drove us like cattle. And when the sun had risen high in the sky we settled down near the creek (the Diamantina).
11. There was a vast multitude of people at Old Lagoon Waterhole. We had gone there bringing them the MuđluŃga corroboree. Maudie Naylor Agawiliga my sister, was staying there. We all joined up together at Old Lagoon Waterhole: there was an immense crowd there, not just a little one, we had all come to follow the MuđluŃga corroboree.
12. There was a place (near Old Lagoon Waterhole), Nařani we call it, (white people) call it 'Seven Mile'. That's where they danced the MuđluŃga corroboree in the creek so that a vast number of people should see this MuđluŃga. That is how they all got to see something special, sensational, a new corroboree which they had never seen before.
13. Five days<sup>12</sup> we stayed there. These old men, now long, long dead, showed the corroboree to us Ńamani, Yaľuyandi, GaraŃura, Ńuľuľuľu<sup>13</sup> – not too many of them – and WaŃgaŃuru. That's why they picked up my mob of WaŃgaŃuru (to show us).
14. And then *we* put on decorations for that corroboree, *we* painted ourselves with red ochre and with kopi, that is gypsum.
15. We stood there holding bushy branches, and long, long sticks, we stood there, and all those of my mob, poor old buggers,<sup>14</sup> poor things (and we sang):

gũđjĩľă bãňă wăľămbăľăyĩ

gũđjĩľă bãňă wăľămbăľăyĩ

12 Five nights represented the standard length of time for a full performance of the *MuđluŃga* as reported by Roth (1897) and by Gregory (1906:218).

13 Ńuľuľuľu was spoken on the Mulligan and belongs to the Pitta-Pitta language group (Blake 1979). Speakers of WaŃgaŃuru and also speakers of Ńamani thought of the Ńuľuľuľu as very different from themselves, with different customs.

14 Mick conveys by this expression that all participants, apart from himself and Bob Naylor, had died, and the whole group and their traditions had disintegrated.



Holding long, long sticks we stood, having tied on masses of foliage, so that we could make a loud (swishing) noise (and we sang):

gur̄t̄lǎ wǎdjǎ wǎdjēlē

ŋ̄t̄djǎr̄i gēlē wǎdjǎ wǎdjēle

That was the Mudlunga corroboree.

16. They (my mob) stayed there one more day, and then they went to Bulana.<sup>15</sup> It was ration day: there was Government flour that time. From the people (the Aborigines) that were living there, they managed to get plenty of bullock meat, and so they had a feast of bullock meat and they ate damper and sat about drinking tea.<sup>16</sup>
17. And they heard (the old men's) decisions: 'let us go and fetch the people from Kanowana so that we can dance for them here'. Tom Naylor's mother and Jackie Hughes's mother were there — they were bigger than us two (Bob Naylor and me) you know — my two sisters Darba-nangada 'Continually Trampling', Tom Naylor's mother and Jackie Hughes's mother, she had two names Bina-winma 'Large Lip' (i.e. 'Pelican') and Maḍa-duru-duru 'Large Island' (both Yaluyandi names from the Waterfowl song cycle). They were big girls; they went on staying there to listen to the Mudlunga. They themselves became expert in the Mudlunga since they had been staying there for some time and had by now become thoroughly familiar with that Mudlunga corroboree.
18. They were waiting for that Kanowana mob, they sat waiting all the time. My father's youngest brother, my cross-cousin (Bob Naylor) and I, we all danced, just our mob, just us; a big crowd of young people we were, including Jim Naylor Arbilindiga, who belonged to the Goanna history from Adnaldjawara,<sup>17</sup> Adnaldjawara was his country:

