

Yolŋu Baḷandi-waṭaṅumirr

Yolŋu with ancestral connections

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Language: Dhuwal

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This paper contributes to research into Indigenous Governance being conducted by the Yalu Marŋgithinyaraw Research Group at Galiwin'ku, and the Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management at the Faculty of Indigenous Research and Education, Northern Territory University. It deals with the links between Yolŋu identity - through ancestral songs and connections - and the harvesting of resources

The first column contains the original essay by Garŋgulkpuy written as part of her study in 2002. The second and third columns provide literal and free translations by Michael Christie and Garŋgulkpuy.

Outline:

- 1 Introduction. Yolŋu are distributed in distinct groups knowing their lives through ancestral songs etc.
- 2 Yolŋu from both the freshwater country and the saltwater country have the full balance of carbohydrate and meat food through their individual skills and resources, and through sharing.
- 3 Our Wangurri song teaches Wangurri people how we should live our daily lives, as well as how we should see our world.
- 4 It is our affiliation to particular groups and their affiliations to the natural and cultural world - places, species, and practices - which drives our knowledge and our behaviour.
- 5 Within each group we have a particular way of talking about our collective knowledge as a clan, and we can see how that helps knowledgeable Yolŋu keep the peace by directing people to consider themselves in terms of their ancestral affiliations.
- 6 Within the mother-child clan relationship (yothu-yindi) our clan-based mind-sets show us how to behave responsibly as children/caretakers and as mothers (like using peaceful Yirritja seawater for sorting out problems for our shark-like Dhuwa mother's clan)
- 7 All Yolŋu groups have names to link their minds into ancestral practice, in every aspect of everyday life from hunting to politicking, within and between groups. Even when Yolŋu have passed away, our bodies are still sacred objects belonging to our own group.

1

Yolŋu buku-ŋiw'maram dhuwal wānjanur gan mala-bunhamin¹ romŋur, ga bukmak limurr ŋuthar marrtjin, ga marŋgithin marrtjin romgu limurrungalaŋaw.

Ŋanapurrdya dhuwal Yolŋu Australiapuynyndja mala-barrkuwatjkuhawuy² dhuwandja Northern Territory-ŋurnydja.

Napurrdya Yolŋuny ŋuthar ga marŋgithin marrtjin napurr dhāwuw malaŋuw mārranharaw buŋgulŋur, manikayŋur, buku-ŋupŋur, milkarriŋur³ ga dharrwa bulu.

Dhiyan ŋunhi dhāwuy malaŋuy ga mel-ŋakaram djāma mala, napurr dhu djāma rāl-gāma⁴ diltjilil ga bala raŋilil.

2

Manymak! Yolŋu moŋukpuy, napurr ŋuli ŋakaranhamirr djambatj⁵, bili napurr dhu mārram ŋatha ŋunha dāmurruŋur, matha-yal'

Yolŋu face-round this land were clangroup-creating¹ inside the law, and all we grew up, and went learning law which belongs to us.

We are Yolŋu of Australia in various distinct groups² here in the Northern Territory.

We Yolŋu grew and became knowing we went getting stories from ceremony, song, cleansing ceremony, keening³, and much else.

These those different stories, reveal activities, we will implement and carry our rāl⁴ to the bush and to the beach.

Good. People of the saltwater, we always speak of ourselves as 'djambatj'⁵. because we will get food from the salt, tongue relaxers, and

Yolŋu from all around this country have been giving life to new generations within the law, and we all grew up, and learnt our law.

We are Aboriginal people of Australia distributed in distinct groups here in the Northern Territory.

We Yolŋu people grew up and we learnt the various stories, we got them from the ceremonies, and the ancestral songs, from the mortuary rites, from the keening, and from many other sources.

These very stories reveal the work of our day to day life, and we practise them as we carry our knowledge, confidence and skills into the bush and on to the beach.

Okay, we saltwater Yolŋu, call ourselves good hunters because we can get meats from the sea, and fruit and vegetable from the bush.

