

THE YINAPAKA STORY (MILPIRRI 2021)

as told by Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-kurlpurlurnu (Steven Jampijinpa Patrick)

All the birds gather there at Yinapaka doing night ceremonies (like Ngatijirri budgerigar, cockatoos, it's a Japaljarri Jungarrayi Nungarrayi Napaljarri Skin group story). The two beings there, the sky creators' sons were there watching, watching the gathering. Unknown to the birds they were watching what was unfolding.

During the night and during the day, birds would go hunting, some of them, collecting plants preparing for that evening ceremony, or getting food.

All the birds started debating that they should be allowed to see daytime dance instead of only night-time dance. (The Japangardi, Napangardi Japanangka Napanangka group – because they are together they reflect each other – Yellow group reflecting Green group). It is their story as well, they have the right to say why don't do the daytime dance. The Blue and red group don't say anything, they are kurdulangu? Some birds go night hunting but can't during ceremony.

All the low flying birds are debating - They want to see daytime dance If they learn stronger they can then fly higher.

That day Warlawurru (wedgetail eagle) went hunting early, as did other birds of prey. The others, wanting daytime ceremony, were looking for someone to teach them.

Karnka (The Crow) - Japangardi, Japanangka, Napangardi and Napanangka (Green Group)



Karnka (The Crow)(Japanangka) says – “I can teach you to fly high. I am the smartest. I can work out strategies, teach you how to move your wings to lift you higher.”

But the others say – “you are smart but you have broken the law. You stole a little girl's puppy dog, you deceived that girl. She is the wrong skin, mother in law skin”. Karnka stole the dog and then said he just found the dog wandering around, he is in my camp and you can come around later and pick it up, pick it up when the sun is going down, when I get back from hunting. The little girl went over to the crows place at sunset. When she saw the dog the crow trapped her and kept her there. (This is all in the Kurdiji Ceremony) “You might be smart, but we don't want you,” they said.

*Story from Yarrunkanyi (Mt Hardy)

Wirntiki (The Stone Curlew) - Jupurrula, Jakamarra, Napurrula and Nakamarra (Red Group)



Wirntiki says “I can teach you to fly. I flew over the Mumingirri (Two Monsters/Devils). We fly higher than the rocks and boomerangs they threw at us, they cannot reach us.”

Someone said – “yes you can do that and you can fly at night too. But you stole fire from someone and played around. You were so silly that you flew with the fire and it burned your wings and you fell to the ground. Fire is important, don't muck around with it.”

*Story from Mungularrpa

Winyiwinyapa (The Spotted Harrier) - Japaljarri, Jungarrayi, Napaljarri and Nungarrayi (Yellow Group)



Winyiwinyapa said hey, I can teach you how to fly. I am the best fighter, I can drive out people. I can teach to fly and pounce on people who are trying to invade our hunting grounds. I can chase them off. I am a great warrior.

But the birds said -yeah, but you have done that one but you tell lies. You have gone out hunting, people go hunting, and you come back all bloodied and you come back looking like you have been in a fight, and we nurse you back so your wounds can heal. 4 or 5 times you have done that before we found out. People would give you food because you were wounded and couldn't go hunting yourself. But you were chasing another language group invading our hunting ground. But we found out you were deceiving us to get free food. Those wounds and broken weapons were broken by you. You are a lazy hunter. All the hard work that other people do, you live off. (Don't loaf around, do your bit for community.)

*Story from Pinja Outstation - (Spider Lake)

Kirrkalunji (The Brown Hawk) - Jangala, Jampijinpa, Nangala and Nampijinpa
(Blue Group)



Kirrkalunji says what about me. I am community with fear. You have fear but I don't. I can show you how to get rid of fear. I can fight snakes, I can kill all the dangerous snakes. I can get big animals like kangaroos and bring them to you. I attack their eyes. I am the bravest. With that knowledge you can fly high and not be afraid. You can see that rainbow serpent. I can pick that up and put it around my head.

They said, yeah you can put him there, but you can't make it stay there. It slipped off and got away. You can't make it stay solid there. Your bravery is just temporary. You cannot sustain it.

In the meantime while they were talking, the wedgetail came back with a friend. When they got closer it was the Emu. They picked up all the conversation.

Emu said I can teach you mob to fly really high amongst the clouds and tame them. All the birds burst out laughing. They said Emu? You want to teach us how to fly? Some threw stones and sticks and spit on him. They chased him away. Poor thing.

*Story from Nganarirri - near Papinya

They turned to wedgetail. We have been waiting. Surely you are the one. You can teach us two things - how to fly high, and how to hunt.

Eagle says but I was taught to fly and become the ultimate hunter. You have to be the ultimate flyer to be the ultimate hunter. But you can't do that when you treat Emu like that. You have to impress the teacher.

The one who taught me to fly and hunt was the one that you chased away. He was my teacher. The one you see in the sky is his spirit. It is knowledge that makes you fly high and teaches you how to work out things, like dangerous times and good times. Being ready. That is what the Emu teaches.



This is the Yinapaka moment, the slap, the wake up call. They realise that they have missed the opportunity to learn.



This is the Yinapaka Story as told by Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-kurlpurlurnu (Steven Jampijinpa Patrick) to Tim Newth and David McMicken of Tracks Dance Company. March 4, 2020.

Background

Yinapaka means to slap somebody. Slapping somebody could be bad, but slapping someone could be good too. This slap is a wakeup slap - waking up to yourself. Listen and try to understand this story.

Yinapaka (Lake Surprise), is a freshwater lake but I think a policeman in the 1920's or 30's went around there shooting people. He came across the sand dunes and to his surprise there was a freshwater lake there. That is why he named it Lake Surprise. But Warlpiri call it Yinapaka, wakeup call slap, that's what it means - time to understand this story.

In the dream-time the ground, which is now full of water, when it dries up it is the dreaming place for all the birds gathering there for the sky ceremony. The grass is burnt off and the area becomes a big ceremony space.

On the dried up banks of the lake known as Yinapaka, or Lake Surprise, birds are gathering for the Sky Ceremony. Once the ceremony ground is ready, the white cockatoos all flock down towards the ceremony space, It is as if the stars themselves have arrived.

The Sky Ceremony might take a year or two to complete. The last time I was in one of them it was 8 months long, back in 1988. The Sky Ceremony is seen as a female ceremony but done by men. Men learn all the stories of each song line for the area and try to walk the tracks of the dreaming stories around that area.