yǎdā nǎdǎ djǎd̄T

ǎlǎb̄t̄dǎlbǎnǎ

- 15 *Bulana* simply means 'The Two' and probably refers to the Goyder Lagoon Waterhole which has the Yawarawarga name *Dirba-guliṇa* 'The Two Waterholes'. Many of the Yawarawarga were camped there, having been driven off the Coongie Lakes and Cordillo Downs stations and they were receiving rations. For the events at Coongie, see Farwell (1950:161).
- 16 The group of Wanganuru to which Mick McLean belonged had left the Simpson Desert in late 1900 or early 1901, probably about six months before the events of the present account, and they had come to like tea and damper after some initial misgivings, as Mick McLean has explained (Hercus and Sutton, forthcoming).
- 17 *Adnaldjawara* is a grub and goanna sacred site in the plain immediately south of Oolgowa waterhole on the western edge of the Simpson Desert. It is just within Aranda country.

- (that is the verse of the Aranda goanna song cycle from which he got his name). Arbilindiga that means 'Clearing the Ground' (in Aranda). He was a big man already initiated, but he was really half woman half man.<sup>18</sup> We all stayed there and we went on dancing the MudluŅga corroboree. A big lot of Ņamani old men were there too.
19. Another lot of old men from my mob were on their way to Kanowana to fetch people from there for the MudluŅga. They went to Kanowana, to Yawarawarga country to collect them for the MudluŅga – it was just like mustering.
  20. They rounded up that mob to bring back for the corroboree at Old Lagoon. They knew one another (the people at Old Lagoon and the Yawarawarga), but we were strangers to the Yawarawarga. There was a big crowd of them, all big fellows, tall fellows too.
  21. We taught them all thoroughly, and we went on then (until it was all) finished. Then we went back, we went right back to Kalamurina, home to our camp. We were happy to get back and to stay there.
  22. Some time later we set out again, bringing the MudluŅga corroboree to Cowarie. We went right to Madla-Mirga 'Dog Hole' (the main Dog-site near Cowarie homestead). That's where we brought it to the Killalpaninna people, yes even them!
  23. I went, all (my mob) went to fetch them so that we could dance for them. We brought them back here to Cowarie, the biggest mob ever of Diyari people. They stayed (at Cowarie), women and all.
  24. They stayed, but they soon left again. They didn't want to sit about there for any length of time. They went back to Killalpaninna to the missionaries. They belonged to the missionaries: they had to get back to learn this school!<sup>19</sup>
  25. They went back, but we stayed together, and (the old men) had a discussion amongst themselves and decided: 'let's go and fetch those (other) people!'
  26. So they got ready to go and fetch the people from Tuppana water-hole (on the lower Macumba). They fetched a mob of Arabana people, they collected a large crowd.

18 It seems surprising that such a person should have been initiated, but Mick's statement corroborated on various occasions by joking references from other Wangganuru speakers about 'old men' particularly of Yaŷuyandi descent, who were *gana* (fully initiated), yet were

<i>Ņama</i> -buru	bugu -wili
<i>breast-having</i>	<i>woman-like</i>

19 The reference is to the Lutheran Missionaries at Killalpaninna. They were very strict about school attendance for people of Mick McLean's age group, as is borne out by comments from Ben Murray, who was rescued by the missionaries from the de Pierres brothers and made to go to school at Killalpaninna (Hercus 1977b). Mick implied that the Killalpaninna people had not learnt the MudluŅga thoroughly enough. They did however perform the newly acquired corroboree on their return to Killalpaninna, as shown by the comments and the photographs contributed by Siebert (Gregory 1906:216).