¹ mala-bunhamin from mala-buma (lit: group-make/create) to procreate. Reflexive form mala-bunhamirr -procreating together within distinct groups.

² mala-barrkuwatjkuhawuy (lit: groups constituted separately) - distinct, or differentiated

³ buŋgul - any Yolŋu ceremonial, manikay - ancestral song, buku-ŋup - lit: head-wash - cleansing ceremony, milkarri - lit: tears - women's ceremonial crying for the deceased.

⁴ rāl - represents the hunting skills, environmental knowledge, confidence, and connections which are productive in the Yolŋu economy.. rāl-gāma (rāl-carry) to go out hunting taking with you the knowledge, skills and confidence to be successful., rāl-dumurru -(big rāl) person who goes hunting and comes back with lots of fish, shellfish, etc., rālmiriw - someone with no luck hunting., rāl-gurrupanmirr - sharing the bounty from hunting expeditions, rāl-manapanminya - collaboration, sharing work together

⁵ djambatj - skillfull hunter, smart, knowledgeable, insightful thinker.

⁶ matha-yal' - tongue-cooler/relaxer and murnyanj - sweet and starchy foods are opposites. Matha-yal' is meat which needs to be balanced off with murnyanj' which is carbohydrate.

ga ṅunha diltjijurnydja murnyaṅ⁶ṅha.

Wiripuny Yolṅu ṅunha bala gapu-raypinyṅur ga nhina.

Ḳukany walal ṅuli marrtji ṅaririny, bitjan bili nhakun napurr marrtji ṅuli Ḳuka.

Bili walal ṅuli Ḳakaram walalaṅuwuy matha-yal¹ ga murnyaṅ¹ manikaykurr ga buṅgulkurr bitjan bili nhakun napurr moṅukpuyyu.

Yolṅuny dja rom ga bitjan waṅa gam¹: ṅunhi dhu Yolṅu djambatj marrtji ḍuwaṅṅhun, mārram yan ṅayi dhu matha-yal¹ diltjijurnydja, balanya nhakun gurrumattji, weṅi, djanda ga minhala ga dharrwa bulu.

Ga gapu raypinybuyyu Yolṅuy dhu mārram yān, nhā mala ṅunha gapuy moṅukthu ga ṅayatham, ṅunhiyiny ṅuli rāl-gurrupanmirra⁴.

3

Manymak. Yirritjay Yolṅuy dhu manikay ḍar¹ṅaryun, Ḳakaram ṅayi dhu Ḳolṅuny Wurarnha ṅayi dhu ga nhāma raṅi Djältji, Watjpalala, Gäwunu, ga Mänurr⁷ ṅayi dhu ṅorra¹, ṅunhiyiny dharrwa dhu matha-yal Ḳakaram ga mārram napurr dhu.

there in the bush, starchy, filling food⁶.

Other Yolṅu there away by freshwater are sitting.

They always eat fish, in the same way as we always eat.

Because they always speak their own tongue relaxers and fillers, through song and ceremony just as we of the salt water.

Yolṅu law is saying this: when a djambatj⁵ Yolṅu will go up, he will easily obtain tongue-coolers in the bush, like for example goose, wallaby, goanna, tortoise and much else.

And the fresh water Yolṅu will always get, whatever things that salt water is holding, that it is which always give rāl reciprocally⁴.

Good. Yirritja Yolṅu will sing a song, he will tell: Ḳolṅu Wurarr he will be seeing the beach Djältji, Watjpalala, Gäwunu, ga Mänurr⁷ it will be lying¹, that one will be telling many tongue-coolers, and we will get it.

Other Yolṅu belong to freshwater country,

They eat fish just like we saltwater people do.

Because they always sing of their own meat and vegetable foods in their own songs and ceremonies, just as we saltwater people do.

Yolṅu custom says: If a good hunter⁵ goes into the bush, he can get meat like goose, wallaby, goanna, tortoise and many other things.

And the freshwater Yolṅu will still get some of those things which the salt water holds, because the work and the resources are shared around.

