

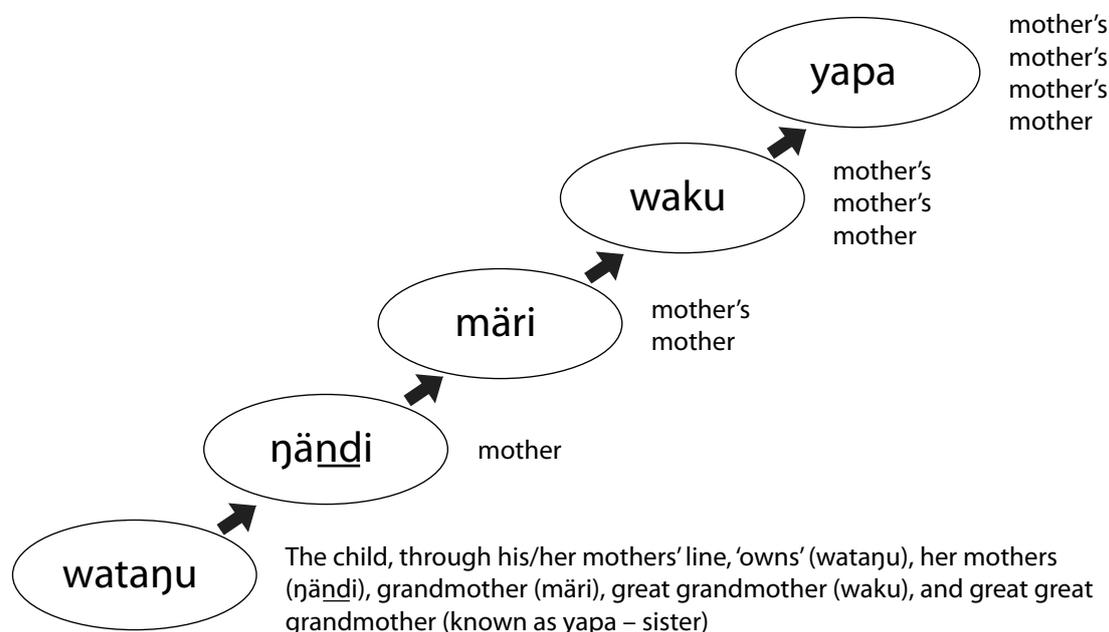
THE YOLŃU CHILD'S PATHWAY

YolŃuw Yothuw MarŃgithinyaraw ga
MarŃgikunhamirr Dhukarr

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Original text

Ńunhi yolŃu yothuy Ńuli wäŃa
nhäma¹, ga wiripuy yolŃuy
gurrutumirriy Ńuli yäku-
nhirrpandja Ńanyany.

Bala Ńuli yorrnha yolŃu
luŃ'thun ga gurrupan nhanŃu
märr-Ńamathinyawuydja
yothuwnydja.

Literal translation

When yolŃu child will place-
see, and other yolŃu with kin
links will name-place him.

Then always later people
gather and give him love for
that child.

Free translation

As soon as a child is
born (sees the land) his
kin folk name him.

And other people will
crowd around and give
that child love.

¹ wäŃa nhäma – literally 'sees the place, the newborn baby's first activity.

Njuruṅiny romdhu ṅuli
ṅāndi'mirriṅunhan ṅayaṅu²
rur'maraman djägawnha
yothuwnydja.

Ga ṅurruṅuny ṅayi dhu
marṅgithirr ṅāndi'mirriṅuw.

Yurr ṅunhi ṅuli Dhuway³
ṅāndi'mirriṅuy gāma
yothuny, ga yothuny ṅunhi, ga
Yirritja. Ga ṅuli ga Yirritjay
ṅāndi'mirriṅuy gāma, yothu
ṅuli malḡ'thun Dhuwa.

Dhunupan ṅayi ṅuli ṅunhi
yothu mālkmirriyirr
bāpurru'mirriyirr, ga
bundurrimirriyirra gurrpanaraw
wiripuṅuw yolḡuw.