27. And they set off to gather in the people from Boomerang<sup>20</sup> waterhole; another lot (of Wanganuru men) set out to fetch those people, and they did get them!
28. They went to collect the people from the Alkaowra flood flats. Their camp was there, but the people had gone. So the two old (Wanganuru) men said: 'let's go back home and not worry about these folk'.
29. But they went over there again, those two Mudlunga men, trying to catch up with George Kempe's mob from the Peake, who'd been camping at the Kulpakuna waterhole. The two Mudlunga men brought back (this mob to Cowarie). That's how I saw George Kempe at Cowarie.
30. I'd been staying there at Cowarie, and (the two Mudlunga men) were bringing (the visitors with them to Cowarie). We came from Cowarie to meet those fellows.
31. They'd come to have a good look at the Mudlunga, they were up till the early hours and I also joined in that Mudlunga.
32. We were glad to meet up together. There was a vast crowd: there was our mob, our own mob from Cowarie, but those others appeared to me like strangers. So I asked my father (i.e. my father's youngest brother): 'where are these people from? Are they Andigirinja?'<sup>21</sup>
33. (He said): 'these are our own Wanganuru and Wang'Arabana people from here and also from over there, from the Creek, from Bandi.<sup>22</sup> Long ago we used to be together as one, that's a fact!'
34. We stayed there (at Madla-Mirga) until we had thoroughly instructed those other people in the Mudlunga corroboree. Then they all split up. I went back to Cowarie, we did, Bob Naylor Gala-gadana and us. We returned to our fathers and mothers who were staying there. But George Kempe and his crowd, they set out and they turned off in another direction.
35. So finally they all went back (to their own place), the Arabana mob from Peake belonging to the Rain 'history'<sup>23</sup> and the Alkaowra mob. They were my own mob, poor buggers, and now there's not a single one of them left.

<sup>20</sup> *Birgiliya* 'Boomerang waterhole' (so called from its shape) is on Brown's Creek in the heart of Arabana country. A Mr Brown had tried unsuccessfully to keep sheep in the area for a few years, before the time of the Mudlunga.

<sup>21</sup> The Andigirinja were real 'strangers'. They are the Western Desert group who have taken over the Oodnadatta and Coomber Pedy area, originally Aranda and Arabana country (see Tindale 1974:210).

<sup>22</sup> *Bandi* is the main Snake totemic centre on the lower Macumba, not far from Noolyeana Lake. It was a site revered by Arabana, Wanganuru and Aranda alike.

<sup>23</sup> The major rain totem centre of the Arabana is *Dandji-wanbada*, a group of rocks in the Peake Creek north of the old Peake Station. *Dandji-wanbada* means 'he is carrying his grandson' and refers to the legend of a grandfather trying in rain to hold his young grandson above the fast-rising storm-waters of the Peake Creek.

## 'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDDLUNGA'

In 1901 Siebert<sup>24</sup> saw the Mudlunga near Killalpaninna, but it is clear from Mick McLean's statements (line 24 of text) that the Diyari at Killalpaninna, subject to mission influence, were not as enthusiastic about the new ceremony as the Simpson Desert Wagganuru. It was in fact again Wagganuru people who in 1902 carried the Mudlunga still further south to Dulkaninna.

In February 1980 Ben Murray, who was born in Marree in 1893 of Afghan and Aboriginal parents, reminisced to me about the ceremony at Dulkaninna. He was then a boy of nine, brought up in an environment altered by European contact.<sup>25</sup> His memories fit closely with those of Murtee Johnny and Mick McLean (who was reared in 'traditional' conditions in the Simpson Desert), but also show the perspective of his totally different background. The events he described must have taken place early in 1902, while Ben and his brother Ern were working for Harry Bosworth, who was then on Clayton Station.<sup>26</sup>

The performance of the Mudlunga took place in the creek 'just down from the bore drain', as Ben Murray explained. Dulkaninna station was taken up by the Bell family late in the nineteenth century and the bore was put down in 1898.<sup>27</sup> Just before the events in Ben's story, and as a result of the drought in 1901-02, Dulkaninna was sold, but the Bell family acquired it again in 1932.<sup>28</sup> Ben Murray's camp was in the direction of Blaze's Well, about ten miles north of Dulkaninna. George Barrett was at the station at the time of the Mudlunga but little is known about him except for the comments of Farwell. An old hut still stood at the well site when he visited the place: 'It was there, according to police records of the early days, that Emma Gates and George Barrett were once arrested for selling sly-grog'.<sup>29</sup> Farwell's description notes that 'All around were the decaying skeletons of cattle, victims of the last drought. Hot winds blow incessantly across this scalded clay flat between two sandhills'. It was probably much the same in 1902, at the time of the present story.