Okay, and when a Yirritja person sings, they might sing for example, "That Wurarr group is going to see the long open beach Djältji, Watjpalala, Gäwunu, and Mänurr⁷ lying there", that implies that there is a lot of good meaty food there, and we will gather it successfully.

⁷ **Wurarr** - a group of people going hunting - from Wangurri ancestral song.

Djältji, Watjpalala, Gäwunu, Mänurr - the beach when the tide is a long way out - from Wangurri ancestral song. I use these words as an example of how, when a Yolṅu person sees even something ordinary in the environment, we properly describe it using words from our own ancestral song (in this case Wangurri tribe). We deliberately see and identify the world from our own particular clan perspective. Our song tells us that what we perceive is a function of our ancestral connections.

Njunha ŋayi dhu
warryundja marrtji
warrawuku⁸ räl-marrtji
ŋayi dhu djuḷkumuŋ.

Njunha bäydhi ŋayi dhu
rurraŋ'thun gathulny'tja
dharpaŋ goḍu
maypalmirriw⁹.

Njuruŋyi manikayyu ŋuli
dhunupamirriyam Yolŋu
djambatj⁵ ga räl-mirriyam
ŋunhi ŋayi dhu ḷarrum
matha-yal'wu yuwalkkum
yän, miyalknhany yolŋu
ŋuli walal ḷakaram räl-
ḍumurrnha ŋunhi ŋayi
dhu dharrwakumany
maypalnydja.

Balanya nhakun ŋändiy¹⁰
walal ŋuli manikay
miyaman ga ḷakaram
walalaŋguwuy djambatj
miyapunuw, yurr
ŋurruŋuny walal ŋuli
ŋäthilmirriyam, rawu, ga
ḷuŋarrinyha, ga ḷaku
walalaŋ yäkumirr mala
Wuwarku, Bultjimarra,
Daymirri.

Miyamam walal dhu
manikaynydja,
dhunupayam¹¹ marrtji

There he will pull along
a warrawuku⁸ paperbark
raft räl-go he will for
cockles.

There alternatively he
will search through the
mangroves for a tree
with mangrove worms⁹.

That song will make
straight the djambatj⁵
Yolŋu, and give him räl,
if he should look for
tongue-coolers truly only,
of a woman they would
say big-räl if she will
make many the shellfish.

Like those mothers¹⁰,
they always sing a song
and tell of their own
djambatj turtle hunter,
but first they will
prepare the rope, and
the harpoon and their
canoes with names
Wuwarku, Bultjimarra,
Daymirri.

They will sing a song,
make straight¹¹ they will,
the custom/law for other

Maybe s/he is dragging
along a warrawuku⁸, the
ancestral Wangurri
paperbark raft, piled up
with cockle shells.

Or maybe hunting
through the mangroves
for a tree which we
would call goḍu-
maypalmirr (because we
refer to it in a specially
respectful way⁹).

That Wangurri (Yirritja)
song makes clear what
the Yolŋu hunter is to
do, and prepares him for
his search for the best
and most efficient
source of meat. And
women are also called
räl-ḍumurr if they have
for example collected a
lot of shellfish.

In the same way, my
mothers' people always
sing the song, and tell
the stories of their own
good hunters, for turtle¹⁰.
They have properly
prepared the rope and
the harpoon and their
canoes which have their
own particular clan-
affiliated names, like
Wuwarku, Bultjimarra,
Daymirri.

They sing their own
ancestral song, and it
shows them the way

⁸ **warrawuku** - word for paperbark raft from Wangurri ancestral song - the hunters may be collecting cockles on to a paperbark raft. People see it and describe it using their own particular clan vocabulary from clan song.

⁹ **goḍu-maypalmirr** - 'the deep inside containing shellfish' - describing a dead tree in the mangroves full of mangrove worms. This is both an expression from the song and something which occurs in real life. We don't speak straight out and say 'a tree with mangrove worms' - 'dharpa ḷatjin'mirr' - we say 'goḍu-maypalmirr' because even though we find these trees in real life as we are hunting, they are also an important totem (to do with the funeral and body of deceased Wurarr people), so we speak of it respectfully, even when we find it out hunting.

