

*Milpirri at Lajamanu*  
*as an intercultural locus of Warlpiri discourses with others*

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the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
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# Declaration

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Yukihiro Doi

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# Abstract

This thesis analyses the event of Milpirri in Lajamanu, Northern Territory — a biennial event first celebrated in 2005, conceived by the Warlpiri educator Steven Wanta Jampijinpa Patrick and produced by Tracks Dance Company in Darwin. Milpirri is a bicultural event primarily aimed at increasing school attendance in Lajamanu through a blended program of traditional Warlpiri dance and modern hip hop instruction, and culminating in a concert in which local children and Warlpiri ceremonial elders perform together collaboratively on stage. It also aims to strengthen community cohesion by encouraging cooperation among numerous local organisations including the elders' council, the school, the shire council, the arts centre, the church and the store. Milpirri is structured around a selection of endangered Warlpiri rituals, many of which have not been performed in their traditional contexts for decades and are largely unknown by youths. Throughout my analysis of this event, I bring my understanding of Japan's *matsuri* tradition, which combines the concepts of festival, ritual and marriage. This approach is novel in that scholarship into Australian Indigenous cultures, such as that of the Warlpiri, has predominantly been undertaken by European-Australian (*kardiya*) researchers. As in the Japanese *matsuri* tradition, Milpirri includes elements of animism/totemism, competitive dance and traditional marriage law, and cannot simply be described as a 'festival' in the Anglophone sense. Through this analysis, I will show how Milpirri instils an atmosphere of harmony and community cohesion within Lajamanu that is grounded in ancestral Warlpiri law, yet embraces the whole of Australia for the future benefit of all.



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# Spellings and glossaries

In this thesis the writing system of the Warlpiri language applied is the standard spelling system explained in *A learner's guide to Warlpiri: Tape course for beginners* by Mary Laughren and Robert Hoogenraad (1996) as it has been modified from the Roman alphabet system devised by Lothar Jagst in the 1950s. For Warlpiri orthography, this thesis accommodates the method of Laughren and Hoogenraad except for Warlpiri community names such as 'Yuendumu' and 'Willowra' when used in an English context (They can be spelled as *Yurntumu* and *Wirliyajarrayi* in the orthodox Warlpiri). A basic explanation of the Aboriginal writing system is introduced in 'Notes to the Readers' (Kleinert & Neale 2000) of *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture* saying that in 'Indigenous languages the pairs p and b, t and d, k and g, ch and j do not function as separate phonemes and are therefore spelled the same'. They continued that '[m]any languages have a set of "retroflex" sounds that are pronounced like /t/, /n/, /l/ but with the tongue tip further back in the mouth; similar sounds occur in American English *barter, barn, barley*'. These accounts are correct except for the somewhat inexact examples because the consonant cluster /rl/ in English does not always produce an [ɭ] (in the IPA) sound, but both [ɽ] and [ɭ] sounds respectively with the General American phonology. Orthographically, at the beginning of a word, the retroflex indicator r is omitted so that 'l' in 'Lajamanu' is pronounced retroflexically [ɭ] as well as spelling /rl/ in the middle of a word. Similarly, *Warlpiri* may be pronounced as ['Wo:lpəɽi] in Australian English while it should be realised as [Waɭbəɽi] in the Warlpiri language.

It is also noted that some consonants can cause a variety of spellings even today. The pronunciation of the retroflex flap /rd/ [ɽ] was relatively newly differentiated by linguists from /rr/ [r]. As /rr/ cannot appear in the beginning of a Warlpiri word, there is no entry for it in *An Elementary Warlpiri Dictionary* by Kenneth Hale (1995), which applies the orthography of *A learner's guide to Warlpiri*. Furthermore, the [ɽ] sound confuses the reduplication spelling of 'rduku-rruku' (Chest) when compared with 'Jinji warnu rdukurduku tirirtiri kirli' of PAW media (2010) or with 'rduku-rduku' of the *Warlpiri yirdi* or a Warlpiri ABC Table hanging in the Community Library in Lajamanu, which has the word in a picture of the chest of a boy. This

may be because, as in several Indo-European languages, the alveolar trill [r] is at least occasionally allophonic with an alveolar tap [ɾ] in Warlpiri, whose /rr/ sound is even closer to /rd/. If compared with the proto-Pama-Nyungan phonology reconstructed by Barry Alpher (2004), the /rd/ in Warlpiri can be considered to have derived from /rr/, /r/ or /rt/ in Pama-Nyungan. *Rdaka* (hand, finger) is explained by Laurie Reece (1975:92) as ‘at times pronounced raka (retroflexed or /raka/) or taka’. There still is a minimal pair with the middle /rd/ and /rr/ such as *kurdiji* (1. shield; 2. circumcision initiation) and *kurriji* (mother-in-law) noted by Hale (1995) and Reece (1975) defined ‘kurdutju (E.Wal.), kurditji (W.Wal.), kurritji (H.C.)’ as a ‘broad shield’ (1979:146); and ‘kurritji. alt. kurritju, kurditji (H.C.)’ as ‘mother-in-law/wife’s mother’ (ibid.:108).

To distinguish from his or her other ‘siblings’, this thesis mainly uses the combination of English first name plus Skin Name. For instance, Steve Jampijinpa’s name consists of: Warlpiri name: *Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu*; English name: *Steven Patrick*. A Warlpiri first name (for example *Wanta*) is called ‘Bush Name’ and a last name (*Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu*) ‘Clan Name’ by local people as ‘clan’ here is not regarded problematic. As Jampijinpa one day told that it is slightly inappropriate to call an initiated man with only his Bush Name, which is similaly to a Japanese view, this thesis usually applies a Skin Name to call an Aboriginal elder. When an informant is dead recently, his or her name and image are hidden to respect their tradition of the mourning over a died person, but in lieu is identified with a Warlpiri term *kumunjayi* or ‘No Name’.

For Japanese terms, this thesis applies the Hepburn Romanisation system.

[Abbreviations and terminology frequently used in the thesis]

- ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Corporation
- AIATSIS: The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- ANU: The Australian National University
- Business: ritual, matter, Aboriginal ritual.
- CLC: The Central Land Council
- coolamon: an Indigenous Australian carrying vessel
- corroboree: an Indigenous dance festival, from ‘garaabara’ in the Dharuk language

- Country: the land to which Aboriginal people belong and their place of Dreaming
- didjeridu: a wind instrument developed by First Australians
- Elder: influential member or leader of community
- humbug: harassment, often of the elderly and of women, to share money and goods with their extended families.
- IPA: The International Phonetic Alphabet
- *jukurrpa*: Dreaming, Dreamtime
- *kardiya*: Non-Aboriginal people, European Australian people
- *kumunjayi*: a Warlpiri term literally ‘No Name’ used to replace the name of a recently deceased person
- NT: Northern Territory
- PAW: Pintupi-Anmatjerre-Warlpiri Media and Communications (or former Warlpiri Media Association)
- Purlapa: a social corroboree among central Australia
- Skin Group, Skin Names: Aboriginal kinship system
- Songlines: also called Dreaming Tracks
- WETT: Warlpiri Education Training Trust
- WA: Western Australia
- *yapa*: Warlpiri; Aboriginal people; people. The definition will be clarified in the thesis.
- *yellafella*: Middle Eastern people; Asian people. Although *yellafella* maybe an offensive term, this thesis chose this to put a Warlpiri term for Japanese together with *yapa* and *kardiya*.



# Chapter 1. Introduction

Until recently, anthropological research in Australia has primarily consisted of Western (*kardiya*) interpretations of a distant Indigenous<sup>1</sup> culture. Today, there is an increase in the output of Aboriginal people (*yapa*) who research their own background. This thesis does not belong to either of these approaches. It aims to analyse an Aboriginal event from a Japanese (*yellafella*) perspective. Specifically, this thesis attempts to interpret a Warlpiri event called Milpirri as a *matsuri*, a Japanese term roughly meaning ‘festival’ or ‘ritual’. The aim of the thesis is to understand the profound meaning of Milpirri via a *matsuri* hypothesis to provide a better interpretation for the future, not only for biculturalism<sup>2</sup> and the policy of the Aboriginal community concerned, but for the Australian community as a whole.

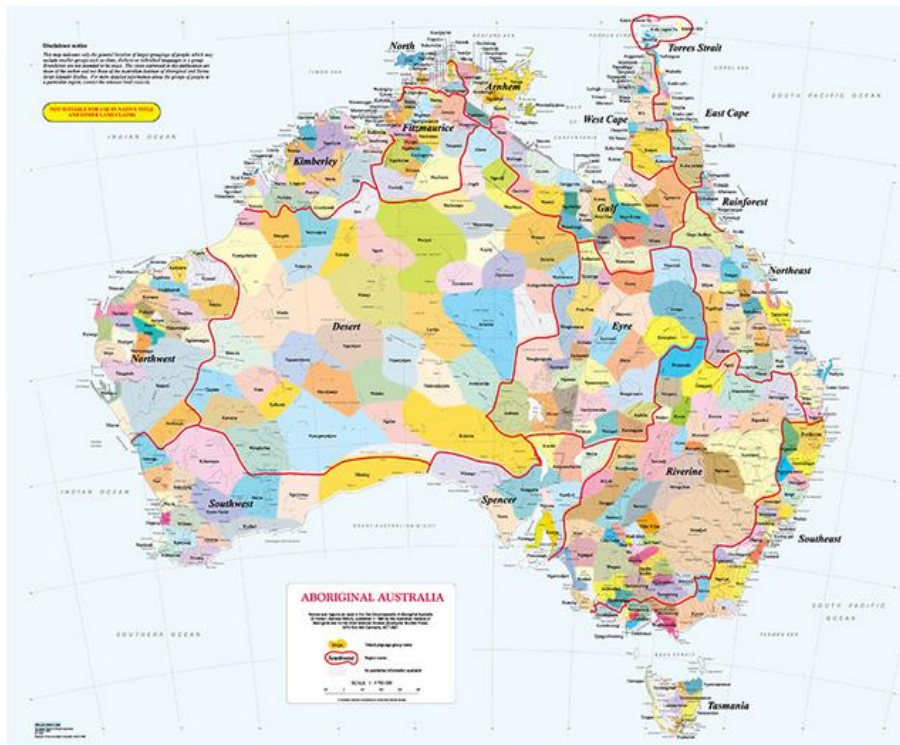
Milpirri is held in Lajamanu about 550 kilometres south west of Katherine on the northern edge of the Tanami Desert (see figures 1.1, 1.2), although there was a scheme to have the event outside of the town, and sometimes some of the Milpirri dancers perform outside of Lajamanu. For the main event, the performers and audience members, constituted by the majority of the community of around 700 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011a)<sup>3</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> It is spelled here with a capital I and it is grammatically correct (NSW Department of Education and Training n.d.). For other discussions on the collective term for those people, see Chapter 2.

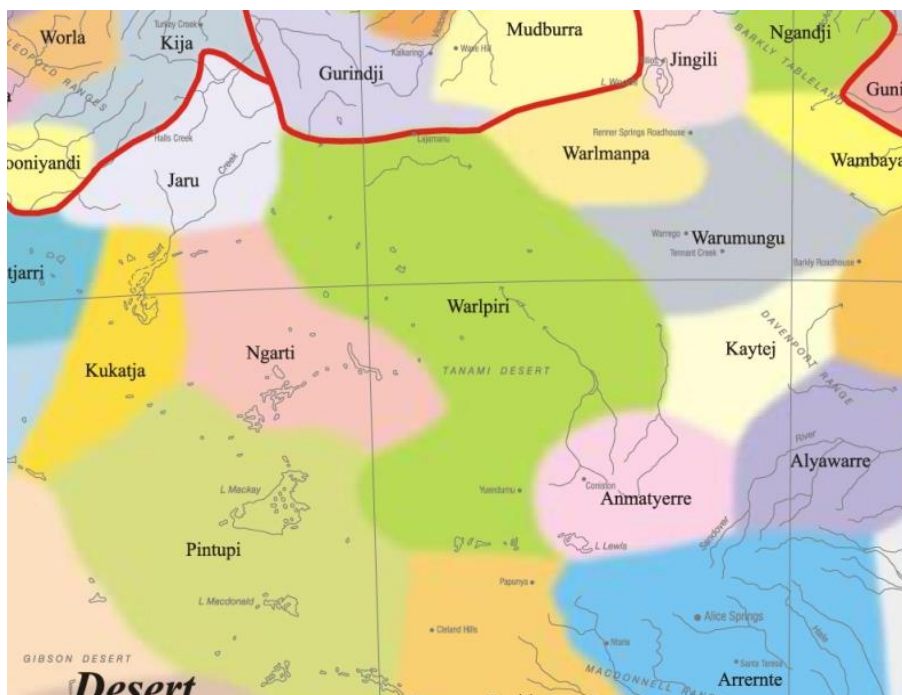
<sup>2</sup> According to Schwartz and Unger (2010:26) ‘Most generally, biculturalism represents comfort and proficiency with both one’s heritage culture and the culture of the country or region in which one has settled’.

<sup>3</sup> According to the 2011 census, Lajamanu had a population of 656, of which 89 per cent are of Aboriginal origin. The population changes seasonally.



**Figure 1.1: Map of language groups in NT 1**

AIATSIS Aboriginal Australia Map created by David R Horton, ©Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS and Auslij/Sinclair, Knight, Merz, 1996.



**Figure 1.2: Map of language groups in NT 2**  
Excerpt from AIATSIS Aboriginal Australia Map 1996.

gather at a temporary stage on a basketball court. The number of outside participants is

increasing, even though access to the semi-arid community is difficult.

With collaboration from the late 1980s between Tracks Dance Company in Darwin, NT, and the Lajamanu community, Milpirri was launched in 2005. It is held in October, around the time the long-awaited rainy season begins in the desert. There have been five Milpirri events so far, including 2011. It is a ‘new event’ compared with the Indigenous ancestral rituals: However, it might also be regarded as an established ‘cultural event’ since Milpirri has been performed over 10 per cent of the history of Lajamanu, which was born only in the 1950s (as Hooker Creek settlement).

The Warlpiri term, Milpirri, translated as ‘Rain Cloud’ or ‘Water’ in English, was chosen for the special night show and was conceived as the *jukurrpa* or Dreaming of Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu (in English Steven Patrick; hereafter referred to as ‘Jampijinpa’), a Warlpiri Elder,<sup>4</sup> when he was an assistant teacher in Lajamanu Community Education Centre (or Lajamanu School). It has been organised by Tracks Dance Company which is also responsible for the hip hop dance part with Lajamanu schoolchildren. *Yapa* Elders manage and sometimes restore rare ancestral ceremonies, teach their juniors, and perform with them in the program. Jampijinpa combines the generations for the event and gives the concept of Warlpiri ritual to the children’s performance, and supervises their performance. The event is

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<sup>4</sup> Oxford Dictionaries Online (2011) defines that an ‘elder’ is ‘a person of advanced age; (often elders) a leader or senior figure in a tribe or other group: a council of village elders; an official in the early Christian Church, or of various Protestant Churches and sects’. As the word ‘elder’ might imply his or her age, a relatively ‘young elder’ like Steve Jampijinpa might be expressed as ‘next generation elder’ (Stronger Smarter Summit 2009).

supported by non-Aboriginal teachers, the local council, the community art centre, outside companies, and the NT government.

The fundamental achievement of this event is to revitalise the Lajamanu community, of which around 90 per cent are of Aboriginal origin. The majority of them seem to enjoy the event, and hope to continue participating in order to rehabilitate their culture. Through this event, children have shown increased respect towards their culture and Elders, and to some extent, an improvement in school attendance. There is also a positive economic effect when non-Aboriginal people visit from outside the town. Jampijinpa has been invited around the world to tell the story of creating the event, and other community members, such as the hip hop children dancers called 'Milpirri dancers', have also performed outside Lajamanu.

The influence of the festival is not limited to the local community. Jampijinpa's research has contributed to publications by non-Aboriginal scholars, and employment for them in urban centres. A prime example is the choice of this thesis topic. Dr Stephen Wild, my supervisor, took me to Lajamanu, and introduced me to Jampijinpa, whose vision is expressed as follows:

We envisage music students, law students, tourism students and students from other university faculties coming to Lajamanu to learn about Warlpiri culture from the Old People, while we still have them. We envisage taking them on country visits and showing them where the ideas for the Milpirri events come from. (Patrick 2008b)

However, the outside influence of Milpirri is not as great as other distinguished Indigenous events. Negative aspects of the yet developing event can be demonstrated. First, Milpirri might be regarded – although there have not been publications concerning the comparison – as a rehash of the internationally renowned Garma Festival, which started in 1998, organised and performed by the Yothu Yindi rock band and the Yolŋu people in Arnhem Land, NT. Actually, both have the aim of two-way learning, and use similar metaphors for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture. In the Garma Festival, *ganma* (a lagoon)<sup>5</sup> is said to be made from ‘salt water and fresh water’ (or the connotation of ‘Balanda’ and ‘Yolŋu’, or European Australian and Yolŋu Aboriginal relations), and likewise in Milpirri (2005), *milpirri* (cumulonimbus cloud) was made from ‘hot air and cold air’ (*kardiya* and *yapa* or European Australian and Warlpiri Aboriginal relations). If only the metaphors in the two events are considered, Milpirri might be thought less significant than the prior Garma Festival.

Second, for Tracks Dance Company, Milpirri is one of several Indigenous projects, regardless how significant it is for them. Although the Warlpiri language group still holds important traditions, like the boys’ initiation ceremony, Tracks only teaches hip hop dance to Lajamanu boys and girls and does not make them perform traditional dances in Milpirri. Warlpiri young people perform their ancestral entertainment Purlapa and Yawulyu with body paintings and the songs of Elders in other ceremonies. Indeed, they still have their traditional

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<sup>5</sup> It is said that the Yolŋu people use different words to describe ‘Two way’ exchange – *ganma* and *garma* (McConvell cited in Hoffman 2006:214).

circumcision ceremony every year inside the community without depending on external instructors or assistants. In other words, the meaning of this thesis may be considered minuscule if Milpirri were only a transient ‘festival’ and had been researched by a non-Aboriginal and non-native English speaking student whose first fieldwork was only the third Milpirri in 2009.

However, I would not overestimate this event or refuse to acknowledge negative aspects in order to justify the research of a ‘small festival’ by disguising it as something greater than the reality. Wild first advised me to consider analysing it as a ‘revitalization movement’, defined by American anthropologist Anthony Wallace as ‘deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture’ (1956:265). He gave several papers proposing Jampijinpa as a ‘prophet’ (Wallace’s term) of the ‘movement’. It might be possible to write a thesis with the title ‘Milpirri: A Revitalisation Movement in Central Australia’ as I used for my research proposal and the fieldwork project. Although certain revitalising factors can be found in Milpirri, I was sceptical of exaggerating the small-scale event as a ‘movement’. In the course of my fieldwork, Wild came to Lajamanu in time to see Milpirri in 2009, and we discussed many ways to interpret the event just before and soon after it took place. Eventually he accepted my idea of analysing Milpirri as a ‘festival’ in my thesis and said in his presentation in *Symposium on Music, Dance and Place*, held at Memorial University, St. John’s in 2010, as follows:

Doi-san and I have had long discussions about whether it is best understood as a revitalisation movement, he thinking it is better understood as just a festival, I thinking it broader in purpose than a festival. (Wild 2010)

Even though I was allowed to take Milpirri as a ‘festival’ but not ‘movement’, I was still not satisfied with the thesis title only as ‘Milpirri Festival’. Wild allowed me to continue studying with the idea of regarding Milpirri as a ‘festival’, and indeed, calling the event ‘festival’ has become more recognised by many people including Tracks Dance Company (2012d) and local people (Miller 2008; ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences 2012; PAW media 2012; Kral & Schwab 2012; Visit Vineyards 2012). I imagine it is something more than a ‘festival’ – in this point, I concur with the opinion of Wild – but what exactly, Milpirri is not merely a ‘festival’ in the English sense.

It would be better to say that understanding Aboriginal cosmology using Western common sense converts it into something unrelated at first sight. *Kardiya* researchers have provided research on *yapa* movements and festivals, and it is unimaginable that a non-Aboriginal and non-native English speaking beginner like me could review it critically and add some novel ideas on an equal basis. While I sat under the shade of a bush hut in the desert, and considered what role such a person could play in the circumstances where a great number of Aboriginal events had already been discussed both in English and local languages, an idea occurred to me. I could utilise something that I am more familiar with; I began nursing the idea

of analysing Milpirri as *matsuri* in Japanese rather than as *festival* in English. At that time I did not have any support for this approach.

*Matsuri* in Japanese is partly a ‘festival’ and, in general, refers to a wide variety of civil and religious ceremonies in Japan. It is probably better known in Australia through Shinju Matsuri (Pearl Festival) of Broome, WA. There are certain reasons which can confirm the analysis of an Aboriginal phenomenon with this seemingly irrelevant Japanese concept. First, the ‘religious ceremonies’ are regarded more particularly as the shrine festivals of Shinto (ibid.; Sonoda 1975), and it is true that the Aboriginal ritual has nothing to do with Japanese rituals.

Once they are compared, however, the similarities appear one after another. *Sakaki* branch used in Shinto can be paralleled with the *witi* wood pole in Warlpiri rituals (Hawkhead 2009). Traditional concept of *matsuri* and Milpirri colour coding both indicate marriage systems which differ from the Western monogamy. The most distinct part of the Anglophone word ‘festival’ does not have the political connotation in *matsuri* theocracy and Milpirri gerontocracy. The Southern Theory (Connell 2008) would also rationalise the approach from a non-Western viewpoint by arguing for a more democratic global recognition of social theory from societies outside the dominant European and North American metropolises. It is true at the same time that most of the anthropological interpretation of Aboriginal culture was done in English, sometimes with unsuccessful translations including, the word *Dreamtime*, probably one of the most

notorious translations of an Aboriginal concept.<sup>6</sup> If it was problematic to consider Milpirri as a *matsuri* with another background, it would also be easy to conclude that the word *festival* is derived from Middle English via Old French from Medieval Latin (Oxford Dictionaries Online 2011) is also problematic.

Another reason to attempt this Asian interpretation is the support Jampijinpa expressed in a good number of conversations both in Lajamanu, Canberra and other locations, when we travelled or worked together. I have been allowed fortunately as the first *yellafella* to dance with ancestral Warlpiri dancers since Milpirri 2009 and to sing certain ritual songs together with Elders since the latter half of my main fieldwork. Finding my role in Australian Aboriginal studies in limbo, I applied my knowhow and experience of traditional music and dance in Japan by assisting Elders to renovate the *kurlumpurrngu* musical instrument, which later became related to the concept of Milpirri. When I was still suspicious that the two ostensibly different situations of Japan and an Australian Aboriginal Community could be successfully compared, Jampijinpa unexpectedly said that it was fate that I should come to Lajamanu. He partly talked about it at our interview by Stewart Carter on the PAW radio network on the success of the restoration of a Purlapa with the *kurlumpurrngu* in Milpirri 2011. He heard a prophetic story from an Elder that a *yellafella* would come from the East to do a Purlapa.

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<sup>6</sup> It is said 'The word 'Dreamtime' tends to indicate a time period, which has finished. In reality, the Dreamings are ongoing all over Australia. However, many Aboriginal people do still use the word "Dreamtime" and this usage must be respected' (Flinders University n.d.).

Jampijinpa: Asian. Someone from Asia will come. That's just rough get that you know why? *Yuwayi*.<sup>7</sup>

Carter: And?

Jampijinpa: That's why I was happy seeing him Jungarrayi over there. (2011, pers. comm., 29 October)

With his encouragement I began to analyse this event as a *matsuri* and to find that Milpirri could be conceptualised beyond the internal revitalisation of the town, and as a solution to the puzzle of bicultural and multicultural Australia.

To review the literature – while there are various approaches to Aboriginal music and culture, including ancestral ceremonies and similar new festivals such as Garma – scholarly discussion of Milpirri which includes rare rituals, has been described only partly. A thorough anthropological study of Milpirri has not been done. Jampijinpa, with Miles Holmes and Alan Box, wrote about the ideology related to Milpirri in *Ngurra-kurlu: A Way of Working with Warlpiri People* (2008). He also gave domestic and international presentations about the event with several people, such as Box (in Patrick 2008b), Wild (Patrick & Wild 2009) and myself (Patrick & Doi 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d, 2011e). However, there is no complete study of Milpirri, and the musical aspect of it has not been analysed yet. The event features part of the Jardiwarnpa ceremony, which had not been fully performed in Lajamanu since the 1980s, and initiation ceremonies which have been simplified nowadays. Furthermore, a rare didjeridu-like musical instrument called *kurlumpurrngu*, which seemed not to have been used for 70 years,

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<sup>7</sup> 'Yuwayi' means 'yes'.

was refurbished during my fieldwork and trial-performed at Milpirri by virtue of a deep connection to the corroboree using the musical instrument. It is, thus, worth examining Milpirri as an ethnomusicological study.

Moreover, Milpirri has never been compared with Japanese *matsuri*, nor have other Aboriginal events. It might be easy to conceive of comparing First Australians with the Ainu people if one were inclined to make such comparisons. The present study, however, indicates the issues on the forced analogy of the two peoples. Briefly speaking, there are hot debates on the recognition of Ainus as Indigenous people, but none on that of Warlpiri people in Australia.

Along with the literature review, this thesis utilises the data from my fieldwork and the experience of my background. I conducted fieldwork<sup>8</sup> in Lajamanu several times, including during the events of Milpirri. I managed to negotiate the ethical clearances from ANU Human Research Ethics Committee and the Central Land Council supported by invitation letters from Steve Jampijinpa and Jerry Jangala to undertake fieldwork on my own. The analysis of the musical aspect of Milpirri and its related ceremonies is largely dependent on interviews and observations to learn their culture and society. The comparison with the Garma Festival is largely based on my observations in 2009 while the comparison with *matsuri* is based on my personal experience in Japan and on readings. My position as a Japanese researcher with the

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<sup>8</sup> Fieldwork is considered as ‘an important component of the dissertation’ in the ethnomusicological field (Stone 2008:5)

knowledge of Gagaku music and dance and Ainu tradition in Hokkaido will be reflected in the survey and analysis of the event and on the musical environment in the community.