24 Gregory 1906:216.

25 Hercus 1977b.

26 Bonython 1971:173.

27 Bonython 1971:27.

28 Farwell 1950:44.

29 Farwell 1950:47.

*The Mudlunga at Dulkaninna*

1. ari danga-ḍa, mayuda Charlie Napier, half-caste,  
*We two stay -PRES, boss*  
 he talk Diyaṛi ari yuga-ḥḍa ibi-ibi  
*we two go -I PRES sheep*  
 yagida - - ma-ḥa.  
*yard Vb-PRES*
2. ari yuga-ḥḍa wadni nani-ligu gaḷa -rugu,  
*We two go -I PRES corroboree see -PURP creek-ALL,*  
 gaḷa -ḥa gari waḥa -ḥura Dulkaninna Creek down.  
*creek-LOC they dance-CONT*
3. 'All right, five days' uga yani-ḥḍa, gawu.  
*he say -I PRES, yes.*
4. ari -ḥa yuwu ḥuru-ru igi ra nani-  
*We two-ACC man other-ERG make go-PUNC see*  
ḍiga -lugu, maḍabuḍa Yariḥili-na, uga-ru  
*return-HIST, old man Yariḥili-PROP, he -ERG*  
 ḥunda-ḍa.  
*show -PRES.*
5. gari-ri buḥawa-ḥa, darga-ḥa-yiwa-ḥḍa  
*-ERG -PRES, -Sp-TR -I PRES*  
 ilina gaḥi-li gaḍayabu-ḥa, ḍaḷba ḥayi ungu-ḥa  
*thus tie -HAB head -LOC, stick here neck-LOC*  
 gari-gi -ḍi ḍadlu gaḥa, uljuḷa badni.  
*they-EMPH-EMPH only man, woman not.*
6. uljuḷa gari danga-ḥura, minbaru-du gaḍa-ḥura  
*Woman they sit -CONT, doctor -EMPH roan-CONT*  
 ḥadji-ḥa-ḥa yaguda - you got to have yaguda,  
*watch-NP-LOC bag bag,*  
 minbaru bidla ḥadu-ḍagali-na, ḥamaḷa-buḥu,  
*doctor name ḥadu-ḍagali-PROP, pity -having,*  
 yaguda-ḥa ḥaldja ḍawi -ḥa, malga waḍlu -ḥa.  
*bag -LOC spit throw -NP, not ground-LOC.*

'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDLUNGA'

7. yuwu gadjiwiri Micky-guna anja njara, madabuda  
*Man big Mick -POS father young, old man*  
 Yundili-na uga-ru igi -ra gari-na.  
*Yundili-PROP He -ERG drive-PUNC they-ACC.*
8. ari diga -nana nura-rugu, gari yuga-nd-inaru  
*We two return-IMM camp-ALL, they go -Sp-PLUP*  
 waḥa -lugu wadni, diga -nda ninda-rugu,  
*dance-PURP corroboree, return-PRES tree -ALL*  
 they were camping at the creek there gaḥa -ḥa  
*creek-LOC*  
 guda -ḥa gari.  
*sleep-PRES they.*
9. malju-mayi mani-ligu Dulkaninna owner, Mr George  
*Food take-HIST*  
 Barrett, flour, tea, sugar, uga-ru ḥuni-ra  
*he -ERG give-PUNC*  
 government ration, anda danga-ḥa old Charlie  
*I sit -PRES*  
 Napier, towards Blaze's Well.
10. gulurú warú waḥangulaná  
 That's the only words I know, muyu bargulu anda  
*day two I*  
 yuga-ga.  
*go -PAST*
11. mubu baḥa-bāra biḥimbara -wili ungu-ḥa gudni-li,  
*Stick long long spear-like neck-LOC put -HAB*  
 didna-ḥa badara gaḥa-ḥa, irdja-buḥu. gari  
*foot -LOC box tree tie -PRES, noise-having. They*  
 wadni wangga-ḥura, gari wadni waḥa-ḥura,  
*corroboree sing -CONT, they corroboree dance-CONT*  
 iḥina-wili mudu gari waḥa -nda piano!  
*thus-like as if they dance-I PRES*
12. gira gaḥayabu-ḥa gari, ḥadla gari wangga-ḥa,  
*boomerang head -LOC they, group they sing -PRES*

