

GARMAK GULARRIWUY

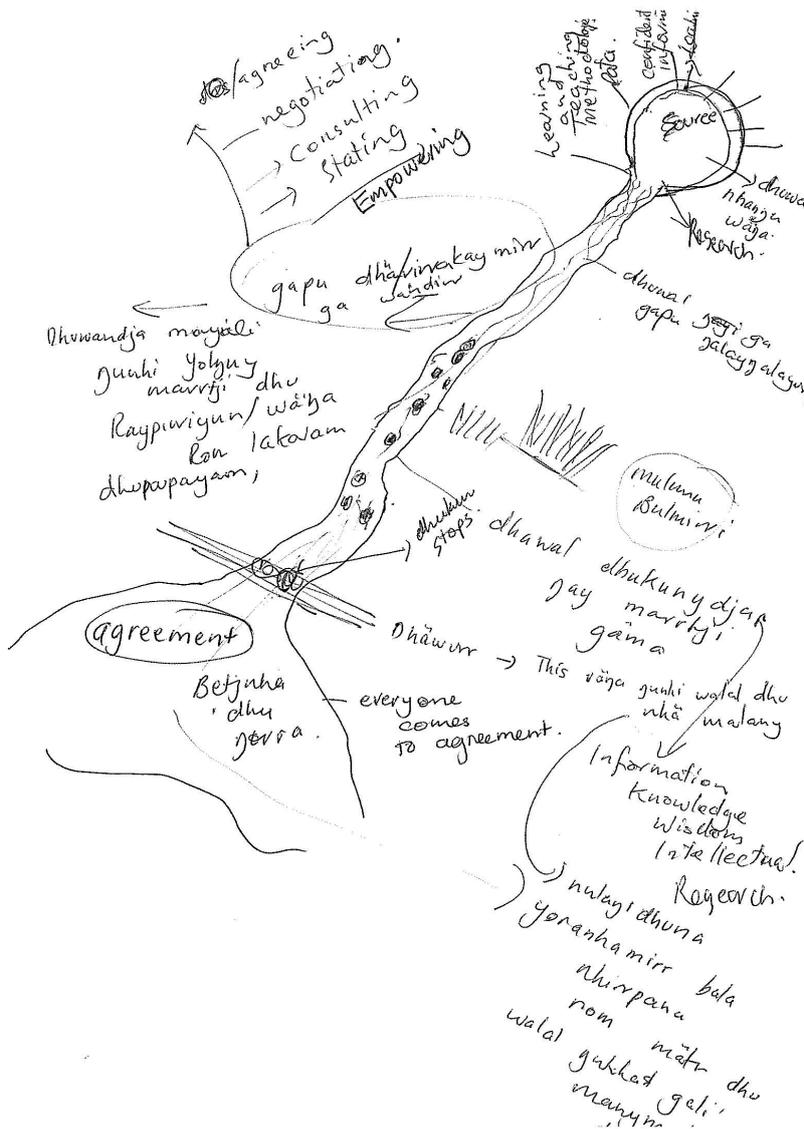
Gularri Water

Timothy Buthiman

talking to his daughter Garngulkpuy and his sister Lisa Walpulay, at the Dingu garden, Galiwin'ku

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Just as the Teaching from Country program was starting up, Garngulkpuy came to work at Charles Darwin University for a few days and brought with her an audio recording from a



discussion with her father. She transcribed the story, and she and Michael worked on the translation and interpretation. It is a story about Wangurri tribe and their water, and what their story of the water tells them about their life and work. While we were working on the translation, Garngulkpuy also drew a diagram.