The order of the chapters is as follows: Chapter 2 provides a review of literature on related subjects, including Warlpiri society in general, ancestral dance and music, and peripheral rituals, or surrounding Warlpiri rituals much influenced by European Australian culture, and contemporary music. I seek to clarify the question of what Milpirri is. In addition to reviewing existing research on traditional rituals in the wide areas of Warlpiri Country and central Australia, I will consider the history of other attempts to revitalise the community prior to Milpirri.

Chapter 3 considers the birth of the first Milpirri, and includes a survey of current musical and ritual life at Lajamanu. Observation of the Kurdiji initiation ceremony suggests that the recondite Emu Dreaming of the Jardiwarnpa traditional ritual of Milpirri could influence the political landscape of Australia or the world. Activities of non-ancestral music are also analysed here in order to consider their significance for Milpirri hip hop dance. The discovery of the *kurlumpurrngu* Warlpiri didjeridu and its corroboree, until now unknown to ethnomusicologists, is discussed. In the process of reviving this instrument, through interviews with Elders, the songs of its corroboree were found to be strongly connected to the visualisation of Milpirri.

Chapter 4 mainly focuses on a musical analysis of the programs of Milpirri, making use of DVDs published by Tracks Dance Company for the first two events and my observational fieldwork from 2009 onwards. The rest of the chapter focuses on the ideas developed for

Milpirri, such as colour coding and a comparison of Warlpiri symbolic creatures to those on the Coat of Arms of Australia, supplementing analysis with the idea of *ngurra-kurlu*, ‘the inter-relationship between Land, Law, Language, Ceremony and Kinship’ (Tracks Dance Company 2007a). After explaining the connection between Steve Jampijinpa and Tracks Dance Company before the first Milpirri, Chapter 4 will focus on the evolution of the event with its original concept of *ngurra-kurlu*. Subsequently, I will report what I observed and how I participated in Milpirri in 2009, 2011 and 2012 and explain the limitations of regarding Milpirri only as a ‘festival’ in the English sense.

Chapter 5 attempts to examine Milpirri from the point of view of biculturalism. First, the differences from the Garma Festival will be discussed in order to place Milpirri as an Aboriginal festival. Second, I will discuss the reason why the juxtaposition between *matsuri* and Milpirri can be allowed with the introduction of the Dreaming story narrated by Jampijinpa. Third, the relationship between *yapa* and *kardiya* people and that between Ainu and Japanese people are compared in terms of the history of the Crown, a sense which can be literally seen in the title of the Milpirri song ‘Give Me the Crown’. Finally, this chapter matches Milpirri with the concept of *matsuri* after taking the Aboriginal world orientation of boys of initiation age into account in order to understand the hidden message of Milpirri. It will be posited that both traditional and contemporary aspects of *matsuri* have plenty of affinities with Milpirri. Similarities in the exterior, religious and political phases of Milpirri are analysed and compared with *matsuri*. The theory of Emu Dreaming taking root in the continent will be posited, and

used to support a comparison between the gerontocracy in Aboriginal Australia and the role of the Imperial Household of Japan in support of rituals and musical activities. In so doing, the meaning of the song ‘Give Me the Crown’ will be clarified.

Finally, Chapter 6 summarises the whole thesis. It will reexamine the research question on the interpretation of Milpirri in light of findings from comparison with the *matsuri* concept. The chapter will also give suggestions for further research.

## Chapter 2. Music and Society in the History of Lajamanu

The role of this chapter is to discuss the former ethnomusicological research on the Warlpiri community in order to ascertain how to approach my research questions mentioned in the first chapter. So, this chapter will provide a summary of existing research on the Milpirri by raising viewpoints of the society, traditional rituals and music, and peripheral ceremony and contemporary music of people owning the event. It focuses on the anthropological and musicological aspects of Indigenous Australians who call themselves *yapa* and more specifically Warnayaka Warlpiri in the remote community of Lajamanu.

Unique to this thesis is consideration of the existence in Milpirri of a rare and endangered culture, particularly music and dance. This chapter will examine the background of the research on the concerned area, people, music and events before discussing the current situation of the musical activity in Lajamanu using the data collected in fieldwork. The methodology of the research will also be clarified along with the fieldwork data which will be scrutinised in the following chapter.

Another aspect of the argument of the thesis dealing with the comparison with different traditions is also considered here in that there would be several origins and competitors of Milpirri. The scope of the literature review concerns the extent to which coverage of past rituals involve music and concepts similar to the phenomenon Milpirri. Through the exploration of this

research, I will attempt to justify the juxtaposition of several events within the NT. Without a detailed discussion here on the view of *matsuri*, or the *yellafella*'s interpretation, this section will consider the Warlpiri concept of the terms used in the whole thesis: *Yapa*, *kardiya* and *yellafella*.

After the analyses of the former musical anthropological approaches in this chapter and of recent tendencies in Chapter 3, the actual programs of Milpirri will be resolved in Chapter 4. Investigating the unexplored meaning of the songs sung several times in the series of event which have implications for the constitution of the whole of Australia will be discussed after distilling questions from previous research on the musical life in Lajamanu. This is the purpose of this chapter in regards to the order of traditional Warlpiri society, its ancestral music and dance, and peripheral rituals and music in the current society.

## **2.1. Warnayaka Warlpiri society**

Milpirri is performed, in the local language, mainly by *yapa* people with the external participants of *kardiya* and, if I am counted, a *yellafella* for the bicultural celebration of their own *yapa* and *kardiya* music and dance. This section will show the reason and justification to adopt Warlpiri words, *yapa* and *kardiya* in this thesis as well as which words, their interpretations have not been adopted or used in previous research.

This demands categorising peoples, especially those referred to by the name Warlpiri.

Further, an event, movement, or phenomenon can be interpreted differently depending on

anthropological approaches applied to a certain group or people occupying the central position.

For an understanding of what is appropriate terminology applicable in the case of the

Indigenous people used by researchers, the author finds the ‘Appropriate Terminology,

Indigenous Australian Peoples’ by Flinders University (n.d.) very useful (see table 2.1).

**Table 2.1: More or less appropriate terms describing Aboriginal people**

| More appropriate                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Less appropriate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indigenous Australian people/s</li><li>• Aboriginal people/s</li><li>• Aboriginal person</li><li>• Torres Strait Islander people/s</li><li>• Torres Strait Islander person</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aborigines</li><li>• The Aborigines</li><li>• The Aboriginal people</li><li>• Aboriginal, Aborigines</li><li>• The Torres Strait Islanders</li><li>• Blacks</li><li>• Whites</li><li>• Yellafellas</li><li>• Coloured</li></ul> |

The list is created from the section ‘Using the right names’ in Flinders University (n.d.).

Although the original meaning of the Latin word *Aborigine* derived from *ab* (from) and

*origo* (origin, beginning) as early used as 1789, ‘Aboriginal Australians’ or ‘Aboriginal people’

are recently taken as more acceptable and correct expressions.<sup>9</sup> It is also implied that

‘Aborigine’ and other such European words have been unwillingly used ‘because there is no

Aboriginal word that refers to all Aboriginal people in Australia’ (ibid.). However, this term

came to be problematic for describing all the Indigenous peoples in Australia including the

Torres Strait Islanders. In describing Warlpiri people in this thesis, the term ‘Aboriginal’ is still

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<sup>9</sup> The term ‘(the) Aborigines’ is often avoided today probably because of too-direct description, so the adjective or its derivative noun ‘Aboriginal’ can be used as an alternative.

appropriate because they do not include people who identify themselves as Torres Strait Islanders. Another collective term for Indigenous people suggested here is 'First Australians'. This was used for the title of their book by Ronald M. Berndt and Catherine H. Berndt as early as in 1954. While in the 1980s the term 'First Australians' seemed to be recognised by several people (Aboriginal Artists Agency 1978; Deiley 1979; Corke 1985, etc.), its popularity became widespread with an eight-hour documentary series 'First Australians' on the history of Aboriginal Australia by Blackfella Films in 2008.

It should be noticed that several terms including epidermis 'colour' as seen in the film name, the term Blackfella can be positively used in several situations. A twentieth-century Indigenous Australian author Kevin Gilbert (1978) wrote *Living Black: Blacks Talk to Kevin Gilbert*. In 1985 the Warumpi Band of Papunya, Indigenous Australian community northwest of Alice Springs, and has much in common with the Warlpiri tradition, released their debut album featuring the track *Blackfella/Whitefella*. This thesis employs *yellafella*, even though the document of Flinders University (n.d.) considers it less appropriate as mentioned above: indeed, I have not actually been referred to by such a name in Lajamanu. Historically, in the early 1960s the term *yellafella* is said to have been used for 'half-caste Aborigines, so-called Afghans and other Asians' (Meggitt 1962:34) in Hooker Creek (former name of Lajamanu), in order to be associated with 'Blackfella' and 'Whitefella'. The reason for using *yellafella* is to help in understanding how the Asian-concept of *matsuri* can be the key to consider Milpirri which is

thought to focus generally on *yapa* and *kardiya* in Australia. Additionally, there is no distinction in their traditional term to divide, for example, Japanese and Chinese.<sup>10</sup>

In Lajamanu, often the Warlpiri term *yapa* referring to people is preferred to the other collective terms which were suggested earlier. Local people (both permanent and temporary residents) in Lajamanu often use the term not only among the Warlpiri community but in daily English dialogue, such as ‘*yapa* teachers’ in Lajamanu School to describe assistant teachers who teach about and in Warlpiri language. Even though the term ‘Indigenous Australian people’ was listed as a recommended term earlier, I found later in the field that the term was not always as appropriate as ‘Aboriginal people’. Jerry Jangala, one of the most important Warlpiri Elders, one day when reading a governmental document commented on using this term and criticised the fact that the administrative terms including ‘Aboriginal people’ and ‘Indigenous Australian people’ had often changed during his lifetime. Former ATSIC chairwoman Lowitja O’Donoghue opines that the term ‘Indigenous’ robbed the traditional owners of Australia of an identity because some non-Aboriginal people now prefer to refer to themselves as ‘Indigenous’ because of their connection to the land (*The Age* May 2008). *Koori* (*Koorie*/*Goorie*) might be another possibility of a collective term for Warlpiri, Anangu, Martu, Yolngu and all the Indigenous Australian people as offered by Eve Mumewa D Fesl (1993) and applied in the name of the departmental section ‘Centre for Koori Studies’ in Monash University. However,

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<sup>10</sup> Lajamanu children often asked me if I was a Chinese or a relative of Jackie Chan or Bruce Lee. Many of them are very friendly to talk to me starting the conversation in English: ‘Excuse me?’

the reason why people in Lajamanu do not call themselves ‘Koori’ is possibly the same reason why people in Victoria do not prefer *yapa*.

The definition and expansion of the term *yapa* can be divided into two to review the former research: Warlpiri speakers and all human beings. Warnayaka Warlpiri is a more specific categorisation of the people who mostly take the stage in Milpirri as well as the majority of the population at Lajamanu. The Warlpiri are an influential group of Indigenous Australians living mostly in the NT with around 2,510 people (*Ethnologue* 17th ed. 2013) who still speak the Warlpiri language in daily life commonly with Australian English. From what follows one can see that there has been sufficient research from the viewpoint of their language, society and music in general, some of which will be discussed. While the dominant language groups of the current Lajamanu are mainly Warnayaka Warlpiri and English speakers with small numbers of Ngaliya Warlpiri, Ngumpin (Gurindji), and other people who have other ancestral backgrounds, the first definition here is the narrowest. This definition is probably taken from the most frequent definition used to broadly distinguish from other language speakers including Gurindji who inhabited the traditional country where current Lajamanu is located. Multilingualism has been more complicated so that some people can speak traditional Warlpiri, English, and other neighbouring languages. Some level of the linguistic hybridity between English and the local language is called ‘Light Warlpiri’ by local people. The Warlpiri language spoken by children in Lajamanu (‘Light Warlpiri’) is said to be already different from that spoken by the Elders, as defined by linguist Carmel O’Shannessy (2005:31): ‘Light Warlpiri ... draws most verbs and

verbal morphology from Kriol, nouns from Warlpiri and English, and nominal morphology from Warlpiri. It has an innovative auxiliary paradigm, which is derived from Warlpiri and Kriol auxiliaries'.<sup>11</sup> Laughren and Hoogenraad (1996:2) identify seven major dialects of Warlpiri: western Warlpiri ('Warrmarla'); north-western Warlpiri ('Ngardilypa'); south-western Warlpiri ('Wawulya'); central-northern Warlpiri ('Warnayaka'); southern Warlpiri ('Ngaliya'); Lander River Warlpiri ('Yarlpiri') as well as Warlpiri; and the most eastern Hansen River Warlpiri ('Wakirti Warlpiri').<sup>12</sup> 'Warnayaka' is translated as the Snake (*Warna*) people and considered as a dialect<sup>13</sup> group of greater Warlpiri people. Jangala's brief explanation on the terminology for Aboriginal people was of the complicated historical process of the establishment of Hooker Creek. It can be heard that the Warnayaka people were unhappy, taken away from their relatives, their country and its sacred places and dumped in Gurindji Country, so that three attempts were made to walk the 600 kilometres back from Lajamanu to Yuendumu between 1952 and 1965 (Peterson et al. 1978:14, Wild 1987b:99, Corbis Images n.d., Katherine West Health Board n.d.).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Although she concluded that it is spoken in the Lajamanu community by adults under the age of approximately 35 and by children as their first language, she did not make an argument how *Kriol* and *Aboriginal English* can be divided.

<sup>12</sup> Jerry Jangala answered later during my fieldwork in an interview by NT MOJOs (Jasmine Patrick 2011) and me, using the term *tribe* for central-northern dialect: 'This (*kurlumpurrngu*) not coming from Ngaliya. This coming from Warnayaka Tribe. Warlpiri ... there're two Warlpiri. They got a different way again'.

<sup>13</sup> The difference between a language and dialect is obscure as it is often said that 'a language is a dialect with an army and navy'. For the phonological level, it is said that 'rd contrasts with rt in Southern Warlpiri (Yuendumu) but not in Northern Eastern Warlpiri (Willowra, Ali-Curung)' (Laughren 1984).

<sup>14</sup> However, it is also noteworthy that according to Mervyn Meggitt (1962:29) the situation in Yuendumu before Hooker Creek was settled was complicated: 'By the end of 1946 there were about 400 Walbiri at Yuendumu, including representatives of all the traditional local divisions of the tribe. Old feuds soon came to life and a long series of quarrels split the settlement into armed factions. Obviously another settlement was needed if bloodshed was to be avoided'.

Related to the definitions of *yapa*, Baptist missionary Laurie Reece (1975:140)

explained in his *Dictionary of the Wailbri (Walpiri) Language of Central Australia* as follows:

Yapa: person, people, mankind; usually used to refer to Aboriginal people, one of us, and hence can include one of another race or colour, especially if that person is acceptable to them, and can be acceptable to them, and can be accepted as one of them.

While Reece's definition includes the meaning of all of 'mankind' without the distinction of ethnic identification, Steve Jampijinpa explains it in that Warlpiri only as the body of the Indigenous people in the continent.

*All of these govern Yapa (Aboriginal) lives.*

*This is ngurra-kurlu (the way Yapa life is governed).*

*Everyone in their own way in Australia, in this land, has this.*

*Everybody.*

*These things, these five things Yapa have all of these.*

(English subtitles in *Ngurra-kurlu* 2008)

According to Jampijinpa 'if we live in the community we will be yapa [Aboriginal] but if we go on country then we will be Warlpiri' (Patrick et al. 2008:20) and it seems that the people in Lajamanu can use the term of *yapa* comparatively between Warlpiri and all Aboriginal people of Australia rather than with the strictest sense of being inclusive of all human beings. This interpretation will have to be examined later from the viewpoint of the connection to the whole continent with the cosmology of *ngurra-kurlu*.

People who are sometimes not included in the sense of Aboriginality in *yapa* are *kardiya* or ‘White people, Europeans in contrast to Aboriginals ... katiya (borr. from Jingili)’ (Reece 1975:9), or ‘whitefella ... *kardiya*, walypali’ (Hale 1995:39). The fact that Milpirri concentrates on adopting binaries such as ‘*yapa* and *kardiya*’ also proves that *yapa* can be paralleled as an antonym of *kardiya*. A group of trainee teachers of Lajamanu School (in Napaljarri & Cataldi 2003:xxii) defined the terms *kardiya* and *yapa* and explained that the majority in Lajamanu consisted of 700 Warlpiri people using the term ‘tribe’.

We call white people “*kardiya*” and we call ourselves “*yapa*” which means a black Aboriginal person. ... At Lajamanu, the *yapa* council runs everything in this community. At Lajamanu, the *yapa* people are very happy because they are running it themselves. Lajamanu is the first self-governing community. ... This community is run by the council and they want to fight for this community because they have lived here for long enough.

There are about 700 people living in Lajamanu, and we are all the Warlpiri tribe.

Although the notable part of the music and dance in Milpirri is music of *yapa*, the other part with the hip hop music are taught by Tracks Dance Company in Darwin – most of whom call themselves *kardiya* – to Lajamanu schoolchildren in order to draw their attention to school and the traditional *yapa* performance by their biological parents and older relatives. For that it is also necessary to be well educated about the background of *kardiya* music in Lajamanu, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Australian Indigenous people including the Warlpiri historically depended on oral literature and not on any writing system until they came in contact with *kardiya* people. Nevertheless, paintings or drawing using various symbols have been used to depict factual information. With this in mind the author speculates on the possibility of the usage of symbols as a form of musical notation or scenery depicting ancestral music performance, including part of Milpirri, and this will also be discussed later.

There are several other terms whose usage can be challenged in describing specific groups among *yapa* people in respect of their culture of music and rituals. An article in *The Australian* with an arbitrary title ‘Dreamtime’ (Ferrari & Wilson 2008) mentioned that words such as ‘tribe’, ‘clan’, ‘band’ and ‘horde’ should be replaced with ‘Aboriginal people’ (tribe), ‘language groups’ (horde) or ‘family groups’ (clan) respectively. However, as mentioned earlier, the term ‘tribe’ is still used and more so, it is positively used in the music scene. For instance, it was used in not only the famous *Tribal Voice* by Yothu Yindi (1992) in Arnhem Land but also in *Warlpiri Tribe* by the North Tanami Band (2005) in Lajamanu. As Meggitt (1962:71) confirmed in his fieldwork as early as the 1950s that there were no longer Warlpiri communities as separate residential and economic units so that it is not necessary to consider the correct terms of ‘band’<sup>15</sup> or ‘horde’; however, other divisions like ‘clan’ and ‘moiety’ are still inevitable in ethnomusicology. On comparing those of the Warlpiri with the two widely known ‘moieties’ of Yolŋu, the moiety terms of Warlpiri have not been well discussed. It is said that

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<sup>15</sup> A small human group called ‘band’ in anthropological sense does not exist any more.

‘[a]mong the Top End people these moieties are generally referred to as “Yirritja” and “Dhuwa” (or similar words, depending on the language), but among the central Australian people like the Warlpiri there are no separate names’ (OzOutback n.d.b). The terms of matri-moiety and patri-semimoiety have not previously been discussed in literature, but as explained by Jampijinpa, they need to be taken up with the Dreaming of the Jardiwarnpa ceremony. Warlpiri human relationships are described in subsections or Skin Names. Table 2.2 shows the eight sibling Skin Groups and 16 separate Skin Names, made by distinct prefixes for male and female Skin Names: ‘J’ for males, ‘N’ for females such as J/Nampijinpa, J/Napanangka, Ju/Napurrurla and so on. In this thesis, the author uses Skin Names to mention Warlpiri informants. In the first instance one would refer to another with a Skin Name in a Warlpiri community, then a kinship term would be used more generally among a friendlier or specific relationship. Since Meggitt’s research, some of the kinship terms have been changed with more complicated Skin Names as a result of ‘wrong skin’ or intermarriages or replaced with English or other borrowing words.

**Table 2.2: 16 Warlpiri subsections or Skin Names**

| <b>woman</b> | <b>man</b> |
|--------------|------------|
| Nakamarra    | Jakamarra  |
| Nungarrayi   | Jungarrayi |
| Nampijinpa   | Jampijinpa |
| Napanangka   | Japanangka |
| Nangala      | Jangala    |
| Napaljarri   | Japaljarri |
| Napurrula    | Jupurrula  |
| Napangardi   | Japangardi |

Nakamarra and Jakamarra (abbreviated as N/Jakamarra), for instance, are brother and sister biologically or belong to the same Skin Group.

To sum up this section, the author has shown the possible terms used to identify the people acting in and staging Milpirri. However, the use of the terms ‘Indigenous Australians’, ‘Aboriginal people’, and ‘First Australians’ are today generally advocated in addition to *yapa* with various connotations in their own language. There was broader application of the term *yapa* which was not given consideration or even mentioned until Jampijinpa’s recent presentation, and it will be examined in the following chapters of the thesis in order to prove that the ideal of performing and having the concept called *ngurra-kurlu* of Milpirri is not only Warnayaka Warlpiri. As there are complicated kinship systems in Aboriginal society, the result of the field research is strikingly different if the researcher belongs to the opposite sex or has another Skin Name. Through the general survey of past research including use of the terms *yellafella* or ‘half-caste’ in the former Lajamanu, the following chapter incorporates the first report of what the author observed and participated in as a *yellafella* Jungarrayi, or Japanese male person who received a Warlpiri Skin Name in Lajamanu. The Skin system and kinship terminologies bear reference to the genres of ancestral Warlpiri rituals in the following section.

### **2.1.1. Ancestral music and dance**

In this section, how the important aspects that characterised music with uniqueness and endangered the culture as seen from the Milpirri perspective will be discussed. Foremost, as the case of the *yapa* part of the music and dance shows, it is necessary to classify the study of music

on this Continent in order to differentiate the other *kardiya* music having origins in Western society which followed the classification of traditional music and dance. The research on individual rituals considered here will also be helpful to analyse their performance and the restoration in the programs in Milpirri that will be dealt with in Chapter 4.

It has been general to adopt the methodology of describing traditional Indigenous music in Australia by the comparison of distinctive musical traditions on the Australian continent and its nearby islands partly as the cross-cultural study of music. According to Clunies Ross, in the 1960s-70s, the first extensive investigation of Aboriginal music began with the work of Alice Moyle, Trevor Jones, and Catherine Ellis (Clunies Ross 1986:237). Subsequently studies of the nexus between music and dance were investigated by Stephen Wild (1975) in his PhD thesis. Wild encapsulated in his articles (1997, 1998a) all the forms of ancestral Aboriginal music in central Australia, southeastern Australia, northeastern Australia, northern Australia, northwestern Australia and the Torres Strait Islands. Dealing with music in traditional Aboriginal culture in the aspects of sacredness and profanity, sexual distinctions and children's music, he addressed the case of Warlpiri culture in which lullabies are not classified according to the principle of children's music as suggested by Margaret Kartomi (cited in Wild 1997), who researched Aboriginal children's music at Yalata, South Australia, in 1969-1970. There are several common opinions on the features of long-established Aboriginal music, and Wild (ibid.) described that the contrasts between Aboriginal music of Cape York and that of the Torres Strait Islands are smaller than those between the music in central Australia and that of Arnhem Land.

Whilst men exclusively sing inherited songs in Arnhem Land, women and men tend to play an equal role in singing in central Australia, the Western Desert and Tiwi Islands, as is clearly seen in Milpirri program. Another well-known Australian ethnomusicologist Catherine Ellis (1994) stated that despite the marked differences between the music of Arnhem Land and that of other areas in Australia, there are remarkable similarities among them. Such differences that exist might demonstrate that northern Aboriginal societies were in contact with peoples to the north prior to European colonial settlement in Australia. This can advocate the attempt to interpret Milpirri in central Australia in comparison with a geographically and historically relevant Garma Festival in Arnhem Land.

Being internationally recognised, there are many published articles on the Garma Festival and its sponsor Yothu Yindi which facilitate a comparison with Milpirri. The mainstream of the research tends to approach present musical movements within the historical context in Arnhem Land. To look at ritual music in Arnhem Land, as reported by Wild (1997), they can be divided into three: eastern AL styles, central AL style, and western AL style. Jill Stubington (cited in *ibid.*) agreed to this and took central Arnhem Land style closer to the eastern style. Western Arnhem Land can also be considered by Allan Marett (cited in *ibid.*) to extend beyond Aboriginal-owned Arnhem Land and further west than Arnhem Land into the Kimberleys region and be rather called 'north-western Australia.' No less than central Australia, songs are organised into song series and called in eastern Arnhem Land *manikay*, in western Arnhem Land *gunborg* and *wangga*. Also, Wild undertook with Margaret Clunies Ross a

sustained analysis of the interrelationship of performance elements in the *manikay* series, *Djambidj* (1984). Marett (1992) analysed a genre of didjeridu accompanied dance songs performed from western Arnhem Land to east Kimberley region, focusing on songs of Alan Maralung and Tommy Baranjuk in Dalabon and Wadjiginy. In *Songs, Dreamings, and Ghosts: The Wangga of North Australia* (2005), he analysed the Wangga song genre in Daly River region while his article on eastern Arnhem Land can be found in *the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001). He touched upon the process that Djatpangarri, or a form of didjeridu-accompanied song performed by young unmarried men, has been incorporated into Western popular music songs by Yothu Yindi. When he reported on a symposium held at the Garma Festival, the symposium concluded with a call for the Federal Government to support and sustain Indigenous song traditions through the establishment of Knowledge Centres, and a national recording project as a National Research Priority (2002). Garma can feature those eastern Arnhem Land ceremonies in terms of the part of traditional music and dance.

There are some trends of studies in Aboriginal music to be noticed, as Ellis (1994) indicated: the attention in the area of discussion about the framework and significance of Aboriginal music had gradually changed from the early evolutionary approach to a realisation of the social point of view of music and finally into an interest in its educational sense. In her book *Aboriginal Music: Education for Living. Cross-Cultural Experiences from South Australia* (1985), she mentioned her recognition of the greatness of tribal teachers when she began to teach Aboriginal music at university. Besides the application of comparisons of music among

peoples in Australia, there are other techniques to describe Aboriginal music in general.

