

# BUNDURRPUY

## What Does Bundurr Mean?

Wapiriny Gurruwiwi

Transcribed by Garṅgulkpuy

Translated by Garṅgulkpuy and Michael Christie

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Yo! Yothu ṅunhi ṅayi li dhawal-guyaṅirnydja dhunupan yan ṅunhi ṅayi bundurrmirnydja yothuny. Yo! Yothu ṅunhi ṅayi li dhawal-guyaṅirnydja ṅunhi ṅayi bundurrmirnydja Yothuny.

Bundurrmirryirra ṅayi li, likanmirryirra, ṅayi dhuwal ṅaraka ṅayi, mulkurr ṅayi, diltji ṅayi, mel ṅayi, marwat ṅayi, ṅunhi ṅayi bundurmirra warrpam'nha.

ṅunhi ṅalapal nhawi malṅ'thuna ṅayi ṅunhi li yutjuwalany ṅunhi dhawal-guyaṅirnydja gal'kalmirryirr ga ṅalapalyirr

Ga yalala ṅayi dhu bāyṅuthirr ṅunhi ṅayi still goṅmirr<sup>2</sup> yān ṅe!

Goṅmirr yān ṅayi ṅunhiyiny ṅunhi dhu dhiṅgamany ṅuruṅiyi ṅayi goṅmirnydja bundurrun, bundurrun likannya ṅayi.

Yol ṅayi dhiyal gan nhinan, wanhaṅur ṅayi, wanha nhanṅu wāṅa, yol nhanṅu yapa<sup>3</sup>, yol nhanṅu māri ga yol nhaṅu ṅāndi'mirriṅu...

### Free translation

Okay. When a child is born she already has sacred names for her bones. Yes, when the child is born it already has bundurr.

She is born with a sacred 'knee' name, and a sacred 'elbow' name, all related to her bones, her head, her back, her eyes, her hair, all of her has bundurr<sup>1</sup>.

Any adult we see, when she was small and newborn, and when she was crawling around, (she always had that same bundurr), and now she is old.

And later when she dies, she still has all those connections.

When she dies, she will be all connected, and it is the bundurr which makes those relationships, through the bundurr she has connections.

Who she was when she was alive with us, where she was from, where her country was, who her great great grandmother's people were, her grandmother's, her mother's ...

<sup>1</sup> Beginning to tease out the meaning of bundurr, Wapiriny is linking the knees and elbows (the most potent source of Yolṅu connectedness metaphor) with all the other parts of the body (each with its own spiritual significance).

Njuruŋiyiny ŋayi ŋuli goŋmirrnydja, beŋur  
ŋayi yutjuwala goŋmirr bundurrrmirra  
ŋayi already, ŋunhi ŋayi li maŋ’thuna  
ŋunhi ŋayi goŋmirra bundurrrmirra ŋayi ga  
bäyŋuthirr ŋayi dhu, rakunydhirr ŋayi dhu  
ŋunhi ŋalapal, yurr rakunydhirra.

Ŋayi dhu yothu ga goŋmirr yan ŋayi  
even ŋayi yothu bäyŋuthirr wanhal  
ŋayi dhu aŋeŋur bäyŋuthirr napuŋga aw  
wulmandhirra ŋayi dhu still ŋayi goŋmirr  
yan bili ŋunhi born goŋmirr ga bäyŋuthirr  
ŋayi still goŋmirr yan.

That’s why ŋunhi li buŋgulnydja  
ŋamaŋamayun, munathany, warraw<sup>4</sup>ny’<sup>2</sup>tja  
dhika nhä marrtji nhirra’<sup>3</sup>nhirra bili  
ŋunhi ŋayi yolŋu ŋunhi goŋmirr ŋayi  
yolŋu bukmak Dhuwa Yirritja bäyŋu.

Bukmak warrpam ŋunhi ŋali dhu  
bäyŋuthirr manikayyu ŋalitjalany dhu  
dholkumany ga balanya.

Rumbalnydja napurr dhuwal mirithirr  
dhuyu ga yaka nhe dhu warku’yundja  
napurrŋ bundurrrnydja bili ŋayi ga rom  
waŋa bukmak ŋaraka dhuwal dhuyu.

Ga ŋunhi napurr ŋuli burr’yun  
gamunuŋguny aw miny’tjiny  
rulawaŋdhun ŋunhiyiny goŋ-wataŋuw ga  
djuŋgayaw yan djäma,

Ga yuwalktja bukmak dhu luŋ’thundja  
mala manapanmirrnydja ŋurikiyiny  
bundurrrwu dhawar’<sup>5</sup>maranharaw.

That is how she is connected, since she was  
a small baby already with bundurr, as soon  
as she was born, she already had connections  
with bundurr, when she dies, when she’s old  
and dead.

Ever since a baby, she has connections, it  
doesn’t matter how old she is when she dies,  
middle aged or old, she is still connected,  
born connected, dies connected.

That’s why when funerals are made, the  
sacred sand sculptures, the sacred shade,  
and whatever else (sacred) are put in place,  
that is done because every person’s body has  
got connections whether it’s a Dhuwa or a  
Yirritja person who dies.

So everything, when we die, will be buried  
by ancestral song, you see.

Our bodies are very sacred, so you must not  
disrespect our sacred names because the law  
says that all bones are sacred.

So when we dance painted up with ochre or  
we paint ancestral designs on the body or the  
coffin, it is only those people responsible<sup>5</sup> for  
performing and managing the funeral who  
allowed to do the painting.

And truly, everyone will gather and join  
together to do the right thing for finishing  
that sacred bone connection properly.

2 Goŋmirr (– hand, –mirr, having) literally ‘with hands’, means having relations around who will give support.

3 Yapa means both sister and mother’ mother’s mother’s mother. (See the diagram on Garŋgulkpuy’s paper The Yolŋu Child’s Pathway in this volume)

4 Warraw’ shade, sometimes used to denote a designated space where secret/sacred business is done.

5 Different clan groups have particular roles in a funeral (as described in Garŋgulkpuy’s paper The Yolŋu Child’s Pathway in this volume) because the body of the deceased is a sacred object through its ancestral connections.