At the top right is the Wangurri water source at Dhalinybuy, and it flows out to the sea (joining up with other Yirritja waters which are not marked). On the side of the river the grass (mulmu bulmirri) is growing. The source contains the 'learning and teaching methodology,

confidence, research’ – ‘dhuwal nhanju wäŋa’ – that is its home. When the water wells up inside Wangurri country, it starts to flow ‘dhuwal ga gapu ŋalayŋalayyun’ and it talks – ‘gapu dhä-rirrakaymirri’ – water with sound in its mouth – ‘agreeing, negotiating, consulting, stating and empowering’. ‘Dhuwandja mayali’ ŋunhi yolŋuy dhu marrtji raypirri’yun wäŋa rom ŋarakam dhunupayam’ – This means that when Yolŋu advise and admonish each other the land tells the law straight. ‘Dhuwal dhukundja ŋayi marrtji gäma’ – these are the leaves and sticks, palm fronds and bits of paperbark the Wangurri water is carrying down the river. These are bits of ‘information, knowledge, wisdom, intellectual research’. Near the mouth of the river is a ‘dhäwurr’ – this ‘wäŋa ŋunhi walal dhu nha malany rulaŋdhuna bala nhirrana rom märr dhu walal ŋunhal gali’ manymak thirr’ – the bar where everything, anything comes together for agreement, and lays down the law ‘rom’ – so that everything on the other side will be good. The water on the other ‘agreement’ side is no longer rippling, it is calm Yirritja water called betj ‘betjŋha dhu ŋorra’ – everyone comes to agreement.

Wangurri transcription

Garŋgulkpuy: Ma! Nhaltjarr gan ŋäthil walal nhinan, ga nhä ŋunhi ŋayi yuwalk Garrayyu gurrupar limurruŋ yolŋuw nhawi, nhaku limurruŋ ŋayi ŋunhi romdja¹ gurrupar! Ga nhaltjan limurr dhu ŋunhiyi use-nydja dhiyaŋuny bala, ŋunhiyiny, bili marrtji dhuwal gumurr-dälthirra wäŋany.

Buthimaŋ: Yo! Garraywu dhaŋu ŋäŋ’thuwan, Garraynha, bala buku-menŋan Garraywul Godnha Moriny ga nhunu ŋarru God moriny galki ŋanapiligul, djinaŋ bala liŋgu nhuŋgu, nhuŋgu rom nhunupi, nhunupi dhuwan bokman waŋgala ŋarru nhawun dharrpalnha.

Dhaŋu waŋgalam ŋarru dharrpalnha dhaŋu, rom mala nhuŋguram dhaluthaŋa gayŋa ŋoya ga nhuŋgura, nhunu ŋarru nhunupin bala milkumam ŋala banha ŋuwakurru ŋanapiliŋgu nyenanhawu.

Translation

Garŋgulkpuy: Okay! How did they use to live, and what did God truly give us Yolŋu, why he gave us our law? And how we will use it today, because things are getting very hard now in this place.

Buthimaŋ: Okay. We’ll pray to god for guidance. ‘Here we ask you and thank you, Lord, God, father, that you will remain close to us, at this time, because you alone are the creator of this earth, and it is sacred land.’

This land is sacred, these laws are in your hands, reveal yourself to show the right way for us to live.

¹ Rom in the context of this story could be translated as protocols, laws, advice, proper ways of doing things, good customary practice

Ga ṅala banha rom, ga law ṅanapilingu ṅanapu ṅarru nyena ṅuwakurru, māgaya bayiṅ ṅanapu ṅarra nhāma nhunany dharanṅan, bitjan bili malthun ga munguyun nhuṅgu mā ṅarru nhunum mattji bala rakaram ya ṅuwakurru dhanṅuny ga rom nhalpiyan gan ṅätjiliṅu dhanṅuny garruwan dhāwu ga ṅoya ga nhalpiyana ṅarru yutaram banhaya liṅgu bala nhan ṅarru yutayin bala ṅanapiliny, guṅga'yunna yutanham yolṅuny djinaṅum bala.

Bilinya dhanṅu Garray ṅaya nhuṅgul rakaranam nhuṅguru, nhuṅguru-murru yäkurumuru Djesuwurumuru. Yo yo.

Buthimaṅ: Yo! Nhāwuy bili ṅaya ṅarru rakaramam ṅurruṅum, gatjuwilak nhuma rakaraṅ ṅatjil nyäkul. Gamurruṅum nhāwuy

Garṅgulkpuy: Balanya nhakun. Balanya nhā ṅayi ga representing ṅalitjalaṅ, ṅunhal ṅali dhu play role today, balanya nhakun example ṅarra dhu lakaram gapu, ṅunhi barpuru ṅali ga lakaranhamirr, ṅunhi ṅalitjalaṅ role ṅali dhu always napuṅga ga dhärra, ga dhukun ṅali dhu gal'kalmaram, djäma litjalaṅ ṅunhi.