Australian social anthropologist and linguist Peter Sutton (1987) verified anomalies in the relationship between meaning, language and property relations expressed in Aboriginal songs.

As the product of his argument, he found that while a song and totemic referents were often synchronised with the lyrics, sites and totemic affiliations of the various owners, there were plenty of examples where they were not. In contrast, Wild (1986) attempted to explain

Indigenous performance as theatrical movement. He indicated that traditional Aboriginal performance often differs from Western theatrical performance; for instance, the period of a performance of an Aboriginal ritual often lasted for days, weeks or even months.

Among the central desert area where Lajamanu is situated, commonality of the ancestral music has been drawn by several researchers. Richard Moyle (1979:166) is known to have spent half a century researching the traditional music of the Pacific and Aboriginal Australia and conducted the first ever research on Pintupi music, although some scholars did make mention of the music of the central desert area before him (Kennedy 1933; Tate 1951; Strehlow 1955; Waterman 1958; Jones 1962, 1965, 1968). An article on music in central Australia, though its areas were not specified, was written by Ellis (Caughie 1958) when she transcribed several Central Australian songs recorded by T.G.H. Strehlow and investigated the use of slight pitch alterations in their singing. Further, the point of the similar forms of ornamentation, but more or less different melodic outlines and harmony between Arrernte and Warlpiri music, was indicated by Ellis (1963). Linda Barwick (2000) basically worked around Pitjantjatjara songs

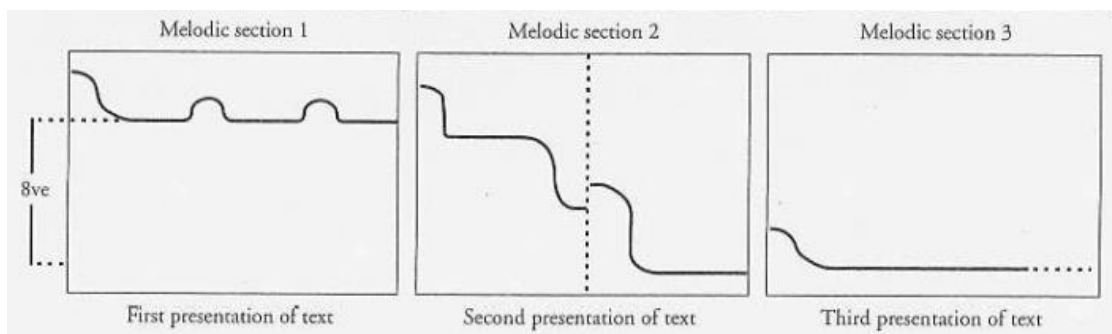
like Ellis and examined the engagement of flexible text structures with fixed melodic contours, so that reference to Pitjantjatjara and other central Australian musics can be made with research on Warlpiri music. The research of the connection between song and visual representation is another remarkable field of study today and the following understanding of the relationship between music and painting will be examined in Chapter 3 with the data from my fieldwork (interviews and recordings of Purlapa songs, including *milpirri jukurrpa*).

To knowledgeable Aboriginal people, seeing the designs associated with a particular Dreaming may immediately call to mind the relevant songs, and vice versa. (ibid.:332)

Ellis (1998) also technically analysed the music of central Australia, dividing it into a variety of aspects: Musical structures, texts and syllabic rhythm, women's dancing, musical accompaniments, functions of songs, roles of performers and secret songs. The traditional music of the Pitjantjatjara of the central desert is, according to her, still functional to some extent for understanding Warlpiri music, and this opinion is supported by Wild (cited in Ellis 1998) who found similarities among the musics of the Alyawarre, Antikirinya, Arrennte, Pintupi, Pitjantjatjara, Warlpiri, and Yankunytjatjara groups (see figure 2.1). However, Ellis (2001:202) mentioned the actual circumstances where there was a lack of ethnomusicological studies in the desert region, which includes over 40 language groups. Yankunytjatjara music among them was taken up by Barwick (1990) saying that the melody of Yamiwara song by Yankunytjatjara women, like all Central Australian melodies, was organised around a tonal centre, which is

usually the last note performed as well as the note occupying the largest proportional duration.

Also, Elizabeth Mackinlay (2000) of University of Queensland mentioned that the Yanyuwa people in the settlement of Borroloola on the edge of the gulf of Carpentaria as well as the Warlpiri have maintained the tradition of continuing the composition of dream songs, which are strongly associated with a supernatural source since the performance material is brought to the individual while they are sleeping. The instrumentation of Warlpiri music in Lajamanu, thus, is compared with that of Yanyuwa later. In most areas of Australia, with the exception of the Tiwi Islands, the songs are believed to belong to the Dreaming Ancestors as Wild mentioned (1997), and the *ngurra-kurlu* cosmology can be applied exclusively among Aboriginal people, but not Torres Strait Islanders or *kardiya* people.



**Figure 2.1: Typical Central Australian melody**  
Excerpt from Ellis (1998:435).

The necessity of consistent terminology of songs performed in central Australia and Western Desert areas has been advocated by Wild (1997, 1998a). According to him, the songs of central Australia should be called ‘song series’ rather than ‘songline’ because they are conceptually, textually and musically linked together in a series. This phraseology could also be

adopted in the structure of music of the other areas in Australia, such as *manikay* in Arnhem Land (Wild 1997, n.d.). Wild's article 'Warlbiri Music and Culture-Meaning in a Central Australian Song Series' used the term in its title and discussed the features of performance to express the culture of Aboriginal societies, with some comparison with music and culture of Pintupi and Yolngu (Wild 1984). The basis for establishing Wild's theory seems to be derived from his dissertation based on the role of music and dance in Warlpiri society, including the description of traditional life and contact history, details of territorial organisation and the Dreaming (Wild 1975). It might be possible to use the original Warlpiri term *yirdiyi* (which literally means track or path) as Tony Swain (1988), religious scholar researching Indigenous 'cargo cults' relating to the theory of 'revitalization movements', claims that 'to sing a song is to sing an ancestor through the land'. Ellis noticed a number of stages of acculturation among the Indigenous people in central Australia, particularly in urban areas. By contrast, in order to explain ancestral history, Ellis considered the term 'songline' as what preserves ancestral history within its specific totem and geographical map and consists of a series of smaller units of composition known among Pitjantjatjara speakers as 'small songs' (ibid.:204).

The missing information on Warlpiri music can be thus supplied from other regional music in central Australia. As mentioned above, one of R. Moyle's (1979) research fields was the Pintupi based at Balgo and Kungkeyunti and includes both contextual and musicological aspects of their performance. Since north Pintupi dialect is closely related to Western Warlpiri dialect, of which many speakers live in Yuendumu, their musics also have numerous

similarities. Another field of Moyle's research is the music of the Alyawarra (Alyawarre) people, including a comprehensive ethnographic account of ceremonial and musical life based on 17 months' fieldwork in the Agharringa community (R. Moyle 1983, 1986). Moyle concluded that four-unit isorhythmic song structures dominate the central desert area covering Alyawarre, Kaytetye, Arrernte, Southern Warlpiri and Pintupi. Moyle (1986) took Alyawarre music as an example to show that it is also strongly connected to their land.

In relation to music, Megan Morais (1998a:466) mentioned the aspect of dance in the essence of Warlpiri culture as '[t]he Warlpiri do not learn dances by rote and rehearsal; they recreate them. Skilled dancers are agents of change, and audiences judge new dances to decide whether to perform them again later'. Maggi Phillips (2005), who received Australian Dance Award for her Services to Dance Education, admitted that Morais was able to summarise the purposes of ritual dance and music into several important points: education, expression of the aesthetic values of the group, confirmation of religious values and beliefs, maintenance of social roles, tension management, entertainment, exchange, and barter and adaptation and acculturation.

Consequently, the music belonging to Lajamanu tradition has been shown to have common features with other central Australian traditions, and this implies that the categorisation of *yapa* can at least be imagined to extend to those areas for their mobility and cultural trade in historical life. Although a similarity can be recognised between the music of Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands, the distance between the music in the Western Desert and in Arnhem Land

is so far that they cannot be easily drawn together as a unified type of music in the NT as Ellis (1994) asserts. However, it can be claimed that the idea of Milpirri proceeded from Garma in Arnhem Land as an Aboriginal festival. Ancestral music and dance of Milpirri performed by Elders and young adults in Lajamanu are part of their authentic rituals with a history in the central desert area, as seen in the similarities of music in the region, so it can be said that there are considerable quantities of research on ‘traditional’ music after the birth of a settlement, Hooker Creek in the Tanami Desert. The following sections will review the research on the specific ancestral rituals chosen among these for Milpirri in Lajamanu. They will be found to be important, but in a state of crisis, and the possibility of their restoration in Milpirri in the twenty-first century will be explored.

### **2.1.2. Categorisation**

This section focuses on the research on the ceremonies which can later be used as ancestral music and dance in Milpirri. This will show the genres of Warlpiri rituals and the interest in Jardiwarnpa ceremony in former research. The initiation ceremony focused on in the second Milpirri (2007) is called Kurdiji in Warlpiri. The summary of erstwhile research on the initiation ceremony including Kurdiji and Kajirri will show the role of my fieldwork in Lajamanu in a season not having Milpirri.

The music traditions in central Australia and the Western Desert have been investigated since Meggitt (1962:209) grouped six Warlpiri rites. Though some of them are already extinct, music of *jauwalju* (Yawulyu), *ilbindji* (Yilpinji) and *bulaba* (Purlapa) are still performed and some are related to Milpirri. In subsequent years, Wild's (1975, 1997) explanation of Warlpiri music in rituals focussed on four different aspects: sources of music, sacred and secular music, women's and men's music, and children's music. Although all central Australian songs had religious reference and sources, according to Wild, a hierarchy of sacredness exists among them. Songs which are least bounded with restrictions on their performance, for example Warlpiri Purlapa, are considered the most secular, and those surrounded with the most stringent restrictions, for example cult songs and some initiation songs, are considered the most sacred. Some types belong to a category between these two extremes, generally those which may be heard by members of the opposite sex but not performed by them (Wild 1997; Morais 1998a). More recently, French anthropologist Barbara Glowczewski (n.d.) analysed the sexual division of *kanunju* (inside-below) and *kankarlu* (outside-above) in terms of the secrecy of rituals. Another Francophone anthropologist, Françoise Dussart (2000), divided Warlpiri rituals in Yuendumu and her work is probably the most specific (see table 2.3).

Jardiwanpa has had a long history of research interest with various spellings<sup>16</sup>; however, there is little report by ethnomusicologists or anthropologists in the current Lajamanu

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<sup>16</sup> Such as 'Thaduwan' (Spencer and Gillen 1904:376), 'Djariwanba' (Peterson 1970), 'Tjatiwanpa' (Reece 1975), 'Tjariwanpa' (Wild 1975), 'Jarriwanpa' (Wild 2009; 2010), 'Jardiwanpa' (Glowczewski 1989, n.d.; Dussart 2000; etc), 'Jarda-warnpa' (LaFlamme 2010; Tracks 2005b; etc) and 'Jarduwanpa' (OzOutback n.d.b).

**Table 2.3: Warlpiri ancestral rituals**

| Classification by Meggitt                                                                           | Classification by Dussart                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) djarada and jauwalju<br>(2) ilbindji<br>(3) bulaba<br>(4) banba<br>(5) maliara<br>(6) buarilba. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kurruwalpa</li> <li>• “Birth Ceremonies”</li> <li>• Kurdiji</li> <li>• Mardukula-Kurlangu</li> <li>• Kajirri and Kankarlu</li> <li>• Malamala</li> <li>• “Finish-Time.”</li> </ul> Rituals performed by women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nyurnu-kurlangu</li> <li>• Yawulyu</li> </ul> Rituals performed by men <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parnpa</li> <li>• Purlapa</li> <li>• Yarda</li> </ul> Rituals Performed by men and Women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yilpinji</li> <li>• Yilpinji-kari</li> <li>• Jardiwanpa, Kura-kurra, Ngajikula, Puluwanti</li> <li>• Jurlurru</li> <li>• “Church Purlapa”</li> </ul> |

Classifications are by Meggitt (1962:209) in the right and Dussart (2000) in the left.

on how it was performed outside of Milpirri. If Warlpiri people at Lajamanu claim that Milpirri has reinstated this ceremony, it should be known how long ago it was performed before the first Milpirri.

The first report of the ‘Fire Ceremony’ (as Jardiwanpa is widely known) was probably in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Spencer and Gillen (1907). Since then, Jardiwanpa has been generally known to *kardiya* anthropologists as one of the two big fire ceremonies and increase ceremonies in *yapa* tradition.

The fire ceremony is one of the great traditions of the Warlpiri and was once widespread among the other language groups of Central Australia. (Michaels 1994:xxxii)

Like other religious traditions, its celebration, is founded on the exploits of ancestral being, of Jardiwanpa (the Snake) and Yankirri (the Emu). (Donovan & Lorraine 2002:174; Langton 1993:76)

There were several theories on the interpretations of Warlpiri Dreamings. Langton's description in the second quotation was the 'Snake' for Jardiwarnpa, but it may be 'Yarripiri' while Jardiwarnpa ritual per se can belong to 'Snake' Dreaming (Ginsburg 2006). In the Wailbri (Warlpiri)-English dictionary, Reece (1975:102) defined 'tjatiwanpa' as 'snake corroboree/ a bush animal dreaming corroboree'. Other than Snake, there is Emu Dreaming (or *yankirri jukurrpa*, explained by Steve Jampijinpa and other Warlpiri Elders. See Chapter 3.) and Spectacled Hare Wallaby Dreaming (*wampana jukurrpa*<sup>17</sup>). Also, while Wild recorded the series of ceremony at Lajamanu during his fieldwork in 1970 and captioned it as 'Jarriwanpa Mala' or Rat kangaroo, Nicholas Peterson (1970: 201) considered that Rat Kangaroo Dreaming belongs to Ngajikula (Ngajakula), which is a ceremonial cycle similar to the Jardiwarnpa. Glowczewski (1989) also described Jardiwarnpa as connected to the Dreamings of Wampana Wallaby and Yarripiri.<sup>18</sup>

In accordance with Dreamings, sites, stories and rituals of Jardiwarnpa and most Warlpiri ceremonies, there is a type of division or moiety of the society researched: *kirda* and *kurdungurlu* (Dussart 2000; Meggitt 1962; Munn 1973). Jampijinpa reviewed the anthropological interpretation of the roles of *kirda-kurdungurlu* relationship and Warlpiri Skin Names to deal with ceremonies. According to Jampijinpa, people have equal and mutual

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<sup>17</sup> See Curran (2010:xxi) and Walker (2010:25).

<sup>18</sup> The confusion can be explained by the fact that Jardiwarnpa and Ngajakula are the Warlpiri names of two specific related ceremonies that have been glossed by anthropologists as 'fire ceremonies'. The two ceremonies have different Dreamings associated with them.

responsibility for the ceremonies either by being in a moiety playing the role of *kirda* or being in the other moiety of *kurdungurlu* in a ceremony. While in general *kirda* can be called ‘boss’ or ‘owner’ in Aboriginal English and *kurdungurlu* ‘worker’ or ‘policeman’ in ceremonial roles (Dussart 2000; Nash 1982), Barbara Glowczewski depicted the idea of sexual division to parallel the relationship. This division was confirmed when the author learned the Jardiwarnpa songs from Elders in Lajamanu.

Men recognise that women are *kirda*, owner-custodians of their fathers’ land, rituals and Kuruwarri (image-forces), and that they are *kurdungurlu*, manager-custodians responsible for the organisation of rituals associated with the land and Kuruwarri of their mothers or spouses. (Glowczewski n.d.)

As a whole, ‘Jarduwanpa’ (Jardiwarnpa) can be taken as an example of a ceremony in which the whole community participates at all times (OzOutback n.d.b). According to R. Moyle (1979), ‘Tjatiwanpa’ (Jardiwarnpa), despite its being ascribed a Luridja origin by most people at Kungkayunti and Papunya, also has a Pintupi origin. The Pintupi are southern neighbours of the Warlpiri and have close ritual ties (Meggitt 1962). This ceremony is considered as not only a community Fire ceremony but also ‘a complex ceremonial cycle during which conflicts are staged and resolved, widows given new spouses, taboos lifted, and so on’ (Dussart 1992:349). As reported by Peterson (1970), its sister ceremony ‘Buluwandi’ (Puluwanti) also used to be performed for the resolution of conflict. How the traditional role of the resolution of communal conflicts was adopted in the current Milpirri will be considered later.

According to several sources the Jardiwarnpa ceremony was performed last in 1993 in Yuendumu where Ngalia people are mainly settled. The performance was videorecorded in *Blood Brothers - Jardiwarnpa, a Warlpiri Fire Ceremony* (2007; see figure 2.2), which also narrated that the ceremony is performed every few years and Warlpiri from several settlements are involved. In Lajamanu, this ceremony by Warnayaka Warlpiri people was last recorded in 1988 by Glowczewski (n.d.). Since then, there seems no further report of Jardiwarnpa, but it suddenly became refocused in the first Milpirri in 2005 with the success of Steve Jampijinpa and his community and announcement of the organiser Tracks Dance Company in Darwin. The next chapter will feature the attempt to bring Jardiwarnpa ceremony back into the context of Lajamanu today in order to see how the musical and spiritual sense of the long Jardiwarnpa ceremony had been condensed in Milpirri, an event of a few hours.



**Figure 2.2: Jardiwarnpa Ceremony in Yuendumu, 1994**  
Screenshot of *Blood Brothers - Jardiwarnpa, a Warlpiri Fire Ceremony* (2007).

The stages of initiation of *yapa* people are explained in various aspects in the literature.

Les Hiatt (1994:939) clarified the Aboriginal ritual transformation of boys into men typically consisting of three phases: (1) a formal separation from the mother and other close female kin, (2) a liminal phase when the boy must remain passive, silent, withdrawn from social life, and may even be regarded symbolically as dead, and (3) a climax when he is installed in his new status as an adult male, usually through an operation on the body, for instance circumcision. The term *Kurdiji* means a Warlpiri initiation ceremony while it originally means wooden shield painted with the designs usually with white dots on a red ochre background, and is used during the *Jardiwarnpa* ceremony by dancers whose bodies are painted with the same design. R. Moyle (1979:25) demonstrated that the *kutiji* (*Kurdiji*) initiation ceremonies were held by the Pintupi language group as well.

The ceremony name derives from the type of shields, *kutitji*, on which have been painted representations from one or more myths; these shields are laid on the ground and beaten with single sticks or single boomerangs as an accompaniment to the men's singing during part of the ceremony.

*Kurdiji* had been translated simply as 'circumcision ceremony' or 'circumcision rite', but it is more appropriate to interpret it as a complex cycle of ritual activities having the act of circumcision as one component (Munn 1973; Dussart 2000). In this point, Dussart (ibid.:49) suggests "'Kurdiji" is as much a woman's "rite of passage" as it is a man's, though less formally declared, to be sure', but there might be 'woman's rite' that existed and disappeared in

the past. Aboriginal female initiation rites should be taken from various viewpoints. Although it has already vanished as a rite, Robert Lawlor (1991:205) in his book *Voices of the First Day: Awakening in the Aboriginal Dreamtime* indicated a similarity that:

The defloration rite seems severe from a Western perspective; however, from early childhood Aboriginal girls look forward to this initiation, viewing sexuality as a joyous, integrated part of life.

In another frame of reference, fault can be found with the way of recording both Kurdiji and Kajirri playing an important role in traditional life. Japanese researcher Shigenobu Sugito (2008) viewed as a problem that secret parts of Aboriginal rituals had been exposed and made vulnerable in the field of anthropology in the past in Australia. The Kurdiji ceremony still exists as an opportunity for circumcision, which is a sensitive issue, but is considered that ‘though much of the performance of *kurdiji* is focused on the circumcision of young men, it is no less crucial for their sisters, mothers, mothers-in-law and (future) wives’ (Dussart 2000:70). However, it was found later that local people recently had less opportunities to perform the Kurdiji ceremony in Lajamanu.

The preparation and ‘grand tour’ of Kurdiji, especially for boys and for mothers, have attracted the interest of anthropologists as well as me. In the south of the Victoria River, the initiation of boys into the first stage of manhood is a prolonged process when initiates are removed from society, placed under the strict control of initiated men, and taken on trips into

the territory of neighbouring groups (Meggitt 1962; Lewis 2005). This journey, called *jilkaja*, was analysed by Peterson (2000) with the increase in numbers of attendants and distances, and his student Georgia Curran (2011:183) further reported with her own participant-observation-based research at Yuendumu since 2005 that ‘Kurdiji and surrounding initiatory events are incorporating many more people than they used to and are becoming increasingly relevant in the lives of younger generations of Warlpiri people’. With the information from Wild (personal communication) that the initiation ceremony was still annually performed in Lajamanu, I organised my fieldwork to observe the ceremony in 2010-2011 even though that season did not include the biennial event Milpirri. The main purpose was to see the formal Kurdiji ceremony as I could not attend Milpirri 2007; however, I discovered later that the recent ceremony in Lajamanu was not really a Kurdiji but a simplified version called Waruwarta, with a different origin and process in comparison with the original ceremony. Some important parts of the dances of Kurdiji were only seen in the series of Milpirri, especially in 2007 and 2012.

There are several reasons to review also the study of the second-stage initiation ceremony called Kajirri (spelled ‘Gadjari’ by Meggitt; see figure 2.3) even though it has not been picked up as a theme of Milpirri yet like the first-stage Kurdiji ceremony has been. First, this advanced stage of male initiation Kajirri or ‘Kankarlu’ (Dussart 2000) clearly has an educational purpose as does Milpirri. In Aboriginal English it can be called ‘high school’, ‘university’ (Patrick et al. 2008), or formerly ‘Big Sunday’ (Meggitt 1966). Kajirri with another name ‘Ngatipatutjara’ (two ancestral humans) was evaluated as ‘one of the most important

dreaming tracks' (Peterson et al. 1978:17); however, it is not actually performed today as far as I could confirm with local Elders.



**Figure 2.3: Kajirri ritual cycle**  
Excerpt from Meggitt (1962:77)

Second, the history of Kajirri can link the traditions in Lajamanu and Arnhem Land, where the Garma Festival was developed in later years. This origin of the initiation ceremony has been studied by several *kardiya* researchers. The most cited anthropologist, Ronald Berndt (1951) researched the Kunapipi from the point of view of psychoanalysis. In his book, he discovered the similarities between the myth of Djanggawul in northeastern Arnhem Land and the central Australian 'wild-cat' mythology. As his work of ethnography covered the history from 1862, Meggitt (1966) took up the references to details of the Kunapipi-Big Sunday complex and the Ingkura initiation ceremonies in other areas so as to indicate their similarities to, and differences from, elements of the 'Mamandabari-Gadjari' (Kajirri) of the Warlpiri. The first cycle of 'Gadjari' or Big Sunday revelatory ceremonies was held following circumcisions. After the analysis by Meggitt, Wild (1972) began to research initiation and 'Katjiri' (Kajirri)

ceremonies influenced by the northern Kunapipi. According to Meggitt, Walbiri men knew the NT-wide terms ‘Big Sunday’ and this secret initiation cycle, or Kunapipi, which travelled from Arnhem Land through Wave Hill, Lajamanu, the Jilbili Hills and the Tanami Desert. Wild emphasised that the pattern of annual ceremonies had been modified since Meggitt’s fieldwork. Kajirri as well as other Aboriginal ceremonies in those days was a period of ritual behaviour, where a myth or symbolisation may provide its major ritual orientation. Kajirri ceremony was said to be uniquely named and includes several classes of song series –*warru-warru* (Waruwarta), *kujingka*, *jamala*, *yilpinji* and *yawulyu*—three of which occur in other ceremonies (Wild 1987b:108). According to Wild, after the establishment of the settlement, local totemic ceremonies declined in importance, and until the early 1970s the Kajirri complex assumed increasing significance. In those days it was reported that ‘almost every member of the community over the age of about twelve (there were a few cases of disaffection) participated in the Gadjari ritual (women much less fully than men)’ (Wild 1981:7).

Purlapa has wider implications but has been mainly known as ‘public entertainments’ (Meggitt 1962:244) in Warlpiri tradition (see figure 2.4). As the third Milpirri (2009) focused on Jurntu Purlapa and the fourth (2011) on Jalurinjirri Purlapa, it will be necessary to review the literature on this Warlpiri corroboree.<sup>19</sup> There appear several questions about Purlapa

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<sup>19</sup> Corroboree is another Aboriginal English word deriving from ‘garaabara’ in the language group Dharuk (spoken in the Sydney area), denoting a style of dancing (Oxford Dictionaries Online 2011)

concerning who can participate in Purlapa dances and if Milpirri itself might be considered a kind of Purlapa.