¹⁰ **ŋändi** - mother - referring here to the mother clan for Wangurri, who are Djambarrpuŋu clan, shark people and turtle hunters, who have their own ancestral songs which demonstrate their way of life.

¹¹ **dhunupayam** - to make straight, to set on the correct path. When they sing, the song teaches all Yolŋu how to read and act upon the world - the technology, the hunting

walal dhu rom wiripuwal
Yolŋuwal, nhaltjan dhu
miyapunuw marrtji.

4

Romdja manikaynydja
walalaŋ, n̄āndipuluw¹² ga
wakupuluw ga
gurrkurnnydja djāmany
mala bukmakkun Yolŋuw.

Ga nhinany napurr ga
dhuwal malany, Yirritja
ga Dhuwa¹², ga dhiyaŋ
napurr ga mala-
bunhamirnydja¹.

Nunha wāŋay-ŋarakay
ga ŋayatham mulmu,
gundā, warrakan, dharpa,
munatha, gapu, mala-
barrkuwatjkuhawuy,
diltjilil, ninydjijyalil,
baralalil, ranjilil ga ŋunha
djinawan gapuŋura, mala
barrkuwatjkuhawuy
Yirritjalil ga Dhuwalil, bili
napurr ŋuli balyunmirr¹³
ŋunhiwili malaŋulil.

Yurr ŋunhiyin ŋunhi rāl-
gurrupanamirnydja⁴
djāma ŋayi dhuwali
yolŋuy nhaltjan napurr
dhu nhina maranhu-gāma,
ga gurrupanmirr.

Yolŋu, how they will go
for turtle.

The law their song, of
the mother's mob¹², and
children's mob, and the
connections work for all
Yolŋu.

And sitting here are we
Yolŋu, Yirritja and
Dhuwa¹², and by means
of this we are having
new generations of our
children.¹

The land-bone holds
grass, rocks, meat, trees,
earth, water, separated
into groups, into the
bush, on to the salt pans,
to the sand hills, to the
beaches, and there inside
the water, separated into
distinct groups to both
Yirritja and Dhuwa,
because we create our
totemic identities¹³ to
these different things.

So exactly there is the
work of sharing
skill/resources⁴ s/he that
yolŋu, how we will sit,
bring rāl, and give to
each other.

ahead, all their different
styles, how they should
go out for the turtle
hunt.

The law which is in
their own song, is also
for their mothers'
people¹² and their
(sisters') children's
people, and so it makes
connections through
kinship to all the other
various groups of Yolŋu.

So we live as groups,
Yirritja and Dhuwa¹², and
through this, we
continue to give life to
new generations¹.

The land holds plants,
rocks, animals, trees,
sand, water all over the
place, in the bush, on
the plains, the hills, the
beaches and underneath
the sea, each belonging
to particular Yirritja and
Dhuwa peoples, and our
Yolŋu identity is
committed¹³ to those
various things as totems.

And therein lies the
work of sharing for each
person, how we will
continue to collect food,
and share it.

grounds and reefs, the roles people play in the hunt, cutting and distributing, etc - not just for the owners of the song, but for their relations too. Some Dhuwa people might not sing the turtle hunt, but they may have a **māri**, or a **gutharra** clan who do, and who share their song and its knowledge.

¹² **Yirritja, Dhuwa**: Everything in the world, people, places, languages, ceremonies, totems, species, **mala-barkuwatjkuhawuy**, (see note 2 above) - is either Dhuwa or Yirritja. Dhuwa things have a Yirritja mother clan (**n̄āndipulu**) and Yirritja things have a Dhuwa **n̄āndipulu**. Yirritja people have Dhuwa **wakupulu** (sister's children' clan group) and Dhuwa have Yirritja wakupulu. Yirritja is connected with Yirritja through the mother's mother's people (**māri**) and the (sisters') daughter's daughter's people (**gutharra**). Dhuwa people have Dhuwa māri and gutharra

¹³ **balyunmirr** - to be committed to, or identify with as a spiritual/totemic relationship. I as Wangurri am balyunmirr to dingu - the cycad nuts and sacred bread - because it is part of my ancestral song and keening. When I die they will sing the cycad ceremonies for me.