Guṅga'yun ṅali dhu ga yolṅuny ṅunhi ṅayi dhu ga hurt, guṅga'yun ṅali dhu ga Yolṅuny ṅunhi ṅayi dhu ga problem-mirriyirr ṅunhi ṅalitjalaṅ rom, bili ṅuruṅiyi ṅayi ga lakaram.

And where is a system and a law for right living, where we can attain your peace, always following you, so you can tell for us the right story, and the right way that the ancestral stories told the story of what was lying there, and how we can continue to renew it, for us so we can help the new generation of Yolṅu of today.

This is what we ask you father in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Buthimaṅ: (to his daughter) What am I going to tell you? You tell me first, what points?

Garṅgulkpuy: Like, tell me what does it mean for us, in the role we play today, the example I'm asking about is water, what we were talking about yesterday, that our role is always to stand in the middle, and get rid of the rubbish, is that our role?

You and I will help Yolṅu people when they get hurt, we will help them when they develop problems, that's our law, because that's what (the water) tells us to do.

Buthimaṅ: Ya' bilinya, dhuwanma nhän nhäpa, dhaṅuyam nhän ga ṅapaṅuruṅ dhuwanayam dhaṅuny nhan ṅapaṅuruṅ garmakpuy. Dhaṅuny ga galanydjawuy dhaṅuny, ga ṅunham ṅarra golam galanydjany galgaluman nhan ṅarra garmakthu bili banhaya garmak nhan gayṅa, ṅarru bitjana liṅgu gätthuna.

Banhaya garmak, banha ṅangawulnha yolṅuyu gayṅan djäma, ga yolṅuwuṅ yaw'yunda, ga yolṅuwuṅ mayṅ guwathanharan aw bore nhan bayaṅu.

ṅangawul banham nininyṅu yana, gulundayṅu, ṅunham Dhälinyṅam garmak, nhan ṅarru gayṅa gätthuna bitjan liṅgu ga bitjan liṅgu.

Liṅgu garmak banhaya rakaram ṅalma ṅarru garmak nhan ṅarru ṅarra räli dhä-wirkarmi garrun.

Garrun ṅarra nhapa ṅarra ṅalayṅalayyun garmak, ṅunha nhan ṅarra gätthun nhan ṅarru gayṅa ṅäma ṅalma ṅarru, nhan ṅarru gayṅa dhä-reṅgitjmi nhan ṅarru gayṅa gätthun garmak ga golamam nhan ṅarru gayṅa dhuwanya, dhuwanya nhäpa malanyṅa galanydja dhukun.

Yo! ṅunham nhan yana ṅapaṅuruṅ dhäwu, ṅunha nhan ga rurrwuyun, ṅunha ga rurrwuyun, yutaram nhan gayṅa djinawa bärku marimi ṅutu, be baya banha ṅali ṅalim ṅangawulnha marṅgi.

Banhayam nhan gayṅa darrtjalkkuman ga waripum nhan ga darrtjalkkum ga waripum nhan gayṅa batjiwarr guwatharam mayṅnha, mayṅnha nhanbay yana garmak. Ga yakan ṅalma marṅgi bulum djinakuyam.

⁴ Dhäliny is the source of Wangurri water which flows into Arnhem Bay along what in English is called the Cato River.

Buthimaṅ: Oh I see what you mean, yes it is, that's the story on the surface, of the water (in both senses of the word). That's the story of the flotsam is being carried slowly by the Wangurri water, because that water will keep on flowing for ever.

That water, was never made by Yolṅu or dug by Yolṅu, the Yolṅu didn't make the river, it's not from a bore.

No it's everlasting, it has always been there, the water from Dhäliny², it will always be flowing for ever.

Because that water tells us it comes to us unstoppable and speaks confidently.