uljuḷa gari ḡalba biḡa-ḡura.  
*woman they lap beat-CONT.*

13. yuga-lugu yada-yi badni, warida awada. malg'  
*Go -HIST more-EMPH no, distant this Not*
- anda waya-ḡda. warida -li daḡa-ḡda  
*I want-I PRES. Far away-EMPH stay-I PRES*
- wadjabala -ḡuna ibi-ibi-ḡa.  
*white man-POS sheep -LOC.*

*Translation*

1. We two (my brother Ern and I) stayed there (on the way to Blaze's Well), our boss was Charlie Napier, a half-caste who spoke Diyari. The two of us were going around yarding sheep.
2. We went to the creek to see the corroboree. They were dancing in the creek, down from Dulkaninna.
3. 'All right five days (I give you off work)' he said, 'yes' (Charlie Napier said, speaking in Diyari).
4. Another man was in charge of us to see the corroboree and to take us back again, it was that old man Yarinili who showed us (the corroboree).
5. They cleared the corroboree ground, they were standing about; they had (something) tied up on top of their heads, like this, and they carried sticks on their necks, here! There were only initiated men (in the actual dance), no women.
6. The women were sitting down, and the clever man, the doctor, was moving among them to check that they each had a bag - you had to have a bag. The clever man was poor old Njadu-dagali,<sup>30</sup> you had to spit into a bag and not on the ground.<sup>31</sup>
7. The master of the corroboree (i.e. the man who took the part of the Mudlunga himself (Gregory 1906:219)) was the youngest brother of Mick McLean's father, it was old man Yundili.<sup>32</sup> He was in charge of all of them.
8. The two of us went straight back to our camp; they, when they had finished dancing (for the night) returned to the trees (by the creek); they were camping by the creek.

<sup>30</sup> For details of the life of Njadu-dagali see Hercus 1977b.

<sup>31</sup> The prohibition against spitting on the ground is most unusual in Aboriginal ceremonies and may possibly be due to European influence.

<sup>32</sup> Yundili had already taken part in the earlier travels of the Mudlunga as described by Mick McLean (line 18).

## 'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDLUNGA'

9. Mr George Barrett, the Dulkaninna owner, brought them flour, tea and sugar, he gave them the government rations. I was staying with old Charlie Napier on the way to Blaze's Well.
10. g<sup>u</sup>lur<sup>u</sup> war<sup>u</sup> wa<sup>l</sup>angulbaná  
that's the only words I know, on two (successive) days I went there.
11. On their necks they held long sticks, as long as big fighting spears, and on their feet they had tied (leafy twigs of) box-trees, making a lot of noise. Some were singing the corroboree while others were dancing, just as if they were dancing to the music of a piano!
12. A whole group were singing, (clapping) boomerangs above their heads, the women were beating their laps.
13. I didn't go there any more (after the second night), it was so far away. I just didn't want to. I was camped a long way off with the white man's sheep.

### *Biographical Notes on Persons Mentioned*

*Mick McLean Irinjili* was born near the Bilagaya *migiri* (buried artesian spring) in the Central Simpson Desert about 1888 and died in Port Augusta in 1977. He was the last desert Wanganuru and his knowledge of the languages and traditions of the north-east of South Australia was unrivalled. For his biography see Hercus 1977a.