Bili ṅāndi'mirriṅu dhuwal
dharray-manymakmirrnydja
bili ṅayi ṅunhi dhang'i'-
wataṅuny yakurr'wuny
yothuwnydja.

Galki nhakun ṅayi dhu ga
yothu nhina ṅāndi'mirriṅuwal.

Bala ṅuruṅiny romdhu
yothuydja ṅuli ṅāma
ṅāndi'mirriṅuny nhanḡuwuy
ṅayi, ṅunhi ṅayi ṅuli
lakanhamirr nhanukal
yothukurr dhārukkurr
'Nāmala'.

By that law will that
mother's ṅayaṅu be activated
to care for that child.

And first she will learn for
mother.

But when will Dhuwa
mother carry baby, and baby
that, and Yirritja. And when
Yirritja mother carries, the
baby will appear Dhuwa.

Straight she always baby
with mālk, with clan, and
with sacred bone names for
kin-calling different Yolḡu.

Because mother here care-
good-full, because she that
hug-owner for sleep for
baby.

Close like she will the child
sit with mother.

Then through that law the
children will hear mother
her own, that she will call
herself to her through baby
language: Nāmala

In that way the mother's
soul becomes mobilized
to look after the child.

The first thing he learns
about is mother.

But Dhuwa mothers
carry Yirritja babies and
Yirritja mothers carry
Dhuwa babies.

Straight away that baby
has a subsection, a
clan name, and sacred
bone name to correctly
identify and link to other
Yolḡu.

So the mother is the
good carer, because she
owns the cradling care
for the child's sleep.

Because the child is
always close to his
mother.

So in this way the
child hears his own
mother, when she uses
baby language and
calls herself 'Mummy'
(Nāmala).

2 ṅayaṅu – the seat of the emotions

3 all Yolḡu (and their land, songs, languages, etc) are either Dhuwa or Yirritja moiety. Marriages are across moieties and children have the opposite moiety of their mother.

Njuruṅiny dhärukthun ṅayi
ṅuli ga ṅandi'mirriṅuy
lakaranhamirr ṅanyapinya
ṅayi gurrutu yothuwala.

Yorrnha ṅuli dhäruk gurrupana
ga marṅikuman dälnydja,
balanya nhakun yäkuwnydja
wiripu-wurrunguny
gurrutumirriwnydja, ga
wakal'wu ga gitgitku bala
marrkapthuna⁴ ṅuli yothuny
dhika mirithirra.

Njändi'mirriṅuynydjja ṅuli
märr-ṅamathinyawuy
gurrupana bala
lakaraman ṅayi marrtji
ṅuli ṅuliwitjandhi märr-
ṅamathinyawuykurra romgurr
ga marrkapthunawurra.

Dhuwaliyiny mirithirr
nhakun ṅayi märr-
daphthunamirr rom, märr ga
ṅayi dhu yothu marrkapthun
nhanukiyingalaṅaw
ṅändi'mirriṅuw.

Njunhi ṅayi dhu märramany
marrtji romdja, bala ṅayiny
marrtji dhu ṅayipin yan
yothuynha mala-djarr'yundja.

Yol ṅayi, wanhaṅur ṅayi, nhä
nhanṅu bapurruny', ga yol
nhanṅu yalu'.

By that by language she
always is mother tell-herself
her-own-self she kin for
child.

Later always language give
and teach hard, like names
other-other kin-full and
for games for laughs then
express love always child her
very much.

Mother always love gives
then tells she goes always
whichever way love law and
appreciation.

This very much like she
commitment law, so she will
child love-praise-appreciate
her mother.

When she will get the law,
then she will go herself that
child differentiate.

Who she, where from she,
what her clan, and who her
nest.

Through that language,
the mother refers to
herself using a kin term
to her child.

After that she starts to
give and teach harder
words, like the names
of other kin folk, and
through games and
laughter the child
becomes confident in his
mother's love.

The mother always
gives love, then tells her
child everything through
the ways of love and
appreciation.

This is a very faith-
clenching law, so
that a child can most
appreciate his own
mother.

As he learns that law,
he learns to make
discriminations for
himself.