It is speaking and at the same time it is flowing, as it runs we can hear it, calling out the names of what it is carrying (belonging to different Yirritja clan groups), it will flow that water and carry the leaf litter, sticks and fragments of paperbark along.

Yes, there's the story about the surface, how it washes clean, and when it washes it makes new the inside, very very deep, so deep we don't even understand it ourselves.

When it cleans, then other things are cleaned too, also, it also prepares a path for the itself, the water does that itself. And we don't know more about that.

Ga gatjuwilak nhunum dhä-wirrka'yuwana
nhänany djinalaya nhänany. Nhuma dhä-
wirrka'yuwamiya.

Garngulkpuy: Yow nunhi nhe gan lakarañal
nhakun gapupuy, ga nunhiyi rom mala
nunhi nayi start wanhal. Ga, ga reasonmirr
nhakun nayi gan marrtjin yarrupthurrnydja
ga dhiyañuny bala, nhaltjana napurrndja
dhu dhiyalnydja Wangurriny Yolñu ga rom
nhakun nayi ga nayatham ñuruñiyi gapuy
limurrup.

Buthimañ: Yo banha nhan ga romma
nayathan ñärrun nhan ñarru gätthunma
garmakma banha ñaya gandarrña djaka-
warruwan. Banham ñaya djakawarruwan
gandarrña ñärrun. Nhan ñarru garmakma
gätthun nunham nhan gayña nunham nhan,
nunham nhan gayña ñäwatthun garmak,
nayathanam nhan gayña dalkarrayu.

Ñe! Nunham nhan gayñan nayathan
dalkarrayu garmakma nunha nhan ga
nhäpa inside yana ñudulñudul dhäya
nhanbay yana garmak be baya nhanbay ga
banha.

Ñarru bukmakma Yolñu banha nhuma
bayiñ manikay ñäma banham ñanapu bayiñ
miyaman ñalma mulmu rakaram gudañbañ
aw dhika nhä banha ñanapu bayiñ rakaram
bulmirri ga banhayam nha gayña ñurru-
yirr'yuna.

Yutan nhän nunha nhän ñarru, ñarru nhäpan
rakaraman ñätjin nhan gayña, ñätjin nhan
gayña gudañbañnha nhan banhayam
bulmirrin nhan ñarru gätthunna garmakma,
nunham nhan out.

Garngulkpuy: Nayiny dhu dhäkay-ñäma
wokaraynydja nhawiyuny wokaraynydja?

Go on, ask me more questions. Ask me.

Garngulkpuy: Yes, when you were telling
the story of water, and the laws, where did
they start? And what is the reason that the
water is going down to the sea, and now,
what are we going to do here, we Wangurri
tribe Yolñu and the law that the water holds
for us.

Buthimañ: Okay, the full story is that the
water was flowing later. We started talking
about the middle of the story, about when
the water is flowing. But the origins when
it first bubbled up, it was held by the sacred
names of the law.

Okay, so the sacred names held the water,
inside, murmuring to itself, the water, just
by itself.

And all of us Yolñu know that ancestral
song which we sing, we sing about the
grass, the new shoots, all the different
things we sing about, it's the grass that
starts it off.

The song tells of all the new things
emerging, the grass starts weeping, when
the rains come, the water will come flowing
and will take it away.

Garngulkpuy: Yes, and will the green tree
frog also feel it?

Buthimaṅ: Yow! Nhanam ṅarru ṅāman dhākay-ṅāman bala mattji garruna wayinma wokaram, ṅunha mattji djarṅgulkmurru garruna ṅunhuṅuyan nhanany ṅarru galṅa ṅulwitjkumam, galṅa ṅuwatjuman. Bala nhan ṅarru nhamapam djarwaryunma ṅanydja buṅgatthuna³ nhan ṅarru.

Buṅgatthumana yana ya ṅunha, ga nhangu banhayam djāma, ṅunha dhupal ga dhuli'na-witjunmi.

Mulmu ga ṅunha garmak inside ga ga garmindjarrk ṅunha ṅalmaliṅgu waṅgala. Yow, bala nhan ṅarru manikayma banham ṅarram ṅārrun nhan ṅarru ṅarra banha manikay bayikuya.