*Murtee Johnny* was also born about 1888, around Murtee-Murtee on the Strzelecki track, just south of where the Moomba oilfield is now. He became knowledgeable in Yandruwanda traditions as well as being a highly skilful rider and station-hand and worked mainly on Mt Hopeless station. He was the last of the Strzelecki Yandruwanda: his wife and young child along with his whole group died during the 1919 influenza epidemic; his brothers Murtee Mick and Murtee George died in separate, and in the latter case particularly gruesome boundary riding mishaps. Murtee Johnny's final tragedy was that, in his own words, he 'lived too long'. He saw the total disappearance not only of Yandruwanda traditions, but also of the type of pastoral work that he knew. Those who were around him in his last years did not understand him. As one well intentioned nursing sister put it: 'Old Murtee is a dear. But I try to make him talk about *real* things, even if it is only the weather, instead of all that stuff about "the red sandhill country" or "horses".' To him, 'all that stuff' was the only thing that was real and mattered. He died in Adelaide in 1977. Several photographs of Murtee were published in Hercus 1979.

*Bob Naylor Gala-gadana* 'A Creek Travelling about', also called 'Milgili', was a great friend of Mick McLean. He was probably the very



first part-Aboriginal on the lower Diamantina. He was the son of Tom Neaylon whose picture, with the caption 'Tom Neaylon, cattle duffer' appears in Farwell (1950:185). Bob Naylon was brought up entirely by his mother's people, but he was acknowledged by the Neaylons. For the sad story of his inheritance and the cattle-duffing techniques of the Neaylons see Farwell (1950:173). Bob Naylon died in Birdsville in 1978.

*Tom Naylon Ganbili* belongs to a wholly Aboriginal family who took their name from the Neaylons. He was born about 1910 at Mt Gason. He is a remarkable horseman of wide fame and a skilful raconteur in both Wanganyuru and English. He has worked on stations in the Birdsville area, managing Andrewilla station for some time. His mother 'Elizabeth' *Darba-nangada* (also called *Garadjani*) was part Wanganyuru, part Yaluyandi from the Birdsville district.

*Jackie Hughes*, born about 1905, was the son of Billy Hughes, the part-Aboriginal who managed Mt Gason for some time (Hercus 1977b:73). Jackie Hughes was a widely experienced drover of the Birdsville area. He died in 1979.

*George Kempe*, a classificatory cross-cousin and friend of Mick McLean, was born about 1888 — he showed us his birth-place, a tree near the now ruined Wood Duck Station. He was the part-Aboriginal son of the owner of Wood Duck and Peake Stations, the Mr E.C. Kempe who was helpful to Spencer and Gillen (1912:13), and of whom Gregory (1906:140) says: 'Mr Kempe . . . told us many interesting stories about the aborigines. He was more critical of the people than were the missionaries at Killalpaninna. But he appreciated their good points and was obviously very successful in handling them'. George Kempe was brought up by his Aboriginal mother and stepfather, and learnt cattle-work 'the hard way' at Wood Duck and Peake. He worked most of his life in that area, on what is now Anna Creek. He had a good knowledge of Aboriginal traditions and was a fluent speaker of Wanganyuru. He died in Port Augusta in 1976.

*Midla Gadjiwana* 'Nose-Turning' (a reference to the Carpet Snake song cycle) was the Aboriginal name of Freda Merrick, a Wanganyuru woman who was actually Mick's classificatory cross-cousin. Freda married a Diyari man, Gottlieb Merrick, and spent much of her life at Killalpaninna Mission and later at Marree. Gottlieb Merrick is often referred to by Horne and Aiston (1924) and his brother Tim by Bonython (1971). Freda had become a good speaker of Diyari and was able to help Peter Austin in his studies of that language. She died in 1979.