Dhuwal napurr ŋuli dhawaṯṯhundja gāna, ga ŋuthandja napurr marrtji ŋuli Yolṅuwal malajuwal.

Birrkayunaraw¹⁴ djāmawnydja napurruṅ ga barrkuwatj malaw ga malaw.

5

Balanya nhakun Wangurri Yolṅu dhuwal napurr dhu ḷakaranhamirr 'Gayilinydjil', muḷkurr¹⁵.

Ŋunhi napurr dhu marilil gulṅiyirr ga walal dhu napurruṅ muḷkurr wutthun; walal dhu wiripuy mala ḷakaranhamirr bitjan gam!: 'Ŋunha Gayilinydjil walal ṅanya nhāṅalnydja!'

Dhuwandja dhāruk ṅunha ṅayi dhu Yolṅuy galkikum mārryu-dapmaram.¹⁶

Yaka ṅayi dhu waṅa bitjandja gam! 'Ŋunha muḷkurr bakthurr!'

Ŋunhi yāku marraṅan! ṅayi dhu Yolṅun galṅa-marimirriyirr.

Ga bukmakku Yolṅuw dhuwal romdja, bāpurruw, bāpurruw.

Djāmawnydja romgu napurr dhu mārra!marranhamirr

Here we come out alone, and yet we grow inside various Yolṅu groups.

To justify¹⁴ our work, is separate for groups and for groups.

Like for example Wangurri Yolṅu here we call ourselves Gayilinydjil, heads¹⁵.

When we will enter into trouble, and they will hit our heads, they will the others say to themselves like this: 'There they saw her Gayilinydjil!'

This speech that he will Yolṅu bring close, by faith-clench¹⁶.

He will not say this: 'That head broke!'

That name provocative. S/he will that Yolṅu skin-become-ready-for-fight

And for all Yolṅu this law, for tribe for tribe.

For work of the law we will gather our heads for testing towards the

We are born alone, but we grow up in specific Yolṅu ancestral groupings.

Our understanding of our actions¹⁴ is individual to our particular groups.

For example, we Wangurri clan Yolṅu, we call our minds¹⁵, our 'Gayilinydjil!'

If we got into a fight, and someone hits us on the head, then people will say of us: 'They have seen her Gayilinydjil!'

By speaking that way a Yolṅu can work towards a peaceful solution which keeps everyone united, tied together by goodfaith, trust and confidence¹⁶.

They are not going to say: 'She got bashed in the head!'

That would be asking for trouble.

People could get really angry.

This principle applies to all Yolṅu groups.

To make our law work, we have to bring our heads back to thinking

¹⁴ **birrkalyunara** - testing, proving, assessing, accusing, deciding, understanding, justifying.

¹⁵ **muḷkurr** - head, knowledge, mind, understanding, perspectives, vision. Every clan group has a special word to describe their own mind-set. For example, Djambarrpuyṅu (and other shark people) call their minds **wanda** - from the shark. Warramiri minds are **nirru**. Gälpu minds are **bamundurr** etc. My Wangurri mind is called **Gaylinydjil**. One way people show respect for the particular mindsets of different people, is to speak respectfully of their heads, even in times of great trouble. To speak like this will keep people focussed on their ancestral connectedness and responsibilities, it will turn their minds back to their land, their language and sacred business, and their kinship network that make it possible.

¹⁶ **mārryu-dapmaram** (lit: faith, trust, confidence, goodwill/instrument-/clench) keeping the situation under control by using the power of ancestral connections (mārr), problem solving by appealing to people's strength through identity and kinship.

napurrunguwuy nurrku birrka'yunawuy bala wāṅlalil ṅarakalil, nhaliy ṅunhiyi bili napurrūṅ dhu roṅiyirr bunḍurr¹⁷nydja balayi bili wāṅlalil.

Balanya napurrūṅ dhuwal djāmany dhiyaṅ Gomuluy¹⁸ ga ḷakaram, Yolṅuw Yirritjawnydja.