**Figure 2.4: Purlapa Wiri in Lajamanu, 1982**  
Excerpt from Nicholls (2014).

According to recent research by Dussart (2000:76), Purlapa rituals are indeed described as *watikirlangu* (public) and *warraja* (cheap), but ‘do more than divert’. In the sense of being public, Milpirri can be taken as a modern version of Purlapa. However, Purlapa has an aspect of ‘men’s public ceremony’ to correlate with women’s *yawulyu warrajanyani* (ibid.). In terms of the male ceremony, some studies have claimed that uninitiated boys could not participate in any traditional dances. Arguing that ‘[f]or boys, circumcision marks initiation into men’s rituals; but as junior novices, they may not yet dance’, Morais (1998:466) did not take up the particular case of Purlapa. Wild (1997:4) suggested that adults did not create music specifically for children to perform or for performance by adults to children though children created and performed their own music. The reason why in the series of Milpirri, schoolchildren danced

only hip hop dance while adults were performing traditional dance might be explained from this viewpoint:

Traditionally young Warnayaka joined adult performances of singing and dancing in their adolescent years. The trajectories of this ‘coming of age’ (for that’s what it was) were different for girls and boys, girls joining women’s ceremonies (Yawulyu) in a gradual process that accelerated after becoming mothers themselves, while boys were inducted into men’s ceremonies in a spectacular initiation ceremony (Kurdiji) at puberty. (Wild 2010)

Purlapa can be regarded as a specific genre among ancestral rituals in terms of its creation with the concept of Dreaming. Previous studies of Purlapa did not address the question of whether or not the current event Milpirri should be included in Purlapa because Milpirri had not yet been launched. The finding of former research was that both Purlapa and Yawulyu were found, under certain circumstances, as totemic songs and dances (which are believed to have been performed by the totemic ancestors in the Dreaming) with the clear distinction that contemporary individuals created ‘Dreamt songs’ (Wild 1987b; Swain 1988). Tony Swain (ibid.:457) summarised Nancy Munn:

Most Warlpiri rituals are said to have originated in the Dreaming. They are thus seen as unchanging and unchangeable. *Purlapas*, however, are an exception. They are performed partly for entertainment and are acknowledged as having been introduced by humans. This is not to say that people have created these ceremonies. Rather, the *purlapas* are said to have been ‘caught’ or ‘found’ by an individual’s spirit whilst dreaming. The usual explanation is that the dreamer is initially attracted by a creature

belonging to a class of spiritual beings which, in effect, mediate between Dreaming and now (usually referred as *kurruwalpa*). He or she then follows the track of an ancestor as the songs and sacred designs are revealed. In the process, the dreamer virtually merges with the ancestor.

Including Yawulyu, there are still some other genres known in Warlpiri tradition and formally adapted in Milpirri. In the present context of Lajamanu where not only Elders' Yawulyu but also girls' Yawulyu is performed as often as boys' Purlapa, Dussart (2000) paralleled Yawulyu with Yilpinji which are men's love-magic songs but not Purlapa. R. Moyle (1979) mentioned that 'Yilpintji' (Yilpinji) is the principal Pintupi women's love magic ceremony and parallels the men's Yilpintji. They are categorised as *warraja*, or semi-secret (Wild 1987b; Dussart *ibid.*). As noted by Wild (1981), although Yilpinji ceremonies were largely defunct in 1969-1972, Yawulyu have not declined as much as others. For that reason, it is also valuable that Wild analysed lyrics of traditional Warlpiri songs in his article *A Central Australian Men's Love Song* comprising a Yilpinji song with its sixty-five verses sung by *kumunjayi* Jangala at Lajamanu (Wild 1990). It is certain that ethnomusicologists have depended on Aboriginal informants to translate profound words of ancient songs. Later in this thesis the concept of Yilpinji will be disclosed to have a strong tie with the Milpirri colour coding to educate the appropriate Warlpiri marriage system even if there was no performance of the song in the program.

Thus, the performance of a special Kurdiji dance in Milpirri can be so important that I will report in the following chapter my observation of the current performance of the Fire ceremony and initiation ceremony and consider if they would still be alive except for Milpirri. I will also show that there is at least an initiation ceremony called Waruwarta in the current life of Lajamanu. The direct roots of Milpirri might not be in Kajirri, which was a primary form of extraneous and non-ancestral movement in the settlement of Warnayaka Warlpiri people. However, the significant roles of the Kajirri were not only a traditional sacred initiation but also a contribution to a sense of community identity by sustaining the links with the past and the reinforcing of traditional authority structures. Wild observed that the word 'Big Sunday' could no longer be heard when he did fieldwork (1969-72) about 15 years after Meggitt's (1953-54).<sup>20</sup> Nowadays, local people call it 'university' with the high expectation of its restoration in the future. The relationship between Kajirri and a ceremony called 'New Business', which also occurred before Milpirri, will be explained later as a genre of Lajamanu peripheral ritual Purlapa.

There would naturally be related questions brought up: although boys and girls dance Purlapa and Yawulyu in school events, why do not they do so in Milpirri? Since Milpirri is an entertainment event for the community in Lajamanu, can it be called 'Purlapa' itself? These issues will be discussed in a later chapter to interpret the meaning of the Warlpiri festival after

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<sup>20</sup> Glowczewski (1995:322) criticised that Meggitt, from the viewpoint of the male-oriented approach, 'who denied women's role in the cult'.

discussing the specific types of Purlapa with a rare instrument and Church Purlapa as the early result of the contact with the *kardiya* tradition.

### 2.1.3. Instrumentation

It is generally regarded that the musical instruments accompanying traditional songs in central Australia are simple: only pairs of boomerangs or clapsticks.<sup>21</sup> This section is regarding research on the existence of the *kurlumpurrngu* or Warlpiri didjeridu which later would be known to have a connection with the purpose of Milpirri. In the first appointment with Wild in Australia, I saw beautiful didjeridus collected in his office in the School of Music. However, I was, to tell the truth, quite shocked to know the fact that I would have no chance of playing the didjeridu as far as studying Warlpiri music as I had liked the sound of didjeridus so much since I was in Japan. It might be thus natural to think that didjeridus or any wind instruments are nothing to do with Milpirri. However, as I found later a rare instrument, a kind of didjeridu in Lajamanu, whose cosmology and accompanying song and dances had intimate links to Milpirri, I will here review basic research on the existence of aerophones in central Australia. In the following chapter I will introduce how I came across the instrument unfamiliar in the literature.

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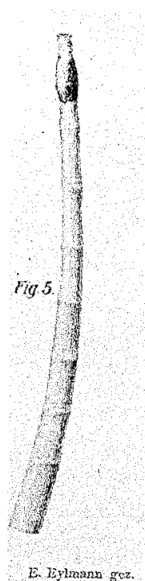
<sup>21</sup> See Ellis (1985) and Curran (2010) for common forms of percussion referred to in the performance on the Central Australian region — namely the use of digging sticks to strike the ground, and the use and techniques of women's body percussion. It seems likely that the sound of the PET bottles is closer to that of striking the ground and possibly lapslapping than clapsticks.

It has been largely believed that the didgeridu was not Indigenous to central Australia. In his article, Karl Neuenfeldt (1997:108) mentioned that ‘the chief irony is that the didgeridu is the major musical symbol of Aboriginality marketed in central Australia, but it was not traditionally a hallmark of the rich musical traditions of local Aboriginal people’, which agrees with Dunbar-Hall’s (1998) expression ‘a national symbol’ in both traditionally-didgeridu-using areas and non-using ones. Even Glowczewski (n.d.) who has travelled to Lajamanu from France for 30 years assumed as common sense that didgeridu had never been used in Purlapa:

The type of men’s singing and dancing that women can attend is called purlapa, a name also given to the songs and dances performed by men and women together. The purlapa dancers are always accompanied by a group of seated singers who give the beat by striking together two boomerangs or small sticks, or sometimes one stick against a shield lying on the ground. These percussion instruments are the only musical instruments of the desert people, who do not have the didgeridu (horns) or the drums hollowed from logs of the Arnhem Land tribes.

However, several studies have proved that certain aerophones, if not *yidaki* or Arnhem Land-type didgeridu, existed historically in central Australia. Referring to several documents in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Linda Barwick (n.d.) discovered that it was only a ‘myth’ that didgeridus were only found traditionally in Northern Australia. Alice Moyle (1981:327) also mentioned that there was evidence that the didgeridu might have primarily been more widespread than just in the northern regions of Australia.

Not only with the variety in spelling (e.g. *didjeridu*, *didgeridoo*, *digeridoo*, etc.), this aerophone has several regional names identified by language groups. It is said that there are at least 45 synonyms for the didjeridu (Jones cited in Ngala n.d.) including *bambu*, *bombo*, *kambu*, *pampuu*, *garbak*, *illpirra*, *martba*, *jiragi*, *yiraki* and *yidaki*. A. Moyle (1981, 322) speculated that some of the synonyms resemble the word ‘bamboo’ because the first didgeridus were made of bamboo. Amongst the various names, *Ulburu* is used by the Arrernte language group in central Australia. The first reference to this is by Spencer and Gillen (1899), who described a ‘rudimentary trumpet’ (60cm. in length) called *ilpirra* or *ulpirra*. Several illustrations were drawn in 1908: The *karakara* used in an ‘Aranda Itata’ were recorded by Carl Strehlow (1913:15), and ‘*Trompete der Waramunga*’ by Erhard Eylmann (1908; see figure 2.5). Ernest Worms (1953:280) found that *ubar*, *uwar* and *uluru* (North-west Arnhem Land) and *ulpirra*, *ilpirra* and *ulburu* (central Australia) were ‘linguistic variations of the same stem’.



**Figure 2.5: *Trompete der Waramunga* [Waramunga Trumpet]**  
Excerpt from Eylmann (1908:15)

A smaller didjeridu, measuring about fifteen to thirty centimeters in length, was also distinguished at Borroloola, on the Gulf of Carpentaria, NT, and will be related to the instrument restored in Lajamanu. According to John Bradley and Elizabeth Mackinlay (2000:9), the didjeridu, termed *ma-kulurru* or *bambu* by the Yanyuwa people, was introduced through trade between the Yanyuwa and their neighbours to the west. It is also known that the equivalent didjeridu, or ‘Ornamented Bamboo Trumpet’, from the Anula (Yanyuwa) was illustrated by Spencer and Gillen (1904:705). Mackinlay (2003) concluded that this small didjeridu was similar to the *ulbura* reported by Ted Strehlow (1947:78-79) for the Aranda (Arrernte) of central Australia. Speaking of small didjeridus, ‘kidjeridus’ are sometimes sold in souvenir shops in Australia. They are defined by Fiona Magowan (1997:164) as ‘short pieces of plastic piping about two feet in length with a smaller body capacity, requiring less air pressure to create a drone and thus, are more suitable for children’. On the other hand, the problem of this is designated by a didjeridu instructor, Joe Cheal (2009:18), that ‘because the instrument is so short, it doesn’t sound much like a proper didjeridu’.

The method of playing the hollow log (didjeridu) is another matter of interest if the sound of the instrument was linked to the voice of an emu, which is regarded as a totemic animal. Worms took it as a kind of drum as well as a trumpet. As diminutive didjeridus like kidjeridus often lack deepness in the sound when blown, the sound of certain didjeridues are imagined to have been produced by slapping hand. A. Moyle (1981:327-328) suggested that ‘emu decoy’ recorded in several parts of Australia may have been a precursor of the didjeridu in

some areas. Thus, it is necessary to systematically evaluate the playing method and another purpose of the *kurlumpurrngu* in a later chapter.

The literature already responded to the question of whether the didjeridu was originally found in the Top End of the NT. The answer depends on how one defines ‘didjeridu’. Although Catherine Ellis (1998:436) knew that the ‘*ulbura*’ or ‘a wooden trumpet’ had been present in central Australia, she did not consider it to be a ‘didjeridu’. It is, however, hypothesised by A. Moyle (1981:327) that at an elementary stage in the development of blowing techniques, aerophones might have been widely scattered throughout Australia. Therefore, it is apparent that if one defines the ‘didjeridu’ only as ‘*yidaki*’, then it cannot be said to have existed in Australia’s central outback. On the other hand, if the definition extends to the ‘*ulbura*’ in all manners of its performance, then the didjeridu can be described as having existed there. Whilst the current popularity of didjeridus in central Australia has been noted by several researchers (Ellis 1985; Neuenfeldt 1997; Dunbar-Hall 1998; etc.), they have always focused on new recordings of *yidaki* type didjeridus. This may be because, as Mackinlay (2003) states, ‘the didjeridu is variously recognized both as a symbol of Yolŋu culture and pan-Aboriginal identity and as an Australian icon’. Also, Shane Homan (1997) already recognised a more than twenty-year didjeridu representation of a ‘pan-Aboriginal culture’ and Dunbar-Hall (1998) depicted that didjeridu is an innovation and interpreted as a national symbol of generalised Aboriginal culture for popular bands from both traditionally-didjeridu-using areas and non-using ones. There have been, however, few studies done on reviving an Indigenous musical instrument in central

Australia, including Lajamanu. Chapter 3 will demonstrate for the first time the story of restoration of a wind instrument called '*kurlumpurrngu*' and how its ceremony relates to the idea of Milpirri.

## **2.2. Peripheral rituals and music**

Half of the Milpirri program is occupied with hip hop music mainly played with CDs sold in the market and danced by Lajamanu schoolchildren with the instruction of Tracks members from Darwin. The rituals or music and dance which are not listed in the table of Dussart (2000) mentioned above will be discussed here. The purpose of this section is to examine how contemporary music in *yapa* society was regarded in the former research. Non-ancestral music in the desert has been strongly influenced by *kardiya* or European culture. I also argue through the literature how much Christian and other Western music affected the music tradition of Lajamanu so as to know the dynamic influence on the Milpirri hip hop. Also I will see the comparative phenomena to Milpirri as a modern phenomenon which has occurred generally in Aboriginal remote communities.

### 2.2.1. Jesus Purlapa

Related to the above mentioned question of whether Milpirri is Purlapa, another aspect to consider is the Christian influence on the event since the Milpirri creator's father, Jerry Jangala, is the current pastor of Lajamanu Baptist Church and the creator of and today's unique male singer of Jesus Purlapa. It is said that meetings among Christian denominations determined that Methodists would cover the NT in 1912 (Harris cited in Kubota 2006). The Baptist mission moderately acquired catechumens at Lajamanu and by the mid-1970s ancestral religion became old-fashioned. Wild (1997) argued that Christianity has been a major force in the lives of generations of the Indigenous peoples of Australia, and Christian music has been an important part of their musical experience. Jesus Purlapa can be taken as 'the most unique and conspicuous aspect of Warlpiri Christianity' (Swain 1988) and the Gospel music by Lajamanu Choir can be another syncretism between Christianity and Warlpiri traditions. Church Purlapa's tradition of central Australia dates back to the 1970s. Graham Paulson, Australia's first and still Queensland's only ordained Indigenous Baptist minister, looked back in an interview at the time Christian corroborees launched with his advice.

I remember writing a paper in 1971 when I suggested Christian corroborees, when I suggested that we look at elements of the body and blood (of Christ) that would be more meaningful to them rather than crushed grape juice and bread from the shop. And they learned that they could tell Biblical stories in an Aboriginal way. This was the beginning then for what has been now called Christian purlapas amongst the Warlpiri in the Northern Territory. (Paulson commented in ABC Radio National 2005)

The first place where Jesus (or Christian) Purlapa (see figure 2.6), re-enacting key episodes of the Old and New Testaments, was performed by Warlpiri people is thought to be Lajamanu. According to Ivan Jordan, who was a Baptist Minister in Lajamanu (1973-1989) and Yuendumu (1992-2003), the churches in both communities began in 1975 using Warlpiri iconographs to draw Bible stories. His book *Their Way: Towards an Indigenous Warlpiri Christianity* (2003) described that, at a combined meeting at the Rabbit Flat Roadhouse<sup>22</sup> in 1977, singers from Lajamanu sang the Jesus Purlapa for the Yuendumu community. Joining in with the singing and being considerably impressed, Ngalia Warlpiri people in Yuendumu also began to perform the new Purlapa themselves in the following year, and it was widely adopted in Aboriginal communities across northern and central Australia.



**Figure 2.6: Photograph taken at a Jesus Purlapa**  
*Wantiya wanta-wantarla warra-warra-kangulpalu* [The Disciples saw Jesus crucified] (Swain 1988:458)

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<sup>22</sup> It lies to the south of Lajamanu on the Tanami Road. Most of the services of the roadhouse were closed in 2010.

Milpirri might be thought to have some Christian influence and, indeed, it is a well-planned event to combine two cultures. The style of Jesus Purlapa is also evaluated as one of the most typical mixtures of Christian and Indigenous traditions. As Wild (1988) attested that Jesus Purlapa consisted of Christian texts and local styles of music and dance, Laughlin (cited in Swain 1988) analysed the tunes as conventional Purlapa and Yawulyu melodies but the words were constructed in fairly archaic Warlpiri. The dance steps, body paintings, and most ritual equipment are similar in style in both Jesus Purlapa and traditional rituals. As with the Christian paintings, the Purlapa have been composed using traditional artistic and ceremonial forms. Similarly, as with the other Purlapa, Jesus Purlapa is believed to be discovered in dreams, although in this case the *Kurruwalpa* (a creature belonging to a class of spiritual beings) is replaced by *Wapirra* (Father or God). Swain (ibid.) attested that the emphasis is not on individual creativity but upon the faithful repetition of the revealed ceremony; this is same as the other traditional Purlapa. The repertoire of Jesus Purlapa is still rich, such as Christmas Purlapa, Easter Purlapa and Creed Purlapa. According to Wild (1997), they are sung by groups of singers, men and women together, accompanied by the playing of boomerang clapsticks by male singers and by body percussion produced by women. It is said that the dances accompanied the singing of Jesus Purlapa, the bodies of the dancers were painted and decorated in traditional style, and the dancers carried shields painted with Christian motifs. Whilst the Yuendumu Church developed the Easter corroboree, Lajamanu developed their 'One Family Corroboree' based on Galatians 3:28 (Jordan 1999). In 2000 Warlpiri people from the central

desert area presented One Family Corroboree at the Baptist World Alliance Congress in Melbourne in which they painted strong Warlpiri iconographs on their bodies for their performance of a Christian Purlapa (Fergie 2005). Old recordings of Jesus Purlapa taken by Wild (1979) are conserved in the AIATSIS sound archive. The singers in those days seem to have been pervaded by a tense atmosphere more than today (cf. 3.3.1.):

Some of the symbols used in the drawings would have to be amended a little in order to be acceptable by the ‘law custodians’ here for open presentation. The Christian elders who saw the ‘pulapa’ are anxious not to offend the non-Christian tribal elders here unnecessarily and intend to move carefully and prayerfully. (Taylor 1978:18)

Besides Jesus Purlapa, many genres of Christian music played an important role in the musical history of Aboriginal Australia and might give the impression of a fairly long tradition. Gospel music, or fundamentalist, evangelical Protestant songs, is said to be ‘[t]he most characteristic Christian music performed by Aboriginal people’ (Wild 1997:8). Aboriginal gospel music performed by Aboriginal choirs of central Australia was published as a compact cassette by Imparja Records, a subsidiary of CAAMA (Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association), as *Aboriginal Choirs of Central Australia* which included songs by the Lajamanu Choir. CAAMA was established in 1980 to produce Indigenous radio programs, and CAAMA Music evolved to produce music for radio jingles, advertisements, educational programs and

community campaigns.<sup>23</sup> The strength of the ‘new’ tradition of Indigenous gospel music was indicated by several investigators. During her PhD candidature, Åse Ottosson (2003) described gospel music as having been reworked within local occurrences by Indigenous people since its introduction by evangelists and the relationship between Indigenous gospel and country music is still very strong in central Australia. Kathleen Oien (2000) demonstrated that many Indigenous communities in central Australia have church choirs and sing ‘traditional’ Christian hymns in both English and local Indigenous languages. For instance the Titjikala Desert Oaks Band, a country-rock band from central Australia, includes selections of gospel music performed by the Titjikala Maryvale Choir on its album, citing them as ‘traditional’ (ibid.). Numerous gospel bands and choirs have come into existence around the various church denominations found across central Australia, and Ellis (cited in Oien 2000) concluded that ‘traditional’ music may include early twentieth-century Scottish, English, and Australian folk songs, black American songs and English music-hall songs. The definition of ‘traditional music’ along with the other genres of music will be clarified in a later part of the chapter.

Before concluding if Milpirri was a ‘revitalization movement’, as defined by Anthony Wallace, I would like to also examine other Christian movements related to Aboriginal culture. If Jesus Purlapa was regarded as a kind of revival movement in central Australia before Milpirri, there were Aboriginal religious movements which occurred in other parts of Australia. Ronald

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<sup>23</sup> Global Recordings Network (n.d.) is providing the Choir’s multiple MP3 files released for everyone in its Website, The Lajamanu Choir Sings for Jesus: Warlpiri.

Berndt (1962) investigated one of the biggest Indigenous movements called an ‘adjustment movement’ which happened in Arnhem Land in 1957. Clan Elders decided to prepare at night to exhibit the sacred *rangga* in the community and women were shocked to see it the following day. Berndt argued that this serious affair would be raised mainly by the several men who had been involved in the establishment of the Elcho mission and had a close relationship to the missionaries since the 1930s. Another well-known cognate to the ‘adjustment movement’ (ibid.) memorial on Elcho Island, Swain (1988) demonstrated the complementary nature of ‘two Laws’ revealed by a stained glass window depicting a large cross surrounded by Dreaming Kuruwarri representing the four patricouples which structure much of Warlpiri religious life. Jordan (1999) witnessed ‘beautiful stained glass window in the Yuendumu Church building, with the cross in the centre, surrounded by the dreamings of the various kinship groups’. Based on his fieldwork in the southern Kimberley, Western Australia, focusing on the Fitzroy area, reporting major cults and their movements in detail of the Gurangara, Dingari and Woagaia, Kolig (1988:167) mentioned:

Current religious dynamics fall basically into two categories—an almost entirely Christian revivalism, the focus of which is predominantly in Arnhem Land; and basically traditional Aboriginal movements mainly in the north-western and central parts of Australia.

Shigenobu Sugito (cited in Kubota 2006) took the ‘adjustment movement’ as a type of Millenarianism with the intent of gaining European property by releasing secret *rangga*.

It might be laborious to find the similarity between Milpirri and Christian movements described above, and other movements in Lajamanu after Jesus Purlapa might be better comparisons. As hindrances to the Aboriginal missionary, Paulson (2006) supposed that Christianity is impossible to separate from its Western cultural structures and Aboriginal Christianity will always be a 'Whitefella' religion. Imposing Christianity involves persuading Indigenous peoples to abandon their own culture. While Wild (1987a:563) assessed the degree of success of Christian missionaries in Lajamanu as not positive, estimating that 'the results were mixed and sometimes unexpected', Swain (1988) considered that the alliance of Warlpiri Christianity was not between 'Aborigines' and 'Whites', but rather between *jukurrpa* and God. However, Wild (ibid.) suggests that although Lajamanu was a newcomer to the religious movements of the Western Desert, it may become a central shaft for a more widespread Aboriginal religious movement because it has historical precedents of cult exchanges with the neighbouring communities. It would be natural to consider that Lajamanu had the capability to have, after New Business (see below), another religious movement mentioned in the following section.

### **2.2.2. New Business**

Following the Kajirri cult and Jesus Purlapa, there was a third movement in the 1970s, called New Business, which influenced Milpirri, in terms of its foreign origin and its attempt to

revitalise the community of Lajamanu. I will examine later the possibility that the New Business is connected to the establishment of Milpirri in 2005.

This historical event already has proven difficult for current researchers to review with the limited documents available. In his presentation taking up the movement with differences between new and old ceremonies, impact on traditional ceremonial life and aspects of social and moral reform, Wild (1981) demonstrated the establishment of the new religious movement called 'New Business' in Hooker Creek region during 1978. According to Wild, the ceremony had another name which was secret and spoken in Lajamanu in a low whisper, in the presence of the non-initiated.

However, New Business might justify with its origin the comparative studies between Milpirri and Garma Festival. While the actual ceremony in Lajamanu was Wild's primary focus, he also discussed the origin of the New Business. The reason for its name was explained by the fact that its audience was comprised of anyone except non-initiated children, which differentiated it from Old Business. It was also called *Woagaia* in the Kimberleys and had been adopted by communities west of Lajamanu (Wild 1981, 1987b). As Erich Kolig (1988) observed, *Woagaia* (*Worgaia*) was first observed by anthropologists in La Grange, Western Australia, in the 1960s. According to Heather McDonald (2005), yet another name for it was Julurru Cult and was an alliance-forming tool operating among people in the Western Desert, Kimberley, and central desert regions as a result of land rights successes and failures. The other

variations of the name were introduced by Kolig (ibid:167) as ‘Sleeping Business’ and ‘Balgo Business’.<sup>24</sup>

This phenomenon might be compared with Milpirri in several respects. According to Wild (1981) there were protests against the New Business by traditionalists, Christians and officials having responsibility for the utilisation of human and material resources. An attempt was observed to force all members of the community to participate in the New Business and to induce them to return to the full attendance at authentic ceremonies of the past. He commented on the significant attraction of the New Business.

The attractions of the New Business are not inconsiderable, since it provides for a specifically Aboriginal identity with a regional emphasis in the face of an increasingly anachronistic clan-based tradition. (ibid.:114)

Since Old Businesses, such as Kajirri and Yilpinji, were mostly obsolete before this movement, Wild concluded this trend was a ‘revival movement’ in 1970s Lajamanu, arguing that ‘[t]he New Business perhaps does not represent as thorough a cultural transformation as Wallace described for a revitalisation movement’ (1981:11). Milpirri can also be interpreted as a foreign-based ‘revival movement’ after the success of the Warlpiri land claim (Peterson et al. 1978), but without Christian elements like Jesus Purlapa.

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<sup>24</sup> As an exchanged ritual, Kajirri was also accepted in Balgo and this process was investigated by R. Moyle (cited in Wild 1981).

However, there is a sharp difference in the fact that although both phenomena of New Business and Milpirri seem to have the function of a community-wide movement, New Business had the policy of exclusion of children. Indeed, Steve Jampijinpa (2009, pers. comm., 3 November) emphasised the uniqueness and importance of Milpirri for the first whole-community event and said that ‘the New Business was more like a Western one. That’s not a tradition’. He might take it Western as the New Business was not based on the segments of Warlpiri music and dance, while the exclusion of children made the Business more like a traditional Warlpiri event.

It is almost impossible to compare Milpirri any further with New Business with the limited records available. Furthermore, through Jampijinpa’s attitude, it should be stressed that New Business did not directly influence him or Milpirri. The biggest difference from Milpirri was that New Business did not allow the children’s participation whereas one of the main purposes of Milpirri is educational, namely, to increase school attendances and to connect to the rest of the community with lasting ancestral background. Milpirri is more like a ‘revitalisation movement’ than New Business.

### **2.2.3. Contemporary music**

There are several opinions on the relationship between ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’ music in the context of Aboriginal Australia and this deserves to be noticed in order to research an

event which manages both types of music and dance separately or together.<sup>25</sup> It is necessary to define the ‘*kardiya*’ songs applied in the programs of Milpirri.