*Maudie Naylon Agawiliga* was born in the Central Simpson Desert around 1886. She could still recall the desert and the times when as a small child 'they carried me and took me all over that sandhill country

## 'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDDLUNGA'

to *Bayanda* and to the Macumba, to the grub sites and to the snake sites. We went across the sandhills to my father's mother's country to *Widjira* (Dalhousie) and then back again. In the end we went down to the creek, the Diamantina, in the drought when there was nothing, no water.' She and her family camped around the Clifton Hills area at first; this is where they were in 1901 at the time of the Mudlunga. She then lived for a while at Killalpaninna and then worked on Murnpeowie station. Later she married Bob Naylor and stayed in the Birdsville area. She died in Birdsville in February 1980. She was the last fluent speaker of Yałuyandi, Namani and Yawarawarga, so these languages effectively died with her. She was of course also fluent in her native Wanganuru.

*Yarinili* 'Tod' was a Simpson Desert Wanganuru. He was a ritual leader of the generation of Mick McLean's father. After the time of the Mudlunga he lived in the Clifton Hills area and when quite elderly (probably around 1920) married the widowed *Dandribilana* 'Judy True', one of the last of the Yałuyandi of the lower Georgina (Eyre Creek) and the grandmother of Tom Naylor *Ganbili*. He worked for the Mortons on Pandie Pandie Station for a long time. His helpfulness is mentioned in Mrs E. Morton's 1976 reminiscence. This publication also gives some evidence about the contemporary treatment of Aboriginal workers:

Aborigines are kind, clean, loyal and honest workers if treated properly. Unfortunately many are being spoiled by some whites . . .

The septic tank was out of order, and we wanted to get it fixed quickly as the temperature was rising and could reach 120 before noon. A loud whistle brought several Aborigines, but Tod was not among them — a special whistle was used when Tod or Dora (his step-grand-daughter) were wanted . . .

Race meetings were the big events of the outback. The last race in the program was always for Aborigines, and was always popular.

Tod, an aged black with a long white beard usually won this race . . . 33

*Yarinili* 'Tod' died at Pandie in about 1930, but he is still remembered with great affection by his step-grandchildren, the Naylor family.

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APPENDIX 1

*The Phonemes of Arabana-Wanganyuru*

	labial	interdental	alveolar	retroflex	palatal	velar
stops	b	<u>d</u>	d	ɖ	dʒ	g
nasals	m	<u>n</u>	n	ɳ	nʃ	ŋ
laterals		<u>l</u>	l	ɭ	lʃ	
vibrants			ɾ, r	ɽ		
glides	w				y	

*Note*

Certain nasals and laterals in Arabana-Wanganyuru have pre-stopped allophones: -bm- corresponds to -m- at the beginning of the second syllable, -dn- to -n-, -dn- to -n-, -dl- to -l-, and -dl- to -l-. In order to make the spelling approximate as closely as possible to the pronunciation these pre-stopped consonants have been included in the orthography.

For simplicity the cluster -njdj- has been written as -ndj-.

APPENDIX 2

*List of Abbreviations*

ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative case
ACT	active voice suffix
ADV	adverb
ALL	allative case
ANC	ancient, distant past
CAUS	causative case
CONT	continuative participle, -nura
CONT S	continuative stem-forming suffix
DAT	dative case
DL	dual
EL	elative case
EMPH	emphatic enclitic participle
ERG	ergative case
EXCL	exclusive
FIN	finality marking suffix
HAB	habitual participle
HIST	historic past, used generally in an account of a series of events. In form this tense is identical with the purposive
HORT	hortative suffix -bara
IMM	immediate past tense
IMP	imperative
INCL	inclusive
INST	instrumental

## 'HOW WE DANCED THE MUDDLUNGA'

I PRES	intransitive present
LOC	locative case
NP	non-past
PAST	past tense
PERF	perfective aspect
PLUP	pluperfect-explicatory past
POS	possessive suffix
PRES	present tense
PROP	proper noun marking suffix -na
PUNC	punctiliar present (in transitive verbs only)
PURP	purposive
REFL	reflexive
Sp	speed form, implying action performed hastily or before departing
TR	transitory aspect
Vb	verbalizing suffix

In the translation brackets are used to enclose phrases that are not in the original, but have been added by way of explanation.

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