ṅanydja ṅunha nhān ṅatjil ṅarru nhinathuṅganmi, nhinathuṅganmi nhan ṅarru baltha bayikuya, bayikuya.

Yo, Baltha nhan ṅarru nhinathuṅganmi. Yo! Ga murrukaynha ṅarru, yindiyin nhan ṅarru ṅoy-gurṅandjin, bala nhān ṅarru nyarryuna, ga nyarryunma nhan ṅarru—u dhawar'ma murryunma nhan ṅarru, murryunma milṅ'thunma nhan ṅarru, dhawar'yuman nhan ṅarru, bala nhan ṅarru ṅalayṅalayyuna garmakma.

ṅalayṅalayyuna nhan ṅarru riyala gātthuna ṅunha bayma ṅe! ṅe! ya ṅunha.

Golurr nhan yāku ṅirrima, Golurr. Nhawi bilanya ya! ṅirrima nhāpa ṅirrima bilanya nhāpa waṅgala nhan ṅarru ga dhāya, lorr yāku nhan lorr, ṅaykana nhan lorr banhayam, yo! bayikuya waṅgala garmakku yana banhaya dharanṅan nhān ṅarru yalala. Ga dharanṅana nhan ṅarru bayiṅyua garmakthu, bala nhan ṅarru gātthuna.

Buthimaṅ: Yes! He will hear the grass crying, and feel the moisture and start croaking that little animal in the little creeks, in that way he will cool his skin and feel better. He won't be feeling tired any more, he'll be feeling cool and relaxed and expectant.

He just relaxes, you see, and that is his job. The grass and the frog both listen to each other.

Water and grass rising up inside our country. Yes, then it will become the song, it turns into the song about it.

But in the very beginning, sitting there, will be that big black rain cloud called baltha.

Yes, the rain cloud sets itself in place, it gets bigger, its base becomes black, and then it will start to rain. It will rain, and then it will stop and then the thunder starts. When the thunder starts, then the lightening, then it will finish, and the water will start flowing.

It will rise up and start flowing from the source over there, eh? That's it.

We call that place Golurr. So you see, the place, the land, will be standing, the water building up is called lorr, that's the name for that water, the name for the water in that place, it will recognise the path it has to take later. The water will recognise its place and start moving.

³ Buṅgatthun means relaxed, but also confident, aware, and ready for action.

Bayikuya wangala garmakku yana after nhan n̄arru dhawar'yunna, bala nhan n̄arru n̄urru-yirr'yun gätthunna n̄alayn̄alayyunna dhuwanayam. Dhuwan nhangu ga rom n̄oya rom nhangu.

Garngulkpuy: Ga nhaltjan nhakun n̄ayi ga teachingnydja napurruny Wangurrinhany limurrnhany n̄uruñiyiny?

Buthimañ: Yo banhayam ga bitjana gayña rakaramam banhayam n̄almalingu yanamu, dhañu n̄humalingu n̄aya n̄arru rakaram, dhañum, dhañum, dhañum nhä n̄aya bayiñ n̄aya gayñan marñgiyin, ga n̄unha nyäku librim, librim nyäku buk, libri yäku bilanya bitjan n̄humalingu nhä n̄almalingu buk, n̄alma bayiñ warrathun ga libriña nhuma bayiñ n̄awatthunga dhañu nyäku libri guñan bitjan n̄humam bayiñ warratthuna, dharangan n̄alma bayiñ nhäma, ya witjan, n̄unha nhawun shopña. Yo! Ga n̄unham nhan libri dhañu gam! nhan n̄arru garrun.

Garngulkpuy: Disciplineny dja n̄ayi ga n̄orra n̄unhiliyi ñe! ? Balanya nhakun discipline n̄ayi ga n̄orra raypirri.

Buthimañ: Yow, raypirri.

Garngulkpuy: N̄ayi ga n̄orra napurr dhu right time napurr dhu gurku'yun.