6

Ga ṅayiny yothuny napurrūṅ¹⁹ dhu marṅgithirr bili ṅayi ṅunha djuṅguyany²⁰, romguny ṅayi marrtji djāga ṅāṅḍiwnydja ga yākuny ṅayi ṅunhi "Dhalnyirri ṅayi Djikungun, Garrawatji."

Rom djāgamirr, ṅunhal bāpurruw-ṅānharaw²¹, buṅgulṅur etc.

Napurr dhuwal yothu 'Djukurr-māṅa'²², napurr dhu guṅga'yun walalany ṅāṅḍipuluny romgurr Betjkurr²³, bili walalaṅ

land bone, how that very thing of ours will return as sacred name to that very place.

For example for us this work the Heron is speaking, for Yirritja Yolṅu.

And our children¹⁹ will learn because s/he is the djungaya²⁰, for the law which s/he is taking care of for the mother, and their name is 'Dhalnyirri, Djikungun, Garrawatji'.

Law caretakers, there for hearing news of death²¹, at ceremonies etc

We here children 'fat-of-shark'²², we will help them the mother's clan through the law of Betj²³ (Yirritja calm seawater),

about our ancestral land, using those sacred ancestral names which take us back each to our own place.

For example the Heron demonstrates that same principle for us Yolṅu of the Yirritja moiety.

And all the children of us Wangurri women will learn all this, because they are the official caretakers²⁰ of Wangurri ceremonial practice, looking after their mother's law, and we call them Dhalnyirri, Djikungun, and Garrawatji.

Custodians of the law, in telling the news of a death, in ceremonies etc.

Likewise, we Wangurri people are the children of shark mothers, we are called the 'shark fat', we will look after our

¹⁷ **bunḍurr** sacred ancestral names which link Yolṅu groups to their ancestral lands and creation stories.

¹⁸ **Gomulu** Yirritja Heron ancestor - referring here to a talk given to the Yalu' Marṅgithinyaraw Yolṅu research group at Galiwin'ku by Barripaṅ about the ancestral crested heron who gave identity and connections to many Yirritja groups, and who instituted the philosophy of yalu.

¹⁹ **yothu napurrūṅ** lit: our child, refers to the clan group which calls them 'mother!'. That is, all the children of Wangurri women (they will all be Dhuwa since their mother is Yirritja and belong to a different clan) are considered to be the 'yothu' of Wangurri. The relationship between the yothu clan group and the mother clan group is called yothu-yindi.

²⁰ The **djuṅgaya** which is the yothu of the mother clan, has important custodial responsibilities in Yolṅu law. There is a very close relationship between the mother and the yothu. The **yothu** looks after the (in this case) Wangurri mother's business, and the mother clan (ṅāṅḍipulu) call the children **Dhalnyirri**, **Djikungun**, and **Garrawatji**, referring to them as the pieces of leaves and bark floating down a wide river towards the mouth of the river and the ocean. All children of Mandjikay women (ie certain Yirritja groups including Ritharrṅu, Guyamirrilil, Golpa, Wangurri, and Walamaṅu) are called Dhalnyirri.

²¹ **bāpurruw-ṅānhara** - lit: clan-hearing - the important ceremonial procedure used to announce a death. The **djuṅgaya** has an important role to play.

²² **djukurr-māṅa** lit: sharkfat - referring to the 'yothu' of shark-totem mother's people (Djambarrpuṅu, Djapu etc)

²³ **Betj** - (lit: calm, Yirritja seawater.) here, the calming influence of Wangurri peacemakers sorting out trouble on behalf of their more shark-like mothers' people.

waṅḁa birra'yunaraw,
walal dhu dhunupa waṅa
yolḁu.

Walal dhu buna yān.

7

Wiripu ḁakaranhamirr,
Yirritja, nḁrrpu, giḁatj, etc
(Yolḁu).