First of all, the debate on how to draw a line between the two derives from the fact that Christian music made roots so deeply. Wild (1997, 1998a) included Christian music in a genre of contemporary music as well as popular music and Torres Strait Islander music, and counted folk, country and rock as popular music. Following his introductory article in the encyclopaedia *Australia and the Pacific Islands*, Peter Dunbar-Hall (1998) added reggae and calypso to contemporary trends in Aboriginal music. In his book *Our Place, Our Music*, Marcus Breen (1989) not only discussed traditions and the destruction of Aboriginal culture but also insisted that in the early 1980s reggae became the black music of the future for many Aboriginals, following a performance by Jamaican singer Bob Marley in Adelaide in early 1979. Contrarily, Wild (1994) argued that in Australian Aboriginal culture continuity between the traditional and the contemporary is not usually implied: Once contaminated by the culture of the settlers the tradition is destroyed and is replaced by contemporary culture. He mentioned ‘it is not a tradition which can be easily transferred to a contemporary context without significant transformation’ (ibid.:188).

In order to research Aboriginal rock music in the NT, it is inevitable to know to what extent the Warlpiri rock bands are influenced by Arnhem Land bands including Yothu Yindi.

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<sup>25</sup> This discussion can refer to an acrylic paint movement and Megaw (1988:170) called it ‘Contemporary “Traditional” Aboriginal Art’ by taking it as ‘another example of European-inspired initiative’.

Describing the history of ‘contemporary’ Aboriginal music is always stuck with this group. In the golden years of the Yolŋu rock band, several researchers were riveted to merely a song, ‘Treaty’, using it in the title of their articles (Nicol 1993; Hayward 1993; Stubington & Dunbar-Hall 1994). Around 1975 Aboriginal peoples were seeking to get their message across to the Australian public with rock music as a particularly important vehicle of their protest (Ellis 2001). However, the novelty of Yothu Yindi, a Yolŋu group from northeast Arnhem Land, was that they played and sang a blend of both traditional music of the Gumatj and Rirratjingu clans and rock music, in both English and Yolŋu dialects. M. (name avoidance) Yunupingu, the leader of the group said ‘[t]echnology today accepts natural science and music, thereby opening new horizons in the study of music which combine sophisticated contemporary sounds with those of the old and draw people together in the process’ (1999). The establishment of Garma Festival was thus dependent on the activity of Yothu Yindi, so that in this respect the research on Milpirri is proposed to be paralleled with Garma in Chapter 5.

There are several researchers interested in Aboriginal rock bands in central Australia. Recent discussions on Aboriginal contemporary music have been reinforced particularly by Dunbar-Hall and Chris Gibson. In their comprehensive overview of contemporary Aboriginal music in *Deadly Sounds, Deadly Places*, they insisted ‘what constitutes “traditional” music is much contested’ (2004a:17). They indicated the adverse circumstances faced by Aboriginal musicians, such as unfair expectations by audiences, and racism and sexism in the music industry (2004b). The song ‘Nitmiluk’ of the group Blekbala Mujik, which they also researched

(2004a, 2004b), signifies the Katherine area, which is between Arnhem Land and Lajamanu. In common with a large proportion of Aboriginal rock music, it relies on a country and western feel with guitar and feature a traditional part with Arnhem Land didjeridu and clapsticks. Clinton Walker's (2000) book, *Buried Country: The Story of Aboriginal Country Music*, steered Larrikin Records to support Indigenous musicians by publishing a number of recordings, including a double CD compendium of historic Aboriginal country music performances (Dunbar-Hall & Gibson 2004a). In his book Walker testimonies that he became a fan of Warumpi Band when he first time heard their debut single *Jailanguru Pakarnu* in 1983.

Ellis (1994) indicated that the emphasis of research on still-living traditions must be changed because the singers frequently regard outside researchers as unimportant interrupters of their ceremonies. She admitted that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal writers had gradually become aware that documentation itself risked creating problems in a sensitive performance culture. In Barwick's (2000) article analysing the commodification of Indigenous song, she criticised that very few recordings of Indigenous genres of Aboriginal song became available despite the 1990s boom in world music. The term 'world music', according to Tony Mitchell (1992), came into currency in 1987 as a marketing tag referring to popular music originating in countries outside the normal Anglo-American and European Australian sources of popular music, while the initial impact of world music in Australia occurred later. Murray Garde (1998, 2000) commented on internet communications of Aboriginal music in the case of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal community of Maningrida, whose internet site was established in 1995. In his

report, the Maningrida and Yothu Yindi music sites were the only two with any Indigenous input as of 1998. Nowadays a number of movie clips of Aboriginal music including Warlpiri ancestral and contemporary in Lajamanu are available in YouTube and websites related to Milpirri.

Although Milpirri does not feature country music, it is taken as a typical product of non-ancestral music in Lajamanu. Walker (2000:13) describes country music as no longer 'contemporary' in Aboriginal society.

Aboriginal country music is a very real phenomenon, a long and rich tradition that opened the door for all Aboriginal endeavour in popular culture to follow, and it's a tradition that's still alive today even though it was dented in the eighties by the advent of black rock and is now swamped in the broader marketplace by a myriad of multicultural styles.

It was again Wild who with the same field tape of Jesus Purlapa recorded the first local band in Lajamanu, named 'Lajamanu Bushrangers' (Wild 1979, 1987b:113). As he (2000) mentions in *Country and Western Music*, country music became less dominant during the 1980s and 1990s but remained an important influence in Aboriginal country-rock. Ottosson (2006:176) concluded that gospel and country music are perceived as the 'Oldfella' music in Lajamanu. Rock music, a genre of popular music that entered the mainstream in the 1950s, has attracted bands in the remote communities in central Australia for decades. The sound of rock often revolves around the electric guitar, a back beat laid down by a rhythm section of electric bass

guitar, drums, and keyboard instruments. It is said that the major sources of inspiration to Aboriginal musicians in the late '70s were Bob Marley and the movie *Wrong Side of the Road* depicting Aboriginal reggae bands struggling for recognition and linked with land rights (Dugan n.d.). Ottosson (2003:5) summarised how it was rare for local people to call their country music 'contemporary'.

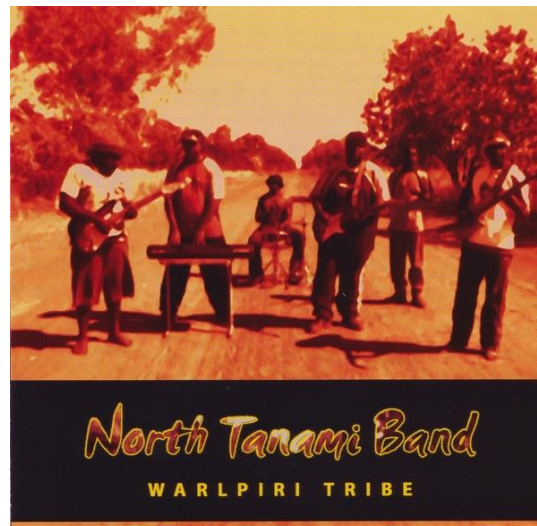
Almost every indigenous person I meet anywhere in the country can tell how they were brought up on country, with uncles strumming away every night on old beat-up acoustic guitars, singing old Hank Williams, Jimmy Rodgers, Tex Morton and Jimmy Reeves tunes. These tunes travelled with indigenous practitioners, vinyl records and via radio to the Centre, where touring Country Shows were other important influences from the 1930s up until the 80s. Country music has thus circulated and been reworked within indigenous social contexts for generations and few of the musicians would define it as a 'contemporary' or even 'nonindigenous' music forms.

The lyrics sung in those songs are considered to be the social background of the creation of the event of Milpirri. On the variety of Warlpiri people's taste in music, Melinda Hinkson (2004) mentions that beyond their own ceremonial songs, people enjoy gospel and blues, country, reggae, folk, rock and roll and its precursor R and B, pop and dance music, as well as more recent genres such as Gangsta rap, or a subgenre of hip hop that reflects the violent lifestyles of some inner-city youths. All styles are represented at town concerts, which some older people as well as children and teenagers regularly attend. In the film *Samson and Delilah* (2009), it was notable that petrol-sniffing 'Samson' (Rowan McNamara) wakes up to

Indigenous rock music everyday in a Warlpiri community near Alice Springs. I will mention in the following chapter my first negative impression of another Warlpiri community – Lajamanu, full of rubbish and humbug.

North Tanami Band (see figure 2.7), together with Lajamanu Teenage Band, is important for its involvement in Milpirri and is, as Ottosson (2006) agrees, Lajamanu's most respected band and the longest in existence. The Band's name refers to the Tanami Desert and to lineage as a means of expressing a group's rights to a place, a recurring theme in contemporary Aboriginal expression (Dunbar-Hall & Gibson 2004a). They sing in Warlpiri and English about common contemporary Aboriginal community and Warlpiri history. As described in the previous chapter, the band was founded by *kumunjayi* Jupurrurla, the father of Zacharia Patterson Jakamarra. Jakamarra, the current lead vocal of the band, has succeeded in singing in both Warlpiri and English through the bilingual education program in the 1980s and is concerned about the declining standard of education: 'Well I hope, for me I want him [his son] to learn Warlpiri first, then English come later' (Patterson commented in 'Going Back to Lajamanu' 2009). This idea of bilingual education was common with Yunupingu who was the lead singer of Yothu Yindi and was the principal of Yirrkala Bilingual School: 'If you have control over both languages, you have double power' (Yunupingu commented in 'Bi-Lingual Education Programs' 1999).

Lajamanu Teenage Band also plays a mix of desert reggae, rock, gospel and rhythm and blues. As Dunbar-Hall and Gibson (2004a) mentioned, when the Band sang about land in their



**Figure 2.7: Jacket of Album *Warlpiri Tribe*, North Tanami Band (2005)**

‘Leave my Grandpa’s Land’ on their album *Echo Voices*, they had connected with a tradition of rock songs by Central Australian music groups over a period of some decades. There is reggae bounce falling on beats 2 and 4 in some songs such as ‘Echo Voices’ and ‘Wiyappa Wanti Jalu’ (Don’t Drink and Drive) warning in English and Warlpiri against drinking and driving. ‘Please Come Home’ is a Warlpiri gospel styling; however, many of the other songs were pure popular music as Aboriginal art collector Will Owen (2007) insisted in his blog series, which were selected for permanent archiving by the National Gallery of Australia (UNC Library News and Events 2014). The Band released their first album *Dreamtime Hero* shortly after their performance at the Barunga Festival in 1996 (Corn 2002:227), and followed up two years later with *Vision*, which was nominated for an Aria Award for Best World Music Album (Australian Recording Industry Association 2012). Through the titles and lyrics of those songs, it is clear that Indigenous bands in Lajamanu emphasise prominent themes such as land, caring for children and family, prison life, drinking, and keeping culture strong, as Oien (2000) mentioned

of a typical song of Lajamanu Teenage Band in *Tell Me Stories*. Less prominent are love songs, which have an important role in traditional Warlpiri Yilpinji. This series of contemporary rock music might have influenced the creation of Milpirri which has a form connecting contemporary and traditional programs.

Non-ancestral music is thus not always as ‘contemporary’ as is represented in the literature, and whether Christian music and country music can be classified as ‘contemporary’ or ‘traditional’ is unclear as they are fluid and constructed concepts. It can be said that research on Lajamanu’s present music has been running smoothly mainly because of Ottosson. She demonstrated that country music at least was interpreted as ‘Oldfella’ music by local people during her field research, including at the Lajamanu Sports Weekend, which I could not observe before writing this. However, Milpirri promotes hip hop dance for Lajamanu schoolchildren with instruction by Tracks, but does not give them a chance to sing rock music on the stage as in the Sports Weekend. In a later chapter it will be necessary to see their attitude to *kardiya* music and how it affected their attendance at school and their original culture through Milpirri.

## **2.3. Summary**

By reviewing studies of Aboriginal music in central Australia in the context of considering Milpirri, it has been shown that this event does play a role in reviving ancestral rituals and music, but on the other hand, does not provide children with an opportunity to perform

traditional Purlapa dance, instead entertaining them with foreign hip hop dance. Therefore, it would be difficult to say that Milpirri is merely a 'festival' specialising in Aboriginal music and dance. This would lead to the question of what part of this phenomenon is most distinctive in terms of music, dance and cosmology. The following chapter will attempt to analyse it with an anthropological approach by comparing it with the other musical activities I observed in Lajamanu during fieldwork and the Garma Festival in northeast Arnhem Land in Chapter 5.

The peak of research in traditional music in central Australia can be said to have been before the 1990s. I have interrogated the classification of ancestral rituals including Jardiwarnpa which, before the influence of Christianity, was interpreted as a reconciliation ceremony. Initiation ceremonies were reported considerably, or often extremely, in detail by European Australian anthropologists. Boys too were proved to have been in the past a part of Purlapa dances. Milpirri has mainly featured these three rituals: Jardiwarnpa, Kurdiji and Purlapa. Jardiwarnpa, above all, used in the inaugural Milpirri in 2005 needs to be painstakingly analysed in terms of to what extent this ceremony was revived through the modern event and how it functioned there as a traditional reconciliation ceremony. As the essence of Kurdiji was utilised in Milpirri 2007, there needs to be further research on the status quo of the initiation ceremony in Lajamanu: I will in the following chapter detail that during the time I was there. Also, because there are various interpretations especially of secret and sacred factors of such initiation rituals, I will consider them from another viewpoint which was not seen in the foregoing research. In order to answer the question if Milpirri itself is a Purlapa, it will depend

on how Milpirri is interpreted as tinged with *jukurrpa*. The event which I observed in 2009 featured Jurntu Purlapa where public songs were sung by men and women together in public. This experience including observing Yinapaka Yawulyu in Milpirri 2011 will be reported in Chapter 4. Also, the concept of Yilpinji, which has been already extinct as a ritual, will be later found as a connector of Warlpiri and other regional cultures.

Besides the differences of opinion, the Kajirri ceremony and New Business can give the impression of having been to some extent an effective method to reinvigorate the community in previous periods. Also the Jesus Purlapa movement might have been a response from Jerry Jangala towards acculturation from traditional life to a modern Western settlement like later Milpirri was a response from his son Jampijinpa. While knowledge of Kajirri seems to be still handed down by current conservative Elders, it has been a long time since the performance – or even the knowledge – of the New Business ended. Non-initiated children play an important role in Milpirri: this is one of the main differences from the New Business. It has also been shown that Indigenous country music has been implicated in two-way education.

There are still several arguments to rationalise the comparison in the thesis between Milpirri, an Indigenous Australian event, and Japanese tradition. They will be presented in Chapter 5 on Milpirri as the two way cultural event influenced by Garma Festival after seeing the actual programs in Chapter 4. There is also emerging literature on Milpirri itself by Jampijinpa and Tracks dance company through books, DVDs and internet homepages. Those are also utilised as references in the coming chapters.



## Chapter 3. Musical Life in Contemporary Lajamanu

This chapter will discuss the background of the process of creating Milpirri in Lajamanu where Steve Jampijinpa was raised. The main purpose of my fieldwork, undertaken intermittently from 2009 to 2011, was to research Milpirri and the other current musical and ritual circumstances in Lajamanu. The data I collected there can be used to investigate the development of the cosmology, *ngurra-kurlu*, and the reason for the choice of the specific rituals in Milpirri. The main repertoires performed in Milpirri were Jardiwarnpa, Kurdiji, and Purlapa. The present practice of each ancestral ritual will be reported after describing my first visit to Lajamanu with Wild in 2008.

To facilitate comparison with the literature review of matters related to Milpirri in the last chapter, this chapter divides into three main parts: first, the pre-fieldwork will be considered; second, the current situation of ancestral music and ritual which have triggered the creation of Milpirri, will be analysed on the basis of my fieldwork experience; and third, the other musical tradition related to the revitalisation event and the history of the hip hop dancers and Tracks Dance Company.

### 3.1. Pre-Fieldwork

When Stephen Wild did his first field work in Lajamanu from 1969-1972, he made many audio recordings and took many photographs, and they were deposited in the archives of AIATSIS in Canberra. He received a grant to return those materials to Lajamanu in 2007. Encouraged by the ‘positive response’ (Wild & Doi 2014) of the Warlpiri people to the initial field trip, he decided to return more materials. When I arrived at ANU in Canberra, Wild suggested as a topic ‘a new movement and festival’ (ibid.) called Milpirri. Stating that and ‘no-one had done any ethnomusicological field research’ (ibid.) in Lajamanu since his own fieldwork in the 1970s, Wild suggested that it was time for someone to update the results of his own research so long ago.

Wild began to give me a private lecture every week, even before I was formally accepted as a student in the ANU, on Aboriginal music and rituals with the former literature including *Desert People* by M. J. Meggitt (1962). About the time I had mastered the Warlpiri Skin Name system, Wild planned a trip with me to Lajamanu with two purposes: one was to return to the community his forty-year-old images and sound recordings which would be useful for reviving the old traditions in Milpirri; and the other was to introduce me to Steve Jampijinpa and other community members, particularly Elders. He proposed that I revisit there for my fieldwork for several months before and after Milpirri 2009.

On 15 October, 2008, Wild and I left Canberra for Lajamanu. I was anxious in the airplane about what real life in an Aboriginal community would await me. Even though I had heard a little information on current life in Lajamanu from Wild, I was confused with the monochrome photos of Hooker Creek in the 1950s in *Desert People* and the description of Robert Lawlor (1991:11) in which he always used present tense to narrate Aboriginal life with the reasoning that 'I believe they are part of an eternal tradition'. Minoru Hokari, who was another Japanese researcher doing his fieldwork in Daguragu, neighbour to Lajamanu, often mentioned in his writings that 'Old Jimmy said "Country called you"' (M. Hokari 2004a, 2004b, 2011; Y. Hokari n.d.; Lal 2006). With such information, I had more practical questions about whether I could take a shower, use the internet and get food other than bush tucker or Witchetty Grubs in the 'desert'. I also imagined some ceremonial long pipes to be adopted by a chief like somewhere in Native America. We stayed one night in Alice Springs before driving a long way. I found a difference there with the greater numbers of Aboriginal people than in Canberra and other cities I had ever visited. I first noticed their somewhat inanimate eyes which did not fit with the lively tourist resort of Alice Springs. An Aboriginal lady on a street demanded of me some change and, when I asked a group of people painting and chatting under a tree if I could take a photo of them, they refused in an unfriendly way: I learned that they are not special, but normal people on streets so that they do not always need to be nice to tourists. After preparing fresh and emergency food, abundant water and extra jerrycans of petrol, Wild and I enjoyed a restaurant dinner with beer, which is not available in the Dry Country.

Driving by turns a 4WD Toyota borrowed from the Warlpiri Songline Project (see figure 3.1), Wild was telling me about many things related to the country.<sup>26</sup> On Stuart Highway we took rests at places including the Devil's Marbles. Most features of the landscape, like this one, have Aboriginal stories regarding them, believed to have been handed down through many generations from the original ancestors of contemporary Aborigines (see figure 3.2). We stayed overnight at a caravan park at a small town called Elliot. On the next day we started again for Lajamanu along unsealed roads with a huge number of magnificent termite mounds<sup>27</sup>, which are a feature of the landscape in the northern desert country of Australia. Although Hokari wrote in his books that he rode a motorbike to Daguragu for his fieldwork, I found that he could not have ridden to the neighbouring Lajamanu with the last section being over 100 kilometres of dirt road from the Buntine Highway.



**Figure 3.1: Toyota of the Warlpiri Songline Project in Alice Springs**

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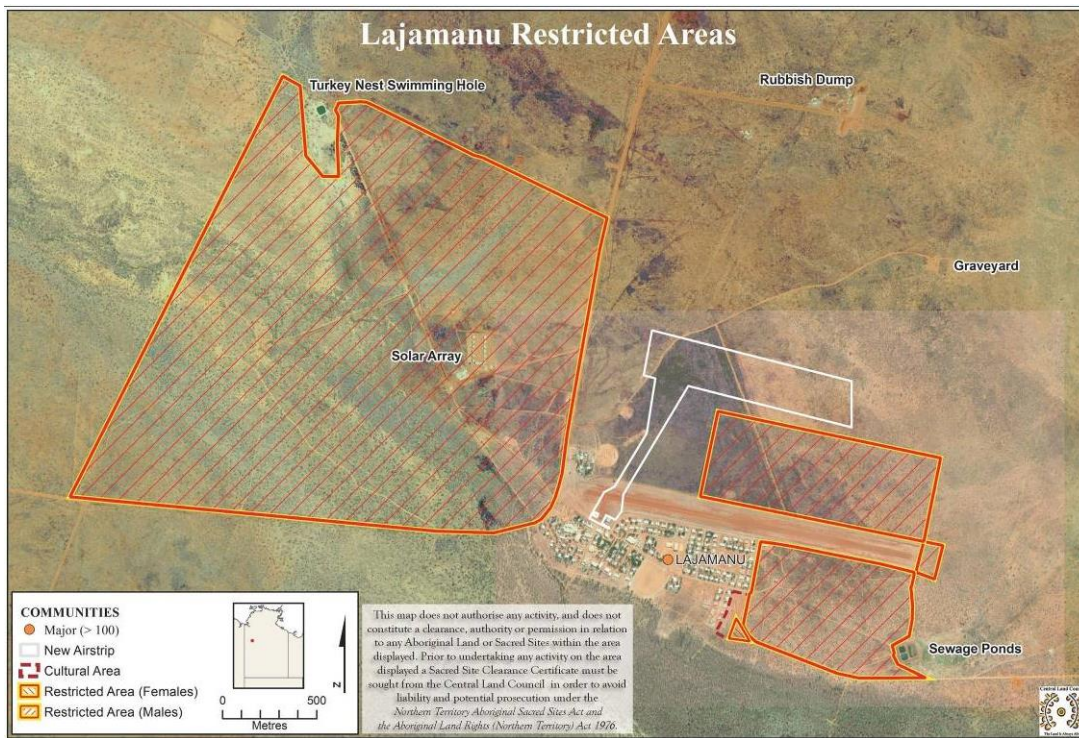
<sup>26</sup> Such as landscapes, dead kangaroos hit probably by Road Trains, driving techniques on unsealed road, a risk of breaking on flammable spinifex, the lyrics of *Walzing Matilda* and so on.

<sup>27</sup> 'Yambit' in Warlpiri English from 'Ant Bed', according to Dr Wild.



**Figure 3.2: Devils Marbles, Stuart Highway**

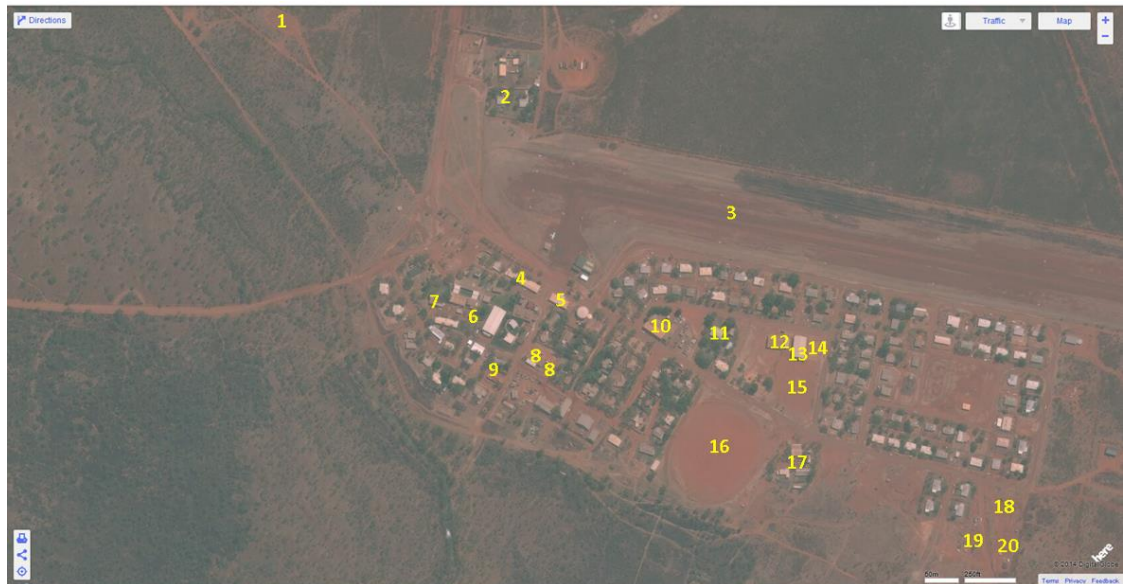
The author, a foreign visitor who did not have enough knowledge of today's remote Aboriginal community, had mixed feelings on arrival at Lajamanu. As I had believed without evidence that an Aboriginal community must be very traditional and unpolluted, I was surprised with the distance from my imagination. After passing a police station, there was a considerably large Lajamanu School surrounded by broken fences, a Shire Office, a sand Airstrip, Community Learning Centre (Library) rarely opening and having intermittent internet access, Health Centre with a doctor, Warnayaka Art Centre, and Shop having almost anything with much more expensive price than market price, and all of those services were basically *kardiya*-administered (see figures 3.3, 3.4). There was rubbish which solved the nutrition needs of sick dogs covered with huge ticks, which were everywhere in the town. Many small children had running noses but no shoes even walking on hot sands or some asphalt roads with dangerous rubbish. I could agree to some extent with the description of Louis Nowra:



**Figure 3.3: Map of Lajamanu town 1**  
Excerpt from Central Land Council (2014).

It is not necessary to exaggerate the dystopian quality of some Aboriginal communities; indeed, the fact is there are communities that exist in conditions which remind shocked overseas visitors of Third World refugee camps. (2007:37)

There was no ceremonial smoking but I found later that the society was full of ‘humbug’ including for cigarettes: For instance, I was first surprised to be frequently sponged from my Skin ‘fathers’ and older ‘brothers’ when I prepared a cigarette box as a tool of communication. Humbug can be defined as ‘begging on the streets of Alice Springs or asking for sexual favours in some Top End communities’ and taken as problems of Indigenous disadvantage and dysfunction (Kearney 2007; Dillon & Westbury 2007), while some regard humbug, or ‘demand sharing’ to be their culture and not to be necessarily negative (Peterson 1993; Dussart 2004). I found later that Milpirri was an event created by Jampijinpa who was also a person sometimes



**Figure 3.4: Map of Lajamanu town 2**

Excerpt from Yahoo! Maps (latitude=-18.335217444675365, longitude=130.635724067688).