Buthimañ: Ya! right time nhuma n̄arru gurku'yun n̄arru gurku'yunma, bili nhan n̄arru banha gurku'yunma nhuma n̄arru right time bayikuya bayikuya yana liñgu, bayiku yana liñgu.

The place that belongs to that water, when later it fills up, then it will start flowing. That's the law lying there that belongs to that water.

Garngulkpuy: So what is it that it teaches us Wangurri people, that water story?

Buthimañ: Yes, it speaks to us like this, this is for us people, it's ours I'll tell all sorts of things that I have learnt, that's my library. The library where you get and look at books inside, and find all sorts of things, so these are our books, which we will get, and you can get the story like the library. This is my library. You can give them, and get them and understand them, just like out of a shop. Yes. There's a library there, it can talk.

Garngulkpuy: Is there a discipline lying in there? Is there some discipline like raypirri⁴ in there?

Buthimañ: Yes, raypirri

Garngulkpuy: It's there, ready for when we (Wangurri Yolñu) get up and start talking.

Buthimañ: Yes, you need to speak up at the right time whatever point you need to make, stand up and make those points.

4 Raypirri is difficult to translate into English. I means discipline in the sense of a well-guided, well-founded appropriate way to behave.

Bayiku yana liṅgu nhawu nhunu gayṅa
gatjpu'yun, ya ṅunha nhawu nhunu ṅayaṅu
gurku'yuan.

Yo! dingū banhay ga garmak garrun bitjan.
Bitjan gam! 'ṅayam dhaṅu, ṅayam dhaṅu
garmak ṅaya ṅarru dhā-reṅgitjmi, ga ṅarra
ga birka'birṅayun ṅaya ṅarru ṅarra.'

Garṅgulkpuy: Dālkurr?

Buthimaṅ: Wanyumurru mu! Ga gandarrṅa
ṅaya ṅarru birṅarr'yun 'Ga yay'!' bili
garmak ya! banhaya nyāku garmak. Bilanya
bitjan djolurr balaya ṅaya ṅarru ṅunhan,
dhuwarrpum ṅaya ṅarru.

Bala bayiṅ ṅaya ṅalthumanna, banha bili
romma banhayan, ṅalthuna nhan ṅarru.

Garṅgulkpuy: Ga betjṅa yān dhu ga
nhinany?

Buthimaṅ: Banhayan liṅgu, Djolurr banha
ya! ṅunhayan nyākum nhan nhawi.

Garṅgulkpuy: Ga nhakun dhiyaṅuny bala
organizationṅura ṅaliny dhu nhāma nhakun
organization-dja

Buthimaṅ: ṅayi ṅunhiyi nhakun ṅayiny
gurrupara limurruṅ ṅali dhu dharray ga
raypirri ṅalitjalaṅ Wangurriw yan yolṅuw
gurrupar Garray-yu mārr ga ṅayi dhu fit in
with nhanukal dhāwu-lil Garraywal.

Yes, so you are looking into the future, and
you are preparing to get up and going.

Yes, the cycad⁵ and the water are both
telling us. Like this; 'I am the water, I speak
the scared connections, I will roar out the
names.'

Garṅgulkpuy: Through strength?

Buthimaṅ: Yes, through strength. And in the
middle (of a ceremony) I will start chanting
the sacred names (and everyone echoes)
'Ga yay'!' because of my water. That's why
I use white clay to paint the balaya on my
forehead when we have ceremonies, it's
showing the pathway of the water.

When I put the white ochre on my forehead
that's the law, I'll put it on (representing the
water)

Garṅgulkpuy: And make the calm quiet
Yirritja water?

Buthimaṅ: That's it, that forehead painting,
that's mine.

Garṅgulkpuy: And what nowadays in
organizations can we see, for organizations?

Buthimaṅ: So what the water has given us,
we will look after carefully and use it to sort
out problems, it was given by God only to
the Wangurri yolṅu, and it fits in with His
truth.

5 Dingū the cycad nut is another Yirritja totem which has a story to tell about water and truth and process.

Yow! Njalmam djinakuya nhawi nhakun
nhawun njalma nhawi gannga njalma marngi,
gannga njalma marngi. Ga njalapalmi gannga
marngi gannga nhan marngi ga djinañum
bala njali njarru nhäma fit in-ma nhän njarru
njalaña, ñe njalaña njarru do'yunmim, bitjan
gam!