Who he is, where he is
from, what clan group,
what mother's line.

4 Marrkap, beloved person, someone who keeps families safe and protected and supports them in difficult circumstances. He is like a 'shade' for that Yolṅu.

Bala ṅayi marrtji dhu
larruman yol mala yapa'mirr
nhanṅu, yol mala ṅāndimirr
mala bāpurru, yol wakumirr
ga yol mārimirr, ga wanhaṅur
ṅayi mala-ṅurrkanhawuy.

Then she go will search who
are m's m's m's m's group,
who her mothers' (pl) clan,
who m's m's m's, and who
m's m's, and where from she
many-thrown.

So he'll want to know
who are his great grand
mothers' people, his
mothers', his mother's
grandmothers' and
mothers, and from
where he is descended.
(See diagram)

Yolṅu yothu ṅuli ṅuthana bala
marṅgithirra dhunukuṅur⁵
ṅāndi'mirriṅuwal yurr
mārrmay' dhukarryuny:
nhānharay ga ṅānharay
bala marrtji ṅuli dhāruktja
rulaṅdhuna nurrku'lilha⁶.

Yolṅu child will grow then
learn in care by mother but
by two paths: by looking and
by listening and then will go
words put into head.

The Yolṅu child grows
and learns in the
mother's care through
two means, looking and
listening, then the words
form in her head.

Ga ṅunhiyi nurrku' djāmaw
dhuwal mirithirr ganydjarmirr
bili birrka'yunawuy nurrku
dhuwal warrpam yākumirr
Yolṅuw yothuw ga bāpurruw,
balanya nhakun napurruṅ
nurrku birrka'yunaraw,
dhuwal Gayalinydjil.

And that very head-mind
for work this very powerful
because trying head this all
with name of the yolṅu child,
and clan like our head for
thinking this Gayalinydjil.

And the mind is very
powerful for working,
since the thinking power
of any Yolṅu child
actually has a specific
clan-related name. For
example our (Wangurri
clan) mind is called
Gayalinydjil.

Beṅur dhuṅgarrāṅur goṅ-
waṅgany ga djimbiyalil yothu
ṅuli marṅgithirra yol nhanṅu
ṅāndi'mirriṅuw galkiwuy
gurrutu'mirr walal, ga yān
bili ga balan bitjana ṅayi ṅuli
marṅgithirra bukmakkun
romgun, ṅunhi ga rom ṅorra
buṅgulṅur, manikayṅur ga
bulu dharrwa dhika.

From years hand-one and
to seven the child always
learns who her mother's
close relations are, until there
she learns all the law, the
law which is in ceremony, in
song, and all other sorts.

Between five and seven
years old, the child
learns who his mother's
close relations are, until
he knows everyone
– relations, and their
traditional roles, in
ceremonies and songs
and all other things.⁷

5 dhunuku – (noun) care, protection

6 Author's note: nurrku – refers to the mind or that part of the head which thinks and knows (as opposed to liya – which is the physical head). Different Yolṅu groups have different names for their nurrku. The nurrku interacts with the nature – thinking, problem solving, negotiation, ways we behave.

7 Author's note: He knows and joins in but still doesn't properly understand

Njunhiyiny waluy n̄ayi n̄uli
djāmamirriyaman n̄han̄u
mar̄ngithinyawuynyndja, bala
n̄uli gāman ga milkuman
n̄han̄uwuy gakał'tja⁸
wiripuŋuwal yol̄uwal.

That time makes her learning
work, and takes and shows
her talent/style to other
Yol̄u.

That period puts his
knowledge to work, and
he carries it, and reveals
his own ancestral style
to other people.

Njunhiyiny n̄han̄u gakałn̄ha
ga mundhurrn̄ha djāmawn̄ha
dirramuwynyndja djāma
n̄ayi dhu mār̄ram djāma
djun̄gayawn̄ha, dalkarawn̄ha,
bilmawn̄ha, ga romgun mala.

That his style and gift for
working – for a boy he
will work as manager, or
ceremonial leader, and
clapstick laws.