- 1 Kurdiji Place (Restricted Area)
- 2 Police Station
- 3 Hooker Creek Airstrip (Current. See the future airstrip in Map 1)
- 4 Shire Office
- 5 Community Library and Learning Centre
- 6 Lajamanu School
- 7 Cenral Land Council Office
- 8 Warnayaka Art Centre
- 9 Longhouse
- 10 Shop and Service Station
- 11 Lajamanu Community Church
- 12 Youth Hall
- 13 New Basketball Court (Roofed. Milpirri 2011)
- 14 Old Basketball Court (Milpirri's Place for 2005, 2007, 2009)
- 15 Community Area (Rehearsal Place for Milpirri 2012)
- 16 Football Court
- 17 Lajamanu health clinic
- 18 Parnpa Place (Restricted Area)
- 19 Top/Sorry Camp Women's only area (Restricted Area Female)
- 20 Top/Sorry Camp Men's only area (Restricted Area Male)

humbugged by his relatives and even had difficulty to travel within a fixed budget to places

outside of his community to deliver his speech on Milpirri.

This project returning recordings from Wild to the community was the second time after 2007 so that the same generation of Elders easily remembered him. We stayed at a sole and expensive public accommodation, Longhouse (see figure 3.5), with shower and TV rooms crowded with family guests from other Warlpiri communities to join an event called Warlpiri



**Figure 3.5: Longhouse, Lajamanu**

Triangle in Lajamanu. During the short stay in Lajamanu we did not always go out to meet people but spent time in Longhouse for various purposes including to analyse the old sound recordings brought from AIATSIS: we removed some segments of people howling in ceremonies 40 years ago because according to Wild they caused annoyance to Elders in displaying them in 2007; counted song items with a digital audio editor; and corrected the captions for the CDs. At first I thought that he was a little too old to walk around to interview people under a sultry sun and preferred to stay in the air-conditioned accommodation for a longer time, but my guess was wrong. He taught me two lessons which were engraved on my mind: 1) ‘Write your diary in as much detail as possible — beginners often make the mistake of thinking that they could remember everything that happened, but eventually they regret having not written enough’; and 2) ‘the most important thing in fieldwork is to be patient’. Indeed, we spent a fulfilling time during the stay with meeting different people every day in the Longhouse

or at the shop to get information on who should be visited. Those lessons were helpful to me later when doing fieldwork alone.

On the following day, Wild invited Henry Cook Jakamarra, one of the oldest in the community, to the Longhouse. Interestingly, a number of song series that Wild had recorded in Hooker Creek, including Yilpinji songs, were performed by Jakamarra himself, so we were able to compare them with his current voice on the day. Although both old and new recordings by the oldest Elder are precious since Yilpinji was an ancestral love magic ritual, but is not performed any more except as individual songs, I was at that time innocent enough to be depressed to witness the reality that interview payment was greedily asked of Wild by a historic and honourable Aboriginal Elder. This is unimaginable in the case of a noble musician of Gagaku (literally ‘elegant music’) in Japanese singing a few songs for one of his old friends, who must have great shame at begging a pittance from him because he is well-supported by the nation so as to behave elegantly. This experience became one of the motives of my trial in Chapter 5 to hypothesise that one of the problems of the Indigenous cultural heritage in Australia can be attributed to the lack of the holders’ elegance resulting from the lack of social status in the nation.

The next day the shop did not open at all, but there was Sunday Service at a Baptist Church at Lajamanu run by Jerry Jangala, who is the biological father of Steve Jampijinpa and a decades-long colleague of Wild. In his sermon, Jangala introduced me to the attendees sitting separately in men’s and women’s seats at the church. Although I could not understand his

Warlpiri, I guessed, from the word ‘Milpirri’ used before and after my name, that he talked about my revisit to observe Milpirri in the following year. As Wild suggested, the church was worth visiting, notwithstanding that I have another religion, to meet various people from within or outside of the community. We also experienced Warlpiri Gospel songs accompanied by a synthesizer and some small girls’ dance with church staff.

The next day became a red-letter day for me. A Warlu (Fire) Purlapa, or an entertainment ceremony relating to Fire Dreaming, was held at the playground of Lajamanu School. Old men under trees were decorating young boys for the performance. I will detail this corroboree later. After the children had been body-painted, Steve Jampijinpa conferred on me a subsection name, or a Skin Name, *Jungarrayi*. The first meeting with Jampijinpa was in the Longhouse with Wild (see figure 3.6). Being a friendly and thoughtful character, he explained to us about the third project of Milpirri in the following year. He gave me his co-written book *Ngurra-kurlu: A way of working with Warlpiri people* (Patrick et al. 2008) with his signature and a short message. It was much later that he told me what he was thinking about the first impression of me and how he gave me *Jungarrayi* out of eight Warlpiri Skin Names. Wild was also granted a Skin Name, *Japangardi* in the late 60s during his fieldwork when he often worked with Steve’s father Jangala. In his co-presentation with Jampijinpa in Darwin in 2009, Wild jokingly said sorry to Jampijinpa for constantly taking his father away from his family to Melbourne and other places because he knew that Jampijinpa was really jealous when he was

little. Wild introduced me to Jampijinpa, who later became my great advisor and co-presenter in several international conferences.



**Figure 3.6: First meeting with Steve Jampijinpa at Longhouse**

On the following day, we visited a men's haunt in the 'Top Camp' ceremonial area under the shade of a bush hut, which is a unique building in the landscape of Lajamanu. Wild showed male Elders his old images and sound recordings on the display of my laptop with the risk of flying grit (see figure 3.7). Most of them watched nostalgic photos with eager eyes and enjoyed old songs whereas one was listening while making a boomerang and some were too distracted by card gambling behind us. As a little girl was scolded for breaking the law to come to her male relative at that time, I felt privileged to be introduced by Wild to them and with a brand-new Skin Name. In this way, the important people remembered my Asian face until my field research the following year.



I was trying to summarise the achievements of the short and busy stay in Lajamanu as we drove for a day to Alice Springs by a short cut along the unsealed Tanami Road (west and south of the Tanami Desert) with camels (see figure 3.8), brumbies (wild horses), cattle, bush turkeys, and above all, a lot of bumps. I was thinking, shaking my head, that in Lajamanu I missed not only alcoholic drink and smooth internet, but also the spiritual experience I expected. I was also dismayed by seeing Elders engaging in humbug. I felt it so natural to enter into the Indigenous community and meet Elders without any spiritual words like Hokari received; however, later I found it only a shallow interpretation after the first visit without more profound knowledge. I conducted four more visits to Lajamanu after this: two long and two short. In order to discuss Milpirri programs and my fieldwork for them in 2009 in the next chapter, I will firstly report the other musical activities which I witnessed during my fieldwork in 2010 – 2011.



**Figure 3.8: Camels on the road, south of Lajamanu**

## 3.2. Ancestral music and dance

### 3.2.1. Jardiwarnpa

Jardiwarnpa ceremonial music and dance have been chosen as the first theme and main part of the program of Milpirri since 2005. The constellation of Southern Cross with *ngurra-kurlu* cosmology can be clarified with the study of Jardiwarnpa and Kurdiji initiation ceremony. I returned to Lajamanu in 2010, a year in which Milpirri did not occur, in order to observe the musical circumstances of the traditional initiation ceremony. Although there was no more complete Jardiwarnpa ceremony as it used to be performed with fire for a couple of weeks, I was able to observe several occasions when Elders were singing the Songline during the initiation season. Because I now had better communication with the Elders compared to my first visit, I was able to even request them to gather in the Art Centre, where I was staying, to teach me privately, and to sing for recording inside the building. The situation of its sister ceremony Ngajakula, sometimes performed in Milpirri, was similar but the other sister ceremony Puluwanti (spelled *Buluwandi* by Peterson 1970) was almost forgotten by the local Elders.

The old generation in Lajamanu were born in a hunter-gatherer society, which is considered as relatively mobile and semi-nomadic, and consisted of individual bands each small in number. The bands may gather together seasonally to temporarily form a larger group of probably 100 individuals or more for special occasions such as ceremonies. There are more than 20 Elders in the list of the Warnayaka Art Centre in Lajamanu and some of them still remember

their childhood and times before the settlement life. Jangala looked back on the last traditional performance at Lajamanu.

Doi: When was the last Jardiwarnpa Ceremony?

Jangala: Jardiwarnpa, Wampana one. Paddy Samson was Engineer. He was Kurdu-ngurlu of Jardiwarnpa. Last we finished. That was long time ago. I don't know what year, sorry Karlyakarlya<sup>28</sup> [Doi]. I can't remember that one. But I remember that place. That was the last one. (Jangala 2011, pers. comm., 5 March)

There are still certain occasions when Jardiwarnpa songs, if not dances, are performed nowadays at Lajamanu and other places by Warnayaka Elders. The following are the performances which I was able to directly witness and/or join in their singing. Some rehearsals before Milpirri 2009 employed standing poles and ululating female dancers; this was more traditional than the night show per se. I will detail this in the later chapter. The occasions when the performances – usually only songs – were witnessed were on the shows and rehearsals of Milpirri since 2009, at Top Camp during initiation ceremony season in 2010-2011, songs by Elders by request, and presentation by Jampijinpa and myself.

Soon after the Christmas service at the Baptist church in 2010, I was at the Men's Area in Top Camp listening to some Jardiwarnpa songs by Elders coming back to Top Camp from the Church (see figure 3.9). At 7.00 pm on 25 December, I was there waiting for a couple of hours after having heard that 'something' would happen after the Service. It took time to gather

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<sup>28</sup> 'Karlyakarlya' (or more often 'Banji') is a kinship term for 'brother-in-law' Skin Name.

all the main Elders as usual. As I heard that it must be a ‘Big Night’, I expected the initial part or rehearsal of the series of Kurdiji initiation ceremony of the year. However, as they lacked the required number of performers, especially female in Top Camp, some male senior people decided not to hold it but instead began to sing some Jardiwarnpa songs. I understood later that the purpose of singing those songs was for my sound recording rather than their relationship to the following ceremony. Jangala reached for his clapsticks kept on the Eucalyptus leaf roof of the bush hut where both young and old men settle to play cards, smoke and chat. Senior Elders joined in singing and gave me the best position to make a sound-recording, in the middle of a semi-circle of singers near the bush hut.



**Figure 3.9: Waiting for sunset to sing Jardiwarnpa songs, Top Camp**  
Images of *kumunjayi* people are hidden.

I learned ancestral songs principally from Jangala (see figure 3.10) and Jampijinpa. On 5 March when I asked Jangala to allow me to record his songs for the fourth time, he told me to

stand near him and held my hands to a pair of boomerangs (*karli*) mindfully and ritually: This was the first moment I participated in Indigenous singing according to the traditional protocol. An explanation of a boomerang was given as ‘a token of respect’ in the show of Milpirri 2009. Jampijinpa was admitted by Elders to Traditional Warlpiri Leadership in 2008 but did not have experience to demonstrate Warlpiri songs by himself or with me in front of audiences, so we decided to pick up and rehearse several typical and significant items out of the Emu Songlines of the Jardiwarnpa ceremony, in order to prepare for future performances. Another Dreaming of Snake for Jardiwarnpa and Ngajakula songs was sung and taught by other Elders including Teddy Jupurrurla, a same generation friend of Jangala.



**Figure 3.10: Jerry Jangala teaching Jardiwarnpa songs, Warnayaka Art Centre**

On 9 March, the author requested five Elders to gather at the Art Centre, which was quiet outside opening hours, to sing the songs that Jampijinpa and the author were practising for presentations (see figure 3.11). The members present were Steve Jampijinpa, Jerry Jangala,

Leslie Jampijinpa, *kumunjayi* Japanangka and *kumunjayi* Jampijinpa. The Centre manager had allowed me to live there and use it for my research most of the time of my 2010-2011 fieldwork. The building did not have a shower room then, but it was as a special favour that she asked other Elders for their permission. The quiet Art Centre made for successful recording and interviewing of the Elders about the rare songs of the *kurlumpurrngu* without having to meet them at the Top Camp where dangerous and noisy dogs are around. This recording was used for our several presentations before the main singer in the video passed away in 2011.



**Figure 3.11: Elders demonstrating Jardiwarnpa and *kurlumpurrngu* songs, Warnayaka Art Centre**

Images of *kumunjayi* people are hidden.

The places where Jampijinpa and I sang those songs were Canberra, Canada, Japan and around Lajamanu. After my field research we travelled from Lajamanu to Canberra together to give a presentation called ‘Milpirri: A Response to Cultural Loss’ (Patrick & Doi 2011a) at the National Australian Folklore Conference in April 2011. This was the first chance when

Jampijinpa and I performed Jardiwarnpa songs and *kurlumpurrngu* demonstrations in public, although Jampijinpa previously gave several other presentations outside of Lajamanu with other people including Wild and myself without singing songs. In July in the same year, the author participated with Jampijinpa in the 41<sup>st</sup> World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) at Memorial University in Newfoundland (2011b). Whilst we talked mainly about the introduction of Milpirri at our presentation, we sang Jardiwarnpa songs, gave a *kurlumpurrngu* demonstration and even sang one of the Kurdiji songs with the participants painting Dreaming designs on their own faces at our workshop (2011c). With boomerangs, clapsticks, *kurlumpurrngu* and some acrylic paints we stopped in Japan on the way back from Canada. Jampijinpa narrated his Dreaming stories with my Japanese translation and the performance with body paintings attracted Japanese students and fans of didjeridu or Aboriginal paintings at a didjeridu shop in Osaka (2011d) and at Tenri University in Nara (2011e; see figure 3.12). Since Jampijinpa moved to Canberra for his research, we had more chances to show songs together with Aaron Corn for the public in general and for ANU students.

There were five songs explained with the Emu story related to the constellations with a question that Jampijinpa asked audiences every time at our presentations: ‘Do you think emus fly in the sky?’ Jampijinpa and the author created several patterns of PowerPoint files using Emu constellations in order to demonstrate the songs of Emu Dreaming. As an answer to the question, he indicates the constellations made of Crux and the Coalsack, which are recognised as ‘Emu in the Sky’ in Australian Aboriginal astronomy. The flying Emu is considered to have a



**Figure 3.12: Presentation by Steve Jampijinpa and myself in Tenri University with the audience of Gagaku music students**

Waniki (Crux, or Southern Cross) Crown. The neck, body, and legs across the constellation Scorpio are formed from dust lanes stretching across the Milky Way. The head is the Coalsack. The dark cloud next to the Waniki has inspired many Aboriginal stories and some Aboriginal groups see it as the head of a lawman, or a possum in a tree (Norris 2007), but the majority including Warlpiri people tell stories of a great emu.

As can be seen in the Milky Way, the shadow caused by the dust and gas clouds of space creates a hole as big as Waniki. The two stars of Alpha and Beta Centauri or The Two Pointers allow people to easily find the asterism of the Waniki from May to September. The photograph of *The Emu in the Sky* won its creator, Barnaby Norris, third prize in the prestigious 2007 Eureka Awards (A. Wild 2007) and was cited in Jampijinpa's PowerPoint slides for our presentations (see figure 3.19). *The Emu in the Sky* constellation defined by dark clouds rather

than the stars would also be approved by the International Astronomical Union (Ruggles & Cotte 2012).

Five songs were explained by Jampijinpa on the meaning of lyrics, related seasons, Skin Names belonging to them and associated Milpirri colouring, and classical elements. These collections were useful not only for our presentations but also as a reminder to song owners themselves. For instance, one day when Jampijinpa was travelling in Melbourne several months after our last performance, he called me to ask the right order and lyrics of the Jardiwarnpa songs. Musical notations of the songs are also demonstrated here.

[Song 1 ‘*Yampirri*’]

*Yampirri*

*Yampirri*

*Karna-nganja jina*

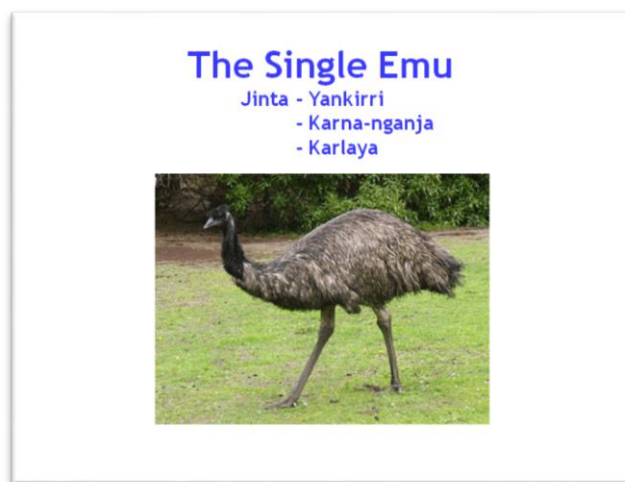
See figures 3.13 and 3.14. *Yampirri* is explained as ‘single or bachelor’. This Single Emu song has all the factors of the seasons and classical elements in the Emu songline according to Jampijinpa and was chosen as an introductory song. The PowerPoint Slide for this song displayed a picture of one emu.

That’s good start. Open place. You see what that song talking about? *Yankirri* [Emu], *Wirnininja* [to swim], there is always *Ngapa* [Water] there. You can’t sing *Yankirri* song without *Ngapa* song. You can see? Always with *Ngapa*. This is why: when out of site, wet season, lot of water there, that’s what it means. Going into the wet season. (Jangala 2011, pers. comm., 5 March)

Four seasons. *Jina*, ‘I am’, Short of *Jinta*. *Yampirri*, ‘Single’. ‘Emu sing about himself. I got no partner, where my partner gone?’ *Karnanganja* ‘I am going to eat’. (Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 26 March)

That’s the single Emu: Single in both way. Single because he’s got no partner. Single means one, neh? And just one Emu.

Next one: wet season which is coming. Emu’s dead. He’s dead. It’s out of our sight because he has died. *Yuwayi*. (Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 22 October)



**Figure 3.13: Diagram of *Karna-nganja* of Jardiwarnpa**

The slide was made and used in the presentation by Steve Jampijinpa and the author using PowerPoint.

## Karna-nganja



**Figure 3.14: Notation of *Karna-nganja* of Jardiwarnpa**

Transcription of the song performed by Jerry Jangala, Leslie Jampijinpa, *kumunjayi* Japanangka and *kumunjayi* Jampijinpa. (2011, pers. comm., 9 March).

[Song 2: 'Japurrarla']

*Japurrarla*

*Japurrarla,*

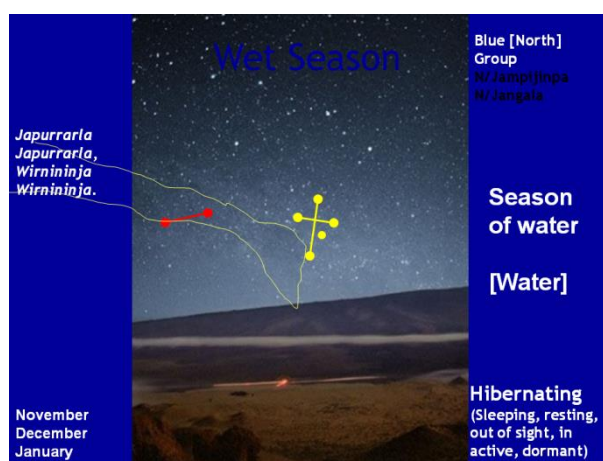
*Wirnininja*

*Wirnininja.*

See figures 3.15 and 3.16. *Japurrarla* song was explained as Wet Season, belonging to Blue, North Group of N/Jampijinpa N/Jangala.<sup>29</sup> It is told to have the factor of the season of Water (November, December and January) when the Emu is hibernating out of sight.

*Japurrarla* – in the water. *Wirnininja* – feather flew out of water, swim. (Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 26 March)

*Japurrarla*: That's the Emu going to the water. Going into the ocean. We got go for the ocean. Ha ha ha! It's in the song. Swim across the ocean. It's soft. Mud in the water. (Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 22 October)



**Figure 3.15: Diagram of *Japurrarla* of Jardiwarnpa**

The slide was made and used in the presentation by Steve Jampijinpa and the author using PowerPoint.

<sup>29</sup> The relationship between Warlpiri kinship system and four Dreaming colours and directions will be explained in Chapter 4 on Milpirri programs.

## Japurrarla

**Figure 3.16: Notation of *Japurrarla* of Jardiwarnpa**

Transcription of the song performed by Jerry Jangala, Leslie Jampijinpa, *kumunjayi* Japanangka and *kumunjayi* Jampijinpa. (2011, pers. comm., 9 March).

[Song 3: ‘*Wirrimpirli*’]

*Wirrim pirlpirli pirlpirli*

*Wirrim pirlpirli pirlpirli,*

*Kurlanga rdilypa ngkaa rdilypa*

*Kurlanga rdilypa ngkaa rdilypa.*

See figures 3.17 and 3.18. *Wirrim pirlpirli*: After the Wet (Cool Season), The Emu of Green

East Group of N/Japangardi N/Japanangka is shaking out water and awakening for rebirth of a

New Year cycle and of a new day to revitalise in February, March and April.

*Wirrimpirrimpirri* – come out of water, like a dog shaking water off. *Kurlangardilpa* – suddenly get out. (Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 26 March)

Jampijinpa: *Wirrimpirli*, ‘Swim across’ and now is on another bank. Shake the water off like a dog shake. Like a dog jumping into water comes out of the water and shake water off is that one. He is in another land, neh?

Doi: Maybe South Africa?

Jangala: Ha ha ha! *Yuwayi*. (Jampijinpa & Jangala 2011, pers. comm., 22 October)



**Figure 3.17: Diagram of *Wirrim-pirli* of Jardiwarnpa**

The slide was made and used in the presentation by Steve Jampijinpa and the author using PowerPoint.

## Wirrimpirli



**Figure 3.18: Notation of *Wirrimpirli* of Jardiwarnpa**

Transcription of the song performed by Jerry Jangala, Leslie Jampijinpa, *kumunjayi* Japanangka and *kumunjayi* Jampijinpa. (2011, pers. comm., 9 March).

[Song 4: ‘*Pirliyarra*’]

*Pirliyarra Wuruwurukarriyi,*

*Pirliyarra Wuruwurukarriyi.*

See figures 3.19 and 3.20. *Pirliyarra* is sung to celebrate Dry Season (May, June, and July), belonging to Red South Group of N/Jakamarra Na/Jupurrurla. Looking for water, active Emu is in full flight, learning, involved in activities.

*Pirliyarra* – hard feet, feed like armour, like a leather. *Wuruwurukarriyi* – tangling. He’s singing about *pirliyarra*, oh my legs are tangling, while he is flying. (Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 26 March)

*Pirliyarra* – It’s Emu flying. But it’s story there. Legs tangling. If you look in July, you’ll find Emu fly, Coalsack. (Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 22 October)



**Figure 3.19: Diagram of *Pirliyarra* of Jardiwarnpa**

The slide was made and used in the presentation by Steve Jampijinpa and the author using PowerPoint. The photo ‘Emu in the Sky’ (Norris 2007) is used.

[Song 5: ‘*Mangkururlarna*’]

*Mangkururlarna Wirriwirrirla,*  
*Jikaya Wirriwirrirla.*

See figures 3.21 and 3.22. *Mangkururlarna* is another interesting song to mention the existence of oceans outside the continent. The wet and hot season (August, September, and October)

# Pirliyana



**Figure 3.20: Notation of *Pirliyar* of Jardiwarnpa**

Transcription of the song performed by Jerry Jangala, Leslie Jampijinpa, *kumunjayi* Japanangka and *kumunjayi* Jampijinpa. (2011, pers. comm., 9 March).

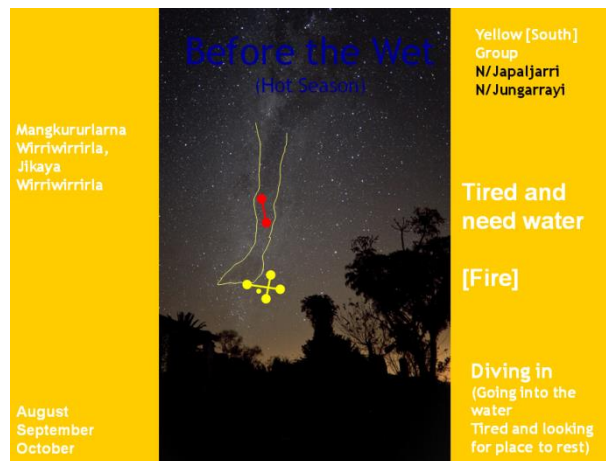
belongs to Yellow South Group of N/Japaljarri N/Jungarrayi when the bachelor Emu gets tired and dives into the water to look for a place to rest.

*Jikaya* – getting tired, troubled. *Mangkurlarna* – I’m in the water. *Wirriwirrirla* – related to water. (Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 26 March)

*Mangkurlarna* is ocean. That is going to the ocean. (Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 22 October)

For those occasions a slide showing the Emu flying from east to west in the world was created (see figure 3.23). In those presentations, Jampijinpa demonstrated his hypothesis on the

Dreaming Emu's role in the world. First, Jampijinpa and the author made the moving image of the Emu constellation's semicircular flight in the night sky with three Emu names (*karna-nganja*: east, *yankirri*: west and *karlaya*: horizon). This movement of the constellations is close



**Figure 3.21: Diagram of *Mangkururlarna* of Jardiwarnpa**

The slide was made and used in the presentation by Steve Jampijinpa and the author using PowerPoint.