Ga bulu dharrwa ga
mayaliny dhuwali ḁakaram
buṅgulwu, djāmaw,
gakal'wu²⁴, djambatjku ga
mariw, waṅanhaminyaraw
ḁunhal ḁāḁḁipuluwal,
yapapuluwal,
wakupuluwal,
märipuluwal, ga ḁunhal
banydji walkurḁur.

Dhuwandja Wangurriw,
ga balanya bili nhuma
dhu maḁḁ'maram
wiripunḁuwalnydja

Dhiyaṅ ga ḁakaram
process, ganydjarr²⁵
bāpurruw malaḁuw,
dhāruk-bakmaranharaw,
ḁuṅga'yunaraw, räḁ-
manapanminyaraw,
gurrupanaminyaraw,
galkikunhaminyaraw,
gurruḁumirriyanhaminyara
w, märryu-
ḁapmaranhaminyaraw²⁶,
ga dharrwa bulu.

because they have sharks
heads for
testing/accusing, they
will speak straight to
Yolḁu.

They will arrive only.

Others speak
themselves, Yirritja,
nḁrrpu, giḁatj etc (For
Yolḁu)

And these many more
are telling meanings for
ceremony, for work, for
behaviour²⁴, for hunting,
and fighting, negotiatings
there with mothers'
people, with clans which
relate as sister, for
women's children's
groups, for mother's
mothers' groups, and
back there in the
father's descent line.

This for Wangurri, and
the same you will find
with different ones.

This tells process,
power²⁵ for different
groups, for word-
breaking, for helping, for
skill/resource-pooling, for
sharing, for staying
united, for making kin,
for clenching faith, and
many more²⁵.

mothers' mob through
our law of the calm
seawater called Betj²³
because their mind is a
shark's mind, a
confronting one, they
just speak straight out to
other Yolḁu.

They are very up-front.

Other Yirritja peoples
speak of their minds
using other names, like
nḁrrpu, and giḁatj.

These various names
label the particular
ancestral perspective for
ceremonial practice, for
work, for reading
people's behaviour²⁴, for
hunting, for fighting, for
negotiation, through the
mothers' people and the
sisters' people, and the
children's people and the
grandmothers' people
and back there through
our own descent line.

This is for the
Wangurri clan, but you
could find the same
thing for the others.
(see diagram at front)

This demonstrates the
process, the strength²⁵ of
the various groups, for
consultation, assistance,
collaboration, sharing,
unity, celebrating kinship,
becoming kin, conflict
resolution, and much
else.

²⁴ **gakal'** the particular way in which people behave, through which their motives and their ancestral histories can be read.

²⁵ **ganydjarr** - strength, power, force

²⁶ **dhāruk-bakmaranha** (lit: word-breaking), discussion, consultation, **ḁuṅga'yuna** - help, assistancel, **räḁ-manapanminya** - collaboration, sharing work together (see above), **gurrupanaminya** - to do with sharing, **galkikunhara** - to do with coming closer together,

Nunhi ɲarra dhu
gänaɲ'thundja
waḡdirnydja, walalnydja
ɲarrany dhu roɲanmaram
ɲarrany yän, riŋgitjthu²⁷,
buŋgulyu, ga
maɲayin'thu, bili ɲarra
dhu ga
ɲayathanmirnydja, ɲunhi
maɲayin'nha.

Ga bukmakku dhuwal
romdja Yirritjaw ga
Dhuwaw.

If I will go alone
running, they will still
bring me back, by means
of sacred connecting
names²⁷, by means of
ceremonies, and by
sacred business, because
I will die, that is sacred.

And for all this law, for
Yirritja and for Dhuwa.

If I went off all by
myself separating myself
from my Yolŋu group,
they would still bring me
back just as myself,
through their singing of
the sacred names,
through their
ceremonies, their sacred
business, because if even
I were to die, my body
would still be a sacred
object.

And this law applies to
everyone, Yirritja and
Dhuwa.

gurrutumirriyanhaminya - developing kinship ties with people, **märryu-ɲapmaranhaminya** (see note 16 above)

²⁷ **riŋgitj** - sacred names and places which are sung ceremonially to affirm ancestral connections between groups of people.