This provides a man's
talent and gift, for the
work he will do as
custodian, authority
on sacred names,
ceremonial leader, and
other important roles.

Ga n̄ayiny dhu miyalktja
yol̄u buthuru gānhamirra⁹
makarrwu yutuŋurrwu
manikaywun, mār̄r ga n̄ayi
dhu nyā'yundja dhunupa yān
bundurrnyndja lakaram.

And the woman Yol̄u will
take her ears to the theme of
ancestral songs, so she will
cry straight, just telling the
body names.

And the woman will
listen carefully so that
when it comes time
to cry, she will get the
song lines right, she will
sing/cry the right sacred
names.

Bili n̄ayipin n̄unhi miyalktja
yothu mar̄ngin yol̄ bāȳn̄uthin.

Because she along that
woman baby knows who
became nothing.

Because she has known
that person who has died
ever since she was a
baby.

Beŋuryiny n̄ayi dhu yol̄guy
yothuy mār̄r-dharaŋanna yol̄
n̄han̄u yapapulu, n̄āndipulu,
wakupulu, māripulu ga
dharaŋanna n̄ayi marr̄tji dhu
djāman n̄han̄uwuy dhiyak
mala.

From that she will yol̄u
child believe who her yapa,
n̄āndi, waku, māri and
understand she will go work
for her for them.

After the child grows
up, he builds up trust
with other groups,
(sisters, mothers,
great grandmothers,
grandmothers), and
understands what his
role is in relation to all
those different groups.

8 gakał – ancestral style, talent, true role. A person shows gakał through his/her performances in variety of tasks – dances, language, law making, and decision making.

9 Buthuru-ganhamirri – to bring one's ears, to bring oneself through listening carefully

Balanya nhakun
yapapuluwalnydja ñayi dhu ga
mukthuna yän nhina, yäkuny
ñayi ñunhi moda wo mirriri.

Like example, sister family
will quiet only sit, name that
there moda or mirriri.

For example at a funeral,
those people from clans
who could be called
'sister' to the deceased,
must sit quietly and do
nothing, this is what we
call moda or mirriri.

Ga ñändi'mirriñuwal ga
märi'mirriñuwal ñayi dhu
rur'yun ga waña ga napuñga
dhärra, balanya nhakun
djawarrkmirr wo rom ñayi dhu
nhirrrpan dhunupayam.

And for the mothers and for
the mother's mothers she
will get up and talk and stand
in the middle, for example
exhorting or law she will lay
down straight.

But for the mother's and
grandmother's clan, he
will get up and stand in
the middle and talk and
exhort people, and make
sure things are being
done correctly according
to law.

Ga wakupuluwalnydja ñayi
dhu nhina ga ñäman, bili
nhanukalañu märipuluw
ñunhiyi romdja.

And with the waku people,
she will sit and listen,
because it is their mother's
mother's law.

And sit with the waku
clan people (see the
diagram), because their
märi (ie the mother's
mother clan of the
deceased) are in control.

Yurru ñunhi ñayi dhu yothu
'watañu' bäyñuthirryndja,
märi yän nhanñu buñgawany.

But if she will child watañu
die, mother's mothers only
her boss.

If a child dies, it will be the
mother's mothers' people
in control of the ceremony.

Yolñuy yothuy ga ñayatham
gakal' ga mundhurr mala,
ga nhaliy ñayi dhu ñunhi
djulkmaramany ñunhi ñayi
dhu ga dhuli'na bitjuna,
ralpayirr ga djambatjthirr,
nhaku mala romgu walal dhu
nhirrrpan nhanñu.

Yolñu children hold roles
and gifts, and who they will
pass them when they will
listen, become helpful and
effective, for what laws will
be put for her.

That Yolñu child has
that talent of gakal, he
is gifted, this will make
him go ahead if he listens
properly, and be helpful
and a good provider for
ceremonies that will be set
up for his participation.

Romdhu manymakthu ga
mägayay dhu guwatjmanmirr
ga dharañanmirrnydja.

By good law, and by peace
will come together and
recognise.

By following this
properly and peaceably,
people will come
together and respect
each other.