Burrpar nhan burrrpar ya wilanya nhakun
ñayi dhu buñgatthunman nhunany
gurku'yuman nhunany nhunu njarru njarra ga
mala manapan bayikul yolñuwul warrawul.

Yolñu banha njanapu njarru luñ'thumanmi ga
mala manapanmi join together-n.

Garñgulkpuy: Njunhi nhe gan lakarañalnydja
ñunhili leadershipñur, leadership ñayi
ga ñayatham yolñuy ñayiny dhu nhakun
napurrnydja wiripuwurrunguny wañgayñu-
wulkuny ga nhäpa balanya ñayi ñunhi
mayali' nhakun dhiyañ bala todays
organization ñunhi limurr ga facing.

Buthimañ: Yo! Ga bitjana nhan njarru ga
wekamam ñe!

Garñgulkpuy: Ga wañganydja ñayi ga
Balanday rom milkum dhiyañ bala njalimurr
dhu ga malthun yanbi dhanaliñguway
romgu, njarru dhanaliway gayñan njalmaliny
baduwaduyuwanam.

Nhakun njalitjalañ gämurru mala
djämaw walaldja ga coming in nhakun
yolñu'yulñuny mala ñayiny ga ñuruñuyiny
clearly ga lakaram dhäwu, ñuruñiyiny
gapuynyndja

Yes! We here, really only partially
understand all that. Even the oldest people
only partly understand, but we can see how
it fits in whenever we meet together (to
reach agreement).

There are two things lying there (that the
water does): to make you confident and
relaxed, and to put you into action, to go
and join with others, other ideas.

(The water helps) Yolñu when we come
together, and join together.

Garñgulkpuy: Was what you were talking
about a sort of leadership, (from the water)
help by Yolñu so that we people, working
with others, (Yes) so it refers to today's
organizations.

Yes that's what the Wangurri water has to
give.

Garñgulkpuy: And the nonAboriginal
people are showing us how to do things
their way, and follow their system, but that
is what has been distracting us.

So that is the point about the work that
keeps coming in for Yolñu, the water is
making the story very clear.

Ga ŋunhi ŋalimurr dhu ŋurukiyi malthun ga openlil dhäruk ŋanya rulaŋmaram as Wangurri tribe-thu. Ga nhawin limurr dhika nhaman ŋanyany ŋunhiyi bala putting into practisenha.

Godkun djäma ŋunhi ŋayi rulaŋdhurra gapu muka ga dhäwu mala ŋayi rulaŋdhurr litjalaŋ. Ŋali dhu put ŋunhiyi into practice dhiyaŋuny bala todays organisationlila balany nhakun dingi dhuwal foundation-mirr ŋayi dhuwal.

Foundationmirr ŋayi dhuwal, founder ŋayi dhuwal, nhaku? Maranhu gurrupanaraw. Ga räi gäma ŋayi dhu maranhuw represent ŋayi ga dingi ŋe!

Buthimaŋ: Yo! Dhuwanya bili mu ŋaya gayŋan rakaran bilanya nhawun leader riwal'yun ŋarra ga mala 'yarrk'.

Bala nhan ŋarru leaderyu bitjana gam! 'Banhalaya liŋgu line-ŋa.' Ŋay! Ŋay nhuŋgum nhunum djinakuya dharray nhunu ŋarru ga dharray djinaku nhakun ŋunha dhanal.

And if we follow it, and put the story out in the open, as the Wangurri tribe. And we will see it, and put it into practice.

It was God's work putting the waters in place, and He put the stories in place for us. We will put it into practice now in today's organizations, it's like this cycad process, it has a foundation.

It is its foundation, the founder what for? For giving sustenance. Getting up and doing something for your survival is what the cycad story represents.

Buthimaŋ: Yes! Yes, that's what I was telling you, that's a leader, who will sweep things away, clear.

Then the leader will say: 'That's the right line!' So there is your story. You will care for it, you will care for this, like they did (your ancestors)