## Mangkururlarna



**Figure 3.22: Notation of *Mangkururlarna* of Jardiwarnpa**

Transcription of the song performed by Jerry Jangala, Leslie Jampijinpa, *kumunjayi* Japanangka and *kumunjayi* Jampijinpa. (2011, pers. comm., 9 March).

to the diagram which was displayed in the website of Museum Victoria (n.d.). Another interesting thing is that the word *mangkuru* (as in *Mangkururlarna*) in Song 5 signifies ‘sea, ocean’. It would be hard to explain how people in the Tanami Desert in ancient times were able to have the concept of the ocean. Jampijinpa emphasises that even though contradiction abounds if it was about the ocean, Warlpiri people in the desert had passed along from generation to generation the word as a significant terminology. This is why he chose an ocean design for the background of the PowerPoint to show the Milpirri and Lajamanu stories (see figure 3.24). By

showing the pictures of flightless birds, he explained that the single Emu in the sky of Australia got across the sea and land to the continent of Africa as an Ostrich to find his partner. Likewise according to Jampijinpa, the Emu would become the Rhea in South America and the (now extinct) Moa in New Zealand. Indeed, most of the flightless birds inhabit the southern hemisphere. In 2012 at Lulju Outstation where I sang those songs with Jangala and Jampijinpa after my overseas travel with Jampijinpa and around Milpirri 2011, they talked openly about this episode in front of visitors to Lajamanu invited by Jangala to his house.

Jangala: Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for coming here. For this open place here, thank you.

Jampijinpa: He's always alone here its pleasure to have anyone here. ... This is made you happy.

We're trying to give you a little bit of what Milpirri is trying to do.

And Emu. Emu song. *Yuwayi*.

That is going back to trying

Indigenous proverb: you know, 'Living in the homeland of Kangaroo, you'll have to understand Emu'. This is that song of Emu. Hope it makes you travel when you take this country with you anywhere, *Yuwayi*.

So it's not you going around the country. It's this country make you go wherever. It's everybody's home. Whoever's home.

This four seasons' song: we got a wet season song, we got a dry season song, and in-between: before the wet and after the wet. *Yuwayi*.

[Singing]

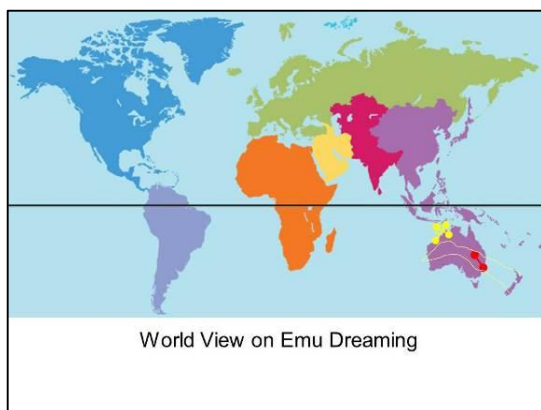
Jampijinpa: That's Emu we were talking about. Four seasons. But what we're really talking you is this Emu from Sydney that Songline going up to Broome, that call it dinosaurs print over there. But we believe that was Emu print singing. That was Emu in South Africa. Cos you can see that Emu inside Africa. That call it ostrich. Ha ha. It goes around to South America they call Rhea. Keep going west you see it in NZ, eh? But I think NZ mob got Moa bird. No more Emu there but still got Emu there. Cassowary. But nothing in North Hemisphere. This South Hemisphere all belong so called flight-less birds. *Yuwayi*. You can see? This song really is talking about our cycle, a clock talking about clock. North hemisphere another moiety. ...

Doi: Is Emu considered as Teacher?

Jampijinpa: Yeah, Emu is considered teacher. Representing teaching. Kangaroo's country.

Doi: And Quolls are Students?

Jampijinpa: Yeah, so we must become quoll. Thank you for that one (Jangala & Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 22 October).



**Figure 3.23: The movement of Flying Emu 1**  
Made with Steve Jampijinpa using PowerPoint.  
The yellow Flying Emu moves from right to left with an animation function.



**Figure 3.24: Flightless birds in the Southern Hemisphere**  
Made with Steve Jampijinpa using PowerPoint.

As discussed earlier, this ceremony has not been held recently but its several songs are still sung occasionally. The story of Jardiwarnpa was not limited to the south hemisphere and

the rest of the story in relation to the north of Australia or Asia will be discussed in Chapter 5 together with the comparison to *matsuri* tradition in Japan. Jampijinpa and Tracks Dance Company highlight the function of Milpirri for reconstructing the Jardiwarnpa ceremony which had not been performed by the Warnayaka Warlpiri since the 1980s. According to some people involved in Milpirri, Jardiwarnpa had been reawakened on the occasion of the first Milpirri in 2005 after nearly 30 years of being absent from community life (Tracks 2005b; McEwen 2007). There is, however, a question against the Jardiwarnpa history: according to a Warlpiri female teacher at Lajamanu School, when the author had an interview with her in 2009, Jardiwarnpa ceremony was and has been constantly performed at least once every few years independently of the events of Milpirri. Afterwards, the author confirmed that the whole ceremony was almost abolished in Lajamanu in the 1980s and it was at least correct that Milpirri 2005 restored part of the ceremony.

### **3.2.2. Waruwarta**

The main reason for my longer-term field work beginning in November in 2011 was to see the Warlpiri initiation ceremony. As the Milpirri-themed Kurdiji ceremony was in 2007 when I was still in Japan, I wanted to observe the ceremony after the following Milpirri in 2009. I transferred from a Master's to PhD program and was given more time to conduct fieldwork so that I decided to return to Lajamanu in order to join the whole initiation ceremony. Later I found

that the ceremony performed was Waruwarta, different in several points from the formal Warlpiri Kurdiji ceremony which contains the fundamental knowledge of *ngurra-kurlu*.

The process of the beginning of the ceremony takes considerable time due to several reasons. It takes many days to gather boys for initiation and their extended families are sometimes as far as 2,250 kilometres away according to Peterson (2000). Although several teachers at Lajamanu School informed the author during fieldwork that the attendance rate of initiated boys reduces dramatically after their initiation, it seems that local people cooperate for school education at least up until the initiation ceremony for them. Jampijinpa told me that as the season for the Kurdiji initiation ceremony was originally right after the Jardiwarnpa ceremony – around November – it was delayed until the Christmas holidays after the end of the school year. Whenever I asked young people in Lajamanu about the time of the initiation ceremony, they answered ‘Christmas time’.

Although several days were called ‘Big Night’ by some of my Skin brothers, the real night was on 28 December and I later found it called ‘Warming Up’ for the initiation ceremony. At 7.00 pm some 20 male adults, more than usual, congregated in the Men’s Area and worked out a plan for Waruwarta, speaking in Warlpiri about some male-secret subjects; they told me to delete this part of the video recording. Soon after that, Jangala began to walk alone towards the Women’s Area, which was about a minute’s walk away. Subsequently, the rest of the men moved to the centre of the Top Camp and sat facing to the East and showing their backs to Women’s Area. Finally at 7.30pm they started to sing and Jampijinpa also joined in. The tonal

centre of songs was relatively low on that day and people could not sing loudly the latter half of each song item because of the lowness, where they repeat the lyrics of the first half in a lower octave. Ten old singers sat to sing and beat the earth with empty 2 litre PET bottles (but no shield or clapsticks) and nine young singers joined them in the same line and four in the second line. Rosie Napurrurla was the first lady who stood up and began dancing around 8.00 pm. It was remarkable that even very old men preferred to use plastic bottles for percussion, often interrupted by their mobile phones ringing and continuing to smoke in the traditional ritual which is a shortened version of Kurdiji but at least authentic in some Warlpiri communities including Yuendumu. That was all for that night (or that year).

There was no specific movement related to initiation ceremony on New Year's Day and I waited until 3 January. It was unclear when the following stage of the ceremony would start because the rainy weather often controlled ancestral events. At 6.00 pm some younger adults played the *mangarta* (or 'marble game'), which, whether it is traditional or introduced, is played in various parts of Australia (Australian Sports Commission 2008), and began to join the group consisting of senior people. Jampijinpa was a little late for the rendezvous to decide the schedule and about which version of Warlpiri initiation ceremony to perform at that time: Kurdiji or Waruwarta. After making the final decision not to do Kurdiji, which would take more than five days, but Waruwarta, which would take three days at most, I heard that they would sing only approximately half an hour of Songlines. Indeed, this explanation on the song time is about the last part of the series of ceremony at Kurdiji Place and until then even the shortened

Waruwarta ceremony includes the day time ceremony called *Marnakurrawarnu* just as the Kurdiji ceremony does.

On the following day, I arrived at the ceremonial area at 8.30 am and thought that I was totally late as they had said that the performance would start at six or seven. However, I was the first to arrive and gradually, young people and dogs, all covered with red ochre, began to assemble (see figure 3.25). As some of the representatives of male and female Elders decided to perform Waruwarta on the previous day, Jangala apologised to male Elders that they would not do Kurdiji. One of them was saying that the big difference between them is that Kurdiji takes several days but Waruwarta is the short version and takes only a few hours exclusively for the last stage. Jangala added that Waruwarta was conveyed via Pintupi, Luritja, Pitjantjara and Ngalia Warlpiri people. Another day, an Elder *kumunjayi* Jangala-Jupurrurla (Anonymous I 2009, pers. comm., 3 November) appealed to me in an interview that Kurdiji, on the other hand, clearly belongs to the Warlpiri people but never to another language group – and that was our last conversation. That year saw the last ceremonial dance by him. Jampijinpa asserted that the contents of initiation ceremonies have been changed since around the beginning of the 1980s although there are several pictures of Waruwarta taken in 1976 by Ludo Kuipers (OzOutback n.d.a). According to Jangala the year when Kurdiji was performed last was the same year of the second Milpirri in 2007. They later described those processes including Kajirri.

Doi: When was the last Kajirri ceremony?

Jampijinpa: Real proper one [organised only by Warlpiri people] ... 7 months in '87.

Jangala: That was large one, that was Warlpiri one. Gurindji one [Kajirri organised by both Warlpiri and Gurindji peoples] was that with this mob [people in Lajamanu]. That was '93. Gurindji one.

Doi: Was it called 'Big Sunday'?

Jampijinpa: Yes. Big Sunday, ha ha.

Doi: When was the last proper Kurdiji? Recently you have only Waruwarta.

Jampijinpa: Last one was 2007.

Doi: Milpirri year?

Jampijinpa: Yeah, same year. *Witi* one [The dance with *witi* poles]. That was the last one.

Doi: Is Waruwarta very short?

Jangala: Yeah, we're not happy with that. Sorry to say that, because we got few people here maybe that one was lazy way.

Jampijinpa: They [other Elders who claimed for Waruwarta] are like dictators. (Jangala & Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 5 March)



**Figure 3.25: Gathering men seated facing the east, Top Camp**

At noon around 50 men and even more women gathered and sang and danced only one song item for less than one minute. Jangala and Jampijinpa came around later when the other

male Elders were painting on Kurdiji or shields, with periodic singing. The design on the shields depends on the Skin Group the boy belongs to (see figures 3.26, 27, 28). After that the father and son took me by car through the road with the sign 'Aboriginal Land, No Entry' (see figure 3.29) to the tin shed marked 'Men Only'. This way is passed several times during each initiation ceremony. They showed me several secret utensils and talked about how they felt sad to have no more Kurdiji even though there are only a few necessities for the ceremony. On the Kajirri ceremony they said they could not hold it because of the lack of Bush Bean trees which are necessary for the ceremony. However, Jampijinpa mentioned an intention to revive the ceremony at the following Milpirri.



**Figure 3.26: Painting *kurdiji*, Top Camp**

At 5.00 pm when we went back to Top Camp people were almost finishing the decoration of young dancers with acrylic paint and fluff taken out of nappies instead of using traditional ochre and *wamurlu* (vegetable down). Male Elders, including Jangala, sang songs



**Figure 3.27: *Kurdiji* with the design for Jupurrurla novices**



**Figure 3.28: *Kurdiji* with the design for Jungarrayi and Jampijinpa novices**



**Figure 3.29: The sign ‘Aboriginal Land, No Entry’, Lajamanu**

periodically and others ululated sometimes. Marnakurrawarnu, the daytime ceremony, was performed usually before sunset in the series of the initiation ceremonies in that year (see figures 3.30, 31, 32, 33). After the dances and dinner at around 8.30, a fire was lit and an hour later mothers and brothers-in-law took novices across the fire and the centre of male singers’ line to a point east of the singers where they made them lie down on blankets. At this moment,

the mothers told the boys one of the magical words that Jampijinpa explained to me later and was referred to in each of our presentations:

‘Walk in the footstep of your older brothers, stay on the pathway and do not walk off the pathway because you would be easily distracted and all would be lost’. (Patrick & Doi 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d, 2011e)



**Figure 3.30: Yawaki (Conkerberry Dreaming) Parnpa by Jupurrurla and Jakamarra group**



**Figure 3.31: Lungkarrajarra (Two Blue Tongue Lizard Dreaming) by Jampijinpa and Jangala Group**

Images of *kumunjayi* people are hidden.

Half an hour later the boys put on ancestral belts and were sent back to the west of where the women were assembled. After midnight, with male Elders’ songs being performed once every few minutes, the Morning Star began to be seen in the east sky at 3.15 am. It is said that there are four celestial objects which can produce shadows on the ground: the sun, the moon, the Morning Star and the Milky Way with high transparency and no light pollution in the sky of the central desert (Watanabe n.d.). At 5.00 am, when the Morning Star was high in the sky and Orion sank below the horizon, the two boys frequently stood with arms back of the head and sat down again with elbows on a pillow in front of a small fire (see figures 3.34, 35).



**Figure 3.32: *Kurdiji* giving Parnpa by *kumunjayi* Jangala**  
Images of *kumunjayi* people are hidden.



**Figure 3.33: *Wirntiki* (Stone curlew Dreaming) Parnpa by Linton Jupurrurla**  
Images of *kumunjayi* people are hidden.



**Figure 3.34: Learning boys seated like an embryo**



**Figure 3.35: Ritual boys in 1975**  
Photographed by Kuipers (OzOutback n.d.a).

At the same time a few (at most a dozen) female Elders were dancing intermittently until the dawn (see figure 3.36). The final songs were sung by men around 20 minutes later while all the women (including the boys' mothers), each with a fire-stick, formed two lines facing each other to make a path for the boys who were led along it by their brothers-in-law. The boys received plenty of food from the women, who were filled with emotion and crying. That was the end of the first main night.

As I heard that I could join another part of the ceremony any time before nightfall, I took some rest during the day and walked to the Men Only ceremonial place through the



**Figure 3.36: Female dancers behind male singers, all facing the east, Top Camp**

‘Aboriginal Land’ gate at around 5.00 pm. I saw many cars parked and men starting the most secret-sacred part of the ceremony (name withheld). I cannot describe any details about what happened during it because of customary law. As was mentioned before, a number of European visitors – explorers and journalists – in the past reported even such a secret-sacred ceremony to fulfil their pedagogical needs. If researchers hereafter, including me, respect and follow Indigenous Law which forbids attendants from making records or reports of secret-sacred ceremonies, the disgrace and misunderstanding of the reports by former *kardiya* visitors who ignored the Law and wrote whatever they pleased will not be corrected or criticised, but continue to be kept in libraries for ever.

After that, the male participants moved back to Top Camp in their cars and made the biggest assembly of both women and men and all the generations (see figure 3.37). This assembly was generally public but when the novices were turned by their custodians to face the hundreds in the audience, women faced away and covered the eyes of their (even infant) girls.

This might be caused by the fact that the novices had just experienced the secret sacred ceremony and the change of both their appearance with body painting and spiritual aspect from the early morning must be respected. There they formally declared who the novices were and that that night the Waruwarta would happen at 'Kurdiji Place'.



**Figure 3.37: One of the biggest assemblies before moving to the final stage of Waruwarta, Top Camp**

Kurdiji Place is the ceremonial ground near the entrance of the 'Aboriginal Land' which has Men's Area and Men's shed behind the solar panels (see figure 3.3). For only several hours of the initiation night, women and small children gathered for the Waruwarta ceremony, which is public for the whole community. Mainly older men and some guardians came first, in cars and an old big bus owned by the community, to prepare the ceremonial area. They levelled the ground, made several camp fires and set two circles surrounded by sticks. After several minutes, a group of young but senior teenagers, who were painted since the previous part of the ceremony, called as they ran from the Top Camp to the new ceremonial area, assembling about

2 kilometres away to the east (see figure 3.38). When they finished their gallant jog with a final big scream at the Kurdiji Place and sat around a circle, another group arrived as courageously and loudly as the first one. This was the beginning of the two different moieties competing with each other in many ways. As another group probably of the same ages as the novices followed and copied the scream, the men at the Place laughed at them. Women and children finally arrived and then it was the time for younger boys to run and jump on the fire (which reminded me of Firewalking ceremony performed at certain *matsuri* in Japan). Women, including small girls, began dancing in accordance with the patri-moieties they belonged to. Jampijinpa explained to me that the names are *yalpurru-kurlangu* and *ngawungawu-kurlangu* ('our moiety' and 'the other').<sup>30</sup> Each group sang wildly in competition with the rival group and waited for the women who were in the preferred marriage categories for the singing groups, the women dancing in accordance with their songs (see figure 3.39). They ridiculed each other for their inferior technique of singing and for the small numbers of female dancers in the group. This can be explained that the forcefulness of the men's songs and the ties to their women dancing in proportion to an upsurge of the volume of songs should be contested at the ritual traditionally arranging marriages. This ancestral ritual can later be compared with Milpirri as another chance of both boys and girls presenting their performance in front of the enthusiastic audience which might include their future spouses. The final stage of Waruwarta and the whole process of the initiation ceremony followed after the song battles ended and the women and children had left

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<sup>30</sup> Group intogeneration moiety, called *kalinyanu*, not taken up in Milpirri. See figure 4.3 in Chapter 4.

the Kurdiji Place. This was, however, another secret part of the traditional law which I am not permitted to report publicly.



**Figure 3.38: Kurdu-yumpu** ('everyone is running') to Waruwarta Ceremony, Kurdiji Place



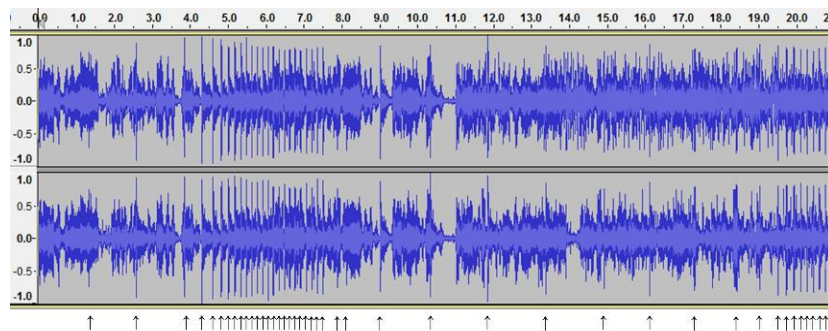
**Figure 3.39: Singing matches** by *yalpurru-kurlangu* and *ngawungawu-kurlangu* male groups and female dance, Kurdiji Place

All of the series of the initiation ceremony were held in January. There were three Waruwarta rituals this season and each created one to four novices. The third ceremony had an interesting song performance with dancers decorated traditionally with crushed *wamurlu* natural cottons but not with white nap. Since the majority of songs in Marnakurrawarnu were sometimes seen in the past, I will undertake here an interesting analysis of a song in terms of showing unique characteristic of percussion rhythm when it is compared with typical *yellafella* (Japanese or Asian) songs. The ritual called *warlawurru* (Wedged-tail Eagle) was performed in the afternoon. The solo dancer was a young Jungarrayi and directed by Elders including *kumunjayi* Jangala-Jupurrurla at the centre of the ceremonial area (see figure 3.40). One of the Elders beat the bottom of a tin bucket with the rhythm (see figure 3.41). The singers did not sing to the beat due to the highly secret/sacred lyrics, except that Jangala continued singing a less

secret Marnakurrawarnu song categorised by local people as ‘easy one’ in a small voice as well as at other situations including during the painting of shields and dancers’ bodies.<sup>31</sup>



**Figure 3.40: Warlawurru (Wedged-tail Eagle Dreaming) Jungarrayi’s dance, Top Camp**



**Figure 3.41: Beat pattern for Warlawurru (Wedged-tail Eagle Dreaming) Song**  
Analysed with the software Audacity.

There is a reminiscence of Asian music in the *accelerando* beats used in the *warlawurru jukurrpa*. Take the typical rhythm pattern of *kakko*-drum used in the genre of *Tōgaku*, or music of Tang Dynasty in Gagaku (see figure 3.42). It should be reasonable to call it ‘Asian’ beat from the fact that the condensation of ancient Asian music has adopted the beat with the drum which plays an important role of conducting the music. In relation to Japanese *matsuri*, the tradition of

<sup>31</sup> Other instances of rhythmic obfuscation in Aboriginal singing have been made elsewhere, e.g. Marett 2005.

*okoshi-daiko* (‘awakening drum’), which is said to originate in its first call for the beginning of a *matsuri* event, has a similar rhythm pattern. Probably most Japanese people who hear the opening of the third movement of *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* by Béla Bartók (Sz. 106, BB 114; see figure 3.43) would naturally recall the sound of the *hyōshigi*-clapsticks played at Kabuki dance drama or Sumo wrestling tournament<sup>32</sup>, which is an interchangeable rhythm of *kakko*, and *okoshi-daiko* in *matsuri*: Setting aside the question of any historical connection, they all have something in common with the musical characteristics of Warlpiri *Warlawurru*.



**Figure 3.42: Beat pattern of *kakko***

*Katarai* and *mororai* patterns [above] and the usage in *Etenraku*, *Tōgaku* [below]. (Oshida 1975:73)



**Figure 3.43: Opening of the third movement of *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* by Béla Bartók (Sz. 106, BB 114)**

<sup>32</sup> Shinto ritual sumo was held as an agricultural rite in order to find out if they would have a rich or poor harvest, or pray for a rich harvest, and to thank for divine protection (Akizawa & Kawamura eds. 2010).

During my field work I found that the attitude of the community to photo recordings of various performing arts and related objects had different levels being roughly divided into four although it is sometimes too ambiguous to distinguish.

1. Things that people ask me to take photos/videos for their recordings.
2. Things that they allow me to make recordings of for academic purpose but not for other purposes.
3. Things that I cannot make recordings of but can observe.
4. Things that I cannot access at all because of my gender or initiation status.

Photos/videos can be taken of all of them by initiated members after consultation with senior Elders. In general, many people liked to be recorded at certain events (1). This might arise from either a sense of crisis of their tradition or just for entertainment as albums of themselves or their families. Of course, there is no consensus of all the community and some do not like photographing or flashing especially in the dark. Obviously a public ceremony or part of a series can be regarded as able to be photographed. This category includes most of Milpirri and Marnakurrawarnu rituals of the initiation ceremony. Even at some part of Sorry Business, many mourning ladies in black and white dress asked me to take their photos; this must not be refused. Whenever I could not attend such part of the initiation ceremony because of my misunderstanding of the results of their meeting, having differences of timing, or returning to the accommodation for meal, a short rest or charging batteries, Elders got disappointed at me saying that Jungarrayi missed a beautiful ceremony. What I recorded with their

acknowledgement, I downloaded recording data into computers in the Community Library, Art Centre and so on. Also I created closed folders to put the photos of a *kumunjayi* person in as people often advised me not to delete them but to keep them for the future.

Some events, paintings, designs and utensils have restrictions on their release for others, especially for the opposite sex and children (2). Some things I could observe and record for myself because I am a male researcher, but there were other things that I could not. This is why precious were the anthropological reports by the earlier female researchers, such as Daisey Bates, Olive Pink, Phyllis Kaberry and Catherine Berndt (partly cited in Nowra 2007).

Elders may have differing opinions on some events regarding whether a researcher can observe the event or not (3). During part of the initiation ceremony, although Jampijinpa had told me that I could make recordings of it for research purposes, I was not allowed to do so because I did not have him with me at that time. All other Elders who were present prohibited me from not only taking photos but also taking any notes on what I was seeing. In other cases, I was sometimes able to go close to the Women's Shelter when I was walking near them and was called by friendly female Elders. They practically requested me for some business because I was taken as a neutral outsider while some other strict Elders including my 'mothers-in-law' overlooked my visit, even if they did not talk to me. After I visited them and returned to the Men's Area, some Elders advised me that I should not have walked there (4).

There was a criticism by a Japanese researcher against European anthropologists' or explorers' exposures of secret/sacred ceremonies. Since Sir John Lubbock in his study

*Prehistoric Times* listed the circumcision and subincision among a number of such customs, little was known about these rites until the investigations of Baldwin Spencer and other anthropologists around 1900 (Darby n.d.). More recently, Nowra (2007:51) who was concerned about issues of Aboriginal violence wrote that ‘the situation has become so bad in the Tanami Desert that mothers have banned their sons from going out into the bush for initiation camps’. However, I found that his statement was not applicable to the current situation of the mothers in Lajamanu as far as I observed, although I cannot divulge the detail of the secret ceremony. Also, it can be naturally expected that the future of secret ceremonies will change in both good and bad aspects from the fact that a male medical staff member is now obliged to be present.

The Kurdiji circumcision ceremony has not been performed lately, but the Waruwarta was instead seen in the year I visited. The important teaching for novices is still handed down to mothers in the process of the series of the shortened initiation ceremony. While the musical and ritual comparison between Aboriginal and Japanese was not seen in the past, the daylight Marnakurrawarnu ceremony had the interesting song items for comparison and Waruwarta had firewalking probably putting outsiders or even Japanese people in mind of their traditions. The analysis of the cosmology of the way on which the initiated young men should walk away from Goanna Holes will be deepened in terms of *yellafella* interpretation in Chapter 5. Even though ethnomusicologically and anthropologically interesting events had happened, it was not described if it was a secret and very sacred part of the ceremony. One of the public Warlpiri dances performed in the authentic Kurdiji but not in the recent Waruwarta ceremony is

performed significantly only in Milpirri in recent years. The program will be detailed in the next chapter.

### 3.2.3. Purlapa

Performances of Purlapa and Yawulyu were occasionally heard while I was staying in Lajamanu, not only during Milpirri time. Although they used to accompany dance in formal rituals, now they are informally sung by artists when they are painting their works or on request by others. Here, we will see how *ngurra-kurlu* ideology can be found in Purlapa, a type of Warlpiri public entertainment. Singers are usually very senior in Purlapa as well as other ceremonies, but the existence of uninitiated boys as dancers, which is contradicted in some literature, is confirmed in the current situation. The question of whether uninitiated boys dance or not is related to Milpirri which focuses on them dancing hip hop taught by Tracks.

Although Stephen Wild did not witness boys joining a Purlapa as dancers during his fieldwork in the early 1970s, there are several pieces of evidence which demonstrate that juvenile performance of Purlapa existed before the Milpirri movement. Steve Jampijinpa, born in 1964, remembered that when he was little, he joined the traditional Purlapa dance in the school playground.<sup>33</sup> This story is supported by Ludo Kuipers who stayed in Lajamanu in 1976, and had photographed ‘Warlpiri boys performing a traditional Purlapa dance’ (Corbis Images

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<sup>33</sup> Also in the AIATSIS archive is a monochrome photograph of a small body-decorated boy dancing with a smiling adult at Hooker Creek, which seems to have been taken by Mervyn Meggitt back in the early 1950s.

n.d.; see figure 3.44) in the school grounds. He explained that Purlapa ‘usually takes the form of a stamping dance by men and boys’. Furthermore, Maurice Jupurrula Luther told in 1977 the detail of the first boys’ Purlapa as follows:

But now, we had the practice dancing for the “Purlapa wiri” and the school grounds were full of parents who were singing the corroboree. That was the first time that something like that had happened, it was never done before. It was a very good thing, everybody showed great interest in it and helped with the painting of the children and it encouraged the parents to come to the school area. Even the council employees helped in their working time. (Luther commented in A Jangala et al. 1977:22)



**Figure 3.44: ‘Warlpiri boys performing a traditional Purlapa dance’**  
Photographed by Kuipers (Corbis Images n.d.).

Apparently, certain Purlapa dances are now allowed for Warnayaka boys and Yawulyu for girls. Although the age of children and the length of the custom are not mentioned, it is

certain that in the current Warlpiri community people teach children both ceremonies as evident from the comment of Lucy Nampijinpa:

Our grandparents and parents taught us women's ceremonies and about bush food and about the land, and we hold the Law. We know everything about Aboriginal Law now; we are strong. Now we teach the young children about ceremonies and bush foods. When we grow old the children can take over the Law. They know Yawulyu and Purlapa ceremonies. (Nampijinpa commented in Vaarzon-Morel 1995:109-110)

As mentioned above, when Wild and I visited Lajamanu in 2008, we came across children dancing at Lajamanu School (see figure 3.45). At that time, there was an annual Warlpiri Triangle convention at Lajamanu and the Longhouse where we stayed was full of people from Yuendumu and Willowra. The Warlpiri Triangle was established in 1983 and since then it has been an annual educational event for the people of the three Warlpiri communities in the NT to help increase school attendance rates. On the day, we saw two Elder dancers and school boys having their bodies painted under a tree. *Kardiya* teachers also helped paint schoolchildren while hearing several *Yapa* Elders singing with boomerang sticks. Another big group of schoolgirls with female Elders and teachers were preparing for the Girls' Yawulyu under a separate tree. Those trees in the school yard were cut down in 2011 with a new system and principal.

The purposes of Warlpiri ritual performances—'commemorative, revelatory, and instrumental' as Wild systematised (1977-1978:15)—were still significant for the ritual



**Figure 3.45: Boys lined up for the dance performance (singers in foreground), Lajamanu School ground**

Images of *kumunjayi* people are hidden.

performed at the courtyard of the school. In front of the singers, the boys moved back and forth rhythmically with their arms behind their back led by the two Elders. After these series of dances, the children's row became a circle surrounding Jangala. This *Warlu* (Fire) Purlapa was the celebration of rebirth for the Remote Partnership Agreement, or the Warlpiri Triangle. The movement will be considered again when we later discuss the rare Purlapa called Jalurinjinri.

There were several Country Visits, cultural programs as part of the school curriculum<sup>34</sup> held during my stay, but I could join none of them. When it happened at Duck Pond about 80 kilometres from Lajamanu, a female staff preparing food informed me that they had provided food for 75 people who were camping. She said that the schoolboys and girls enjoyed dancing Purlapa and Yawulyu as usual but among the Elders there were some issues with the practice of the ritual. Eventually, however, it was observed that the senior men and women exchanged new

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<sup>34</sup> According to the Central Land Council (2012), numerous Country Visits in duration from day trips to a week or more were undertaken during 2010-2011.

blankets with each other and reconciled. Tradition says that people used to exchange food but now exchanged blankets after a ritual. *The Blood Brothers - Jardiwarnpa, a Warlpiri Fire Ceremony* (2007) also shows post-ritual blanket exchange in Yuendumu. At the Lajamanu Store, the blanket corner is disproportionately large compared to the other displays. Some teachers at Lajamanu School told me that the Country Visit is held usually once a year. This seems similar to the excursion run for the senior primary students at Ali Curung. Agricultural knowledge of Fire-stick farming is also related to Country Visits and Jeannie Egan Nungarrayi suggested that ‘traditional knowledge of fire was taught best in an applied context, for example, during school-based country visits to Warlpiri places’ (commented in Gabrys & Vaarzon-Morel 2008). According to a Warlpiri teacher at Lajamanu School, the Country Visit began as a school event in the 1970s when bilingual education was launched. It appears that the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust began supporting school-based Country Visits in Willowra in 2002. According to another teacher, such Country Visits were already being run in 2003 when she was working at Lajamanu School. Schoolboys’ Purlapa and girls’ Yawulyu, performed to Elders’ singing at a Country Visit, was video-recorded by the rangers of the North Tanami Indigenous Protected Area (2009). As Country Visits were vital for Warnayaka Warlpiri on the grounds that they have needed to accommodate their lifestyle into a community which was not always a hometown of every clan group, they show that the Purlapa today is fully accessible by junior novices and even uninitiated boys.

The peoples of central Australia call social gatherings *purlapa*. At a *purlapa*, a stamping dance is usually performed by men and boys. The dancers paint their bodies and decorate themselves with *wamurlu*, a kind of wild cotton. (Colson 2012)

Television station ABC Darwin (2010), reporting the apology by NT Police to Lajamanu Community for the infamous case of entering an Aboriginal area during an initiation ceremony, also used the footage of boys' Purlapa in the bush at the end of the news.

Aboriginal Art is another well-known activity in Warlpiri communities. In the Warnayaka Art and Cultural Aboriginal Corporation, up to a dozen artists come to work every morning (before they arrived I would get up and clean the art centre where I stayed during my fieldwork with the permission of artists and the manager). Central Australian artwork with canvas and acrylic paints originated in Papunya, an Aboriginal community which was established in 1959 to bring together Warlpiri, Luritja, Anmatyerre, and Pintupi Aborigines from the eastern fringes of the Western Desert. An art teacher Geoffrey Bardon (2000) began to teach acrylic painting to Aboriginal children in the Papunya School in 1971, and it was adopted by the community as a whole. There for the first decade painting was almost exclusively a male domain, according to Vivien Johnson (2000), while in Yuendumu it was a group of older women who initiated the process in the mid-1980s. The women at Yuendumu seem to have worked harmoniously together as Warlukurlangu Artists. In Lajamanu, its manager (Anonymous II 2009, pers. comm., 2 November) explained that the Warnayaka Art Centre was established in the 1990s and both women and men were involved from the outset. However,

since then several times – and once for seven years – it had been closed in mourning for artists until she re-opened it in between 2007 and 2008. Today it is used by artists not only for painting: after one of the ladies starts singing while painting, others often follow her, and when they become more interested, they stop painting and stand up to dance with their *parraja* (coolamons) often made for sale.

Whenever an Aboriginal work of art is analysed, it is inevitable to consider its story derived from *jukurrpa*, and particularly its individual conceptual Dreaming. As the central concept of Aboriginal religion, Dreaming may be translated as a spiritual dimension of existence lying beyond and determining the features of the physical, biological and social world (Wild 1997). The English phrase ‘the Dreaming’ has its origins in the late nineteenth century when Frank Gillen, in his research with Baldwin Spencer, coined the term ‘Dream times’ to capture in English the Arrernte word. ‘Dream times’ underwent a number of transformations to become the Dreaming or the Dreamtime, both of which came to be applied on a continental scale to the fundamental religious conceptions of all Aboriginal groups. Indigenous leader Warren Mundine (cited in Ferrari & Wilson 2008) said that while The Dreaming had become a popular term in the past few years, he would still use the term Dreamtime in conversation. However, WA’s director of Aboriginal education Robert Somerville (cited in *ibid.*) insisted that Dreamtime was an outdated term that sounded more like a fairy-tale than a cultural belief. Different principles determine individuals’ conception Dreamings and the Dreamings owned by descent groups, with implications for facilitating adaptation to new country in the past (Wild

1987b). Purlapa and some Yawulyu are believed to be received by contemporary individuals from spirit-agents of the Dreaming. Wild (1975) mentioned that the sites and the Dreamings are linked with individuals and groups, and more than one group usually has rights in any given site. Bain (cited in Swain 1988) suggested that the word *jukurrpa* contains no time referent but is rather used to refer either to myth constellations, or ancestral sites.

Elders both male and female tend to respect fine art and hope that such art from Lajamanu will be treated that way although their acrylic art does not have such a long history. Some senior women and men sit down separately with screens dividing them in the Art Centre. I found painters there magnanimously singing in front of video-cameras their songs related to the *jukurrpa* of their works. Although some male Elders refused to sing their individual songs in the audible range of women, senior women tended to be more open and proudly performed to me, a male, and to the recording equipment. Whilst most Aboriginal performance may occur at night for lighting and staging techniques, painters work with the artwork singing or humming their songs at times in the morning and early in the afternoon. Presently among the Warnayaka Art Centre's collection painted by 8 men and 17 women, the prominent Dreamings are *karnta* (Women), *ngapa* (Water), *ngurlu* (Seed), *kumulyurru* (Budgerigar) (see figures 3.46, 47, 48).

Observing people's attitudes to painting at the art centre, I found that they recognised acrylic painting to be a fairly formal tradition in today's Lajamanu. Elders make their descendants acquire the knowledge of the strong connection between their songs and *jukurrpa* which are demonstrated on the canvas. During my fieldwork, schoolchildren came to learn



**Figure 3.46: Jerry Jangala Patrick singing about *ngapa jukurrpa* (Rain Dreaming)**



**Figure 3.47: Molly Napurrurla Tasman and Rosie Napurrurla Tasman singing about *ngurlu jukurrpa* (Seed Dreaming)**



**Figure 3.48: Lily Nungarrayi Hargraves singing about *karnta jukurrpa* (Women Dreaming)**

artwork every Tuesday. Lajamanu School has a long history to teach crayon drawing to people.

In the 1930s, before the settlement of Hooker Creek, it is known that Norman B. Tindale and

Charles P. Mountford on their expeditions took along brown paper and crayons and offered

them to Aborigines in the bush and in the settlements they visited (Anderson & Dussart 1988).

In 1944-45, Ronald and Catherine Berndt collected a large number of crayon drawings on

brown paper from Aboriginal people including *Wanayaka* (Warnayaka) (Stanton 2000). As in

Hooker Creek in the 1950s Meggitt collected crayon drawings on paper, Stephen Wild with Lee

Anne Proberts came back to Lajamanu during my stay in 2011 for the research on the current situation and the possibility of the revival of the crayon arts. We were fortunate enough to record an interview of only one Elder in Lajamanu who actually learned crayon drawings at school in his youth. The Elder passed away in the same year. To consider that children paint on cartridge paper at school and on canvas at the Art Centre, and also that the crayon drawings did not accompany ancestral performance, depicting on canvas with acrylic paints could be recognised as one of the most orthodox ‘traditions’ in contemporary Lajamanu. The song of *milpirri* (rain, water, or rain clouds) *jukurrpa* related to its event was sung solely by Jerry Jangala at an interview before Milpirri 2009 (see figures 3.46, 49). Belonging to the same patrimoiety, Jangala subsection owns this Dreaming as well as Jampijinpa who created the event of Milpirri. Showing and explaining his completed artwork, Jangala (Jampijinpa’s father) sang the public song even without hesitating where lady artists were also painting near him.

There is a question which is more important for Aboriginal life music or art. It is a cliché but ‘music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy’ according to Ludwig van Beethoven. Does this apply to Warlpiri case? To consider the relationship between the ancestral music and art, it is valid to take the role of an Aboriginal painting as its supporting tool for reminding them of the path of Songlines, or namely, a sort of ‘musical notation’ devoted to *finest* art. In general, Aboriginal designs are believed to have given Indigenous people information regarding places of food and water, laws of nature, and orally transmitted mythology and philosophy. However, it is also thought that ‘to knowledgeable Aboriginal

## Milpirri Jukurrpa



**Figure 3.49: Notation of Purlapa song *milpirri jukurrpa***

*Ya ngapa patarluwanu*

*Ya ngapa kunyanu*

*Ya milpirri-rli*

(We wish rain and thunder coming/shooting down. Water .That is rain cloud.)

Transcription of the song by Jerry Jangala (2009, pers. comm., 17 September). It was also sung four times in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figures 4.29, 31 in Chapter 4.

people, seeing the designs associated with a particular Dreaming may immediately call to mind

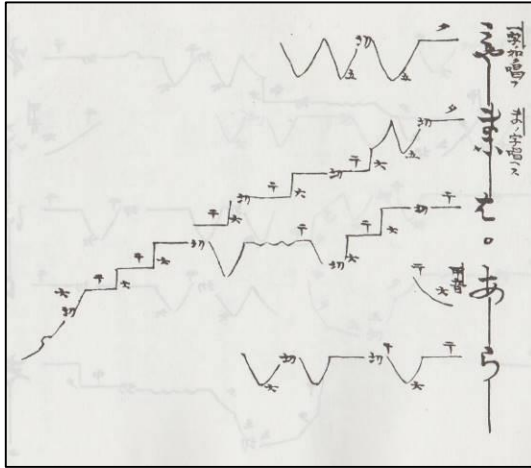
the relevant songs, and vice versa' (Barwick 2000:332).

The fact that art can play the role of musical notation reminds the author of Asian performance art: Gagaku often has adopted unique notations both in traditional and modern music. In relation to traditional and modern aspects of Aboriginal art, as discussed in the last chapter, the term 'tradition' for Aboriginal culture does not always mean 40,000-year history: the technique of putting acrylic colour on the other edge of a brush was undertaken in the 1970s although the origin of dot paintings depicting individual Dreamings is prehistoric. Ancestral values and geometrical designs attract fans of modern art in the world; when I was in Japan, Aboriginal paintings were becoming popular including Emily Kame Kngwarreye's exhibitions

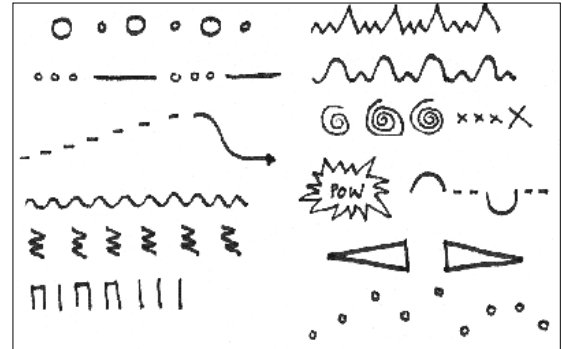
in Tokyo and Osaka in 2008. It might be worth considering the parallel that the function of paintings in Aboriginal culture should work as a music notation from a Japanese musical standpoint. Old-style musical notations used in Gagaku, particularly for its vocal music, have great beauty and splendour out of the combination of both factors of Chinese calligraphy for lyrics and watercolour graphic for melodies (see figure 3.50). After certain training, I memorised and can recreate a number of traditional Gagaku songs and pieces not with a European precise musical score but with one written with a brush and Indian ink. This can be compared with examples of graphic symbols in early music education (see figure 3.51).

Ethnomusicologist Daniel Schnee agrees to this idea to call such a traditional Gagaku music notation ‘Graphic Notation in Asia’ (Schnee 2013). On the other hand, graphic notations evolved in the 1950s for experimental music were often adopted in modern Gagaku compositions probably because graphic notation and Japanese music are well matched. In *November Steps*, a piece that triggered his international fame, Toru Takemitsu (1967) used graphic notations for long cadenzas played by *biwa* and *shakuhachi*. Toshi Ichiyanagi also chose the method of unusual notations for some of his contemporary Gagaku pieces. The structural comparison between Gagaku, Japanese performing art, and Warlpiri ritual including Yilpinji is in agreement with Christine Nicholls. In her book on Warlpiri arts *Yilpinji: love art and ceremony*, she described how

Yilpinji involve, in common with all other traditional Australian Aboriginal art forms, painting, singing, music, oral narratives and dance. As such, Yilpinji could be described as an ancient form of totally integrated “performance art”. (Nicholls 2000)



**Figure 3.50: Example of music notation of Gagaku**  
Excerpt from the Japan Gagaku Society (1998:7).



**Figure 3.51: Examples of graphic symbols in early music education**  
Excerpt from Hounslow Virtual Education Centre (n.d.).

Purlapa and Yawulyu were performed by Elders and children during my stay in Lajamanu.

Milpirri had once themed Jurntu Purlapa in 2009 but not given a chance for ‘Milpirri dancers’

(or Lajamanu schoolchildren who should dance hip hop). It has also followed that the

relationship between Aboriginal art and music, as well as some ancestral Warlpiri rituals, could

remind a Gagaku musician of its Asian counterpart. Although Yilpinji had already disappeared

as a ritual and could only be sung by a limited number of Elders as seen in the first visit,

Jampijinpa had a will to revive it in Milpirri in the future, while its significant teachings on the

conventional Skin marriage system were already used in the program. The rituals had thus

something close to non-*kardiya* tradition especially in a theocratic sense, which cannot be

captured in the contemporary English term ‘festival’ which is another old concept with strong

religious connotations. Christmas, for example, is a religious festival and the English term

‘festival’ is derived from Latin via French. In a later chapter I will justify the juxtaposition of two cultures and analyse Milpirri from a unique angle.

### 3.2.4. Kurlumpurrngu

A rare Purlapa, Jalurinjiirri Purlapa with *kurlumpurrngu*, is discussed here in order to report how I encountered the story of the musical instrument and its ceremony in Lajamanu, how we restored them, and why this project is strongly related to Milpirri, Emu Dreaming, and a symbol of musical life in Australia. I was able not only to participate in the revival of the instrument and its performance, but also to connect this scenario with my thesis because I found that it could contribute to interpreting the phenomenon of Milpirri. I will first consider the linguistic approaches, the process of the practical restoration, and related ceremonies of the rare instrument in Warnayaka Warlpiri tradition in terms of its relationship to Milpirri.

In 2010 when I was en route to Lajamanu to do fieldwork as part of the degree requirements, I bought a *yidaki* (didjeridu) at a souvenir shop in Darwin. I found it much cheaper than those sold in Canberra or Sydney, and I decided to purchase one and loaded it onto the Bush Bus that carried me to Lajamanu. Little did I foresee that my actions would trigger the revival of a rare wind instrument in Lajamanu. Whilst I had already been to Lajamanu twice before, this was my first time there with a *yidaki*. I stayed at the Warnayaka Art Centre in Lajamanu and first showed it to the manager, who suddenly began to tell me that she had heard

from an Elder, Jerry Jangala, that *yapa* also had a didjeridu-like instrument in their tradition. My interview of Jangala was the beginning of the restoration project of the rare instrument called *kurlumpurrngu*.

The people who still remember the aerophone *kurlumpurrngu* are Jerry Jangala and two other Elders of Warnayaka Warlpiri at Lajamanu (see figure 3.52). I will return to Jangala's announcement of the instrument after reviewing his biography. According to Warnayaka Art Centre's records, Jangala was born around 1935, 10 kilometres west of Willowra on the Lander River, and grew up in the nearby bush in the traditional way. When the government began to resettle Warnayaka Warlpiri people, Jangala and his group walked across the Tanami Desert to Willowra, and from there they moved to Yuendumu in the early 1940s. Jangala made the journey on foot, while the government moved other people by truck. At that time Yuendumu had bores but there were no houses. People from different tribes came together there. Jangala continued to travel through Tennant Creek Telegraph Station and Tennant Creek, stopping a short while at each place. He went to Newcastle Waters and old Wave Hill Station and finally came to Lajamanu around 1948, when there were no houses and the work was opening up to make space for the settlement and an airstrip. The first buildings were a small clinic and a kitchen. Today, as well as painting, Jangala makes wooden items like boomerangs at the Art Centre.

Being a respected Elder and the current pastor in the Lajamanu Community, Jangala was the person who rationalised the name of the instrument. According to him, Teddy



**Figure 3.52: Henry Cook Jakamarra and Jerry Jangala discussing the size of *kurlumpurrngu* in comparison with *yidaki*, Warnayaka Art Centre**

Jupurrurla of the same generation and senior Henry Jakamarra also knew about the instrument. After hearing Jangala’s pronunciation of the word several times, the other Elders seemed to recall it soon enough. [ˈkɒlʊmbɔɹŋɔ] was the way they pronounced it – although Jakamarra used the English word ‘didjeridu’ only once – and it can be spelled *kurlumpurrngu* as in the orthography devised by Kenneth Hale (1995:iv) in the 1970s and confirmed by linguist David Nash (a former student of Hale) when I returned to Canberra. I interviewed some older female Elders, as Jangala suggested, but they could not recall the name properly and pronounced it like *kurdu-kurdu-ku*, or related to the plural form of *kurdu* (child).<sup>35</sup>

Jangala emphasised that this instrument and its name originated not from the country of Ngaliya dialect speakers (currently most live in Yuendumu), but in that of Warnayaka dialect speakers (in Lajamanu) by saying ‘This [*kurlumpurrngu*] not coming from Ngaliya. This coming from Warnayaka Tribe’ (NT Mojo 2011). According to him the *kurlu-* means ‘a thing

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<sup>35</sup> As the instrument belonged to men and the last performance was a long time ago, it is natural that the old ladies could not recall the name properly.

comes out of the throat'. This connected the performance with Yawulyu dance *kana* (digging stick) in Milpirri 2009 which is explained as 'the pointers next to the Southern Cross and points to the emu's throat' (Tracks 2009b). I heard Jakamarra chatting with Jangala that the instrument was considered to have originated from 'the north' or 'Warumungu and Kaytej countries'. Jangala said that this instrument was also used by the *Yanmajirri* (Anmatjerre) people and called *ngungkuwarri* in their language. Meggitt (1962:40) reported that Warlpiri people had regarded *Yanmadjari* (Anmatjerre) people as 'half-Walbiri and one people with us [Walbiri]' because 'they have always traded together; they share totemic ceremonies, myths and tracks; and intermarriage frequently occurs'.

A linguist who has shown an interest in our project is Nash (2011b), who met me in my office and described it in his blog. I was surprised to find that he already knew that Jangala tried in a way to revive the word about twenty years ago. He also referred to the entry '*kurlumpurrngu*: trumpet, didjeridu, guitar' in Steve Swartz's (1997:52) Warlpiri-English dictionary. My information from Jangala that the Anmatjerre translation is *ngungkuwarri*, made Nash assume its meaning as 'something that always makes a gargling or coughing noise' with reference to Anmatjerre and Arrernte dictionaries. His impression of my *kurlumpurrngu* demonstration was 'akin to a repeated cough'. Having significant overlap with Warlpiri and Anmatjerre in their region, Alyawarra people were also reported by R. Moyle (1986:130-131) to have had an aerophone called '*kurnatja*'. Although 'didjeridu' in Gurindji is *kulumpung* (Nash

2011a), Jangala took for granted that the *kurlumpurrngu* was originally from Warnayaka

Warlpiri but not from Gurindji. Hence, this Gurindji word is construed as a Warlpiri loanword.

As mentioned in part, the current residents in Lajamanu are very friendly to other Indigenous traditions including Top End *yidaki*. Not only are there skilled players in the Elder generation, some of the children can play the *yidaki* quite naturally. While I was playing my *yidaki* in the bush, a few children sometimes came to me and blew it proudly. Jangala was one of the stockmen who learned how to play it when he was young. Such favourable circumstances facilitated revival of the rare aerophone.

The shape of the *kurlumpurrngu* features a slight curve and shortness in length according to the Elders' memories. The differences of the shape in comparison with *yidaki* might arise from ecological variation between the two regions of their origins. With a carpenter's tool in his hand, Jangala guided us to the area where the malformed and hollowed trees are found. Warnayaka Art Centre and Mt Theo Program cooperated in this project and provided us their vehicles. Jangala stopped about 20 minutes north on the Lajamanu Road to Kalkaringi and began looking around a River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) with termite-bored hollows that make a good tubular wind instrument (see figures 3.53, 54). Jangala was very good at finding such a hollowed tree as well as one 'with honey in it'. The latter was not chosen for the instrument but, as I was informed later, is analogously named '*gulumburu*' in Wulguru, a language spoken in the area around present day Townsville (Donohue 2007:41).



**Figure 3.53: Jerry Jangala choosing a wood, north of Lajamanu**



**Figure 3.54: Steve Jampijinpa smoking out termites, north of Lajamanu**

At first, we cut the collected woods to the size that Jangala instructed. His confidence comes from his precious memory of the songs that were accompanied by the *kurlumpurrngu*. Also his son, Steve Jampijinpa, insisted that when he was a child, he saw a short tube, probably a *kurlumpurrngu*, somewhere at his house. Jakamarra, however, opposed Jangala about the length of the instrument. Seeing the multiple wood pieces we cut, Jakamarra commented that the ‘didjeridu’ he saw when he was young was a little longer and straight. Before we completed making a proper *kurlumpurrngu*, I played my *yidaki* as a surrogate Warlpiri *kurlumpurrngu* following the way Jangala taught me (not continuous sound). Jakamarra and the female Elders agreed that the low tone made from the *yidaki* was similar to that of the *kurlumpurrngu* in their memory.

Luckily, my experience and knowledge in Japan contributed to this restoration project. I had been interested in working to restore old music and culture as my research topic at Tenrikyo Graduate Seminary was on the transition and restoration of musical instruments of *Mikagura-uta*, or the sacred songs of Tenrikyo, as some of them have been widely used in early modern

Japanese music. Also I was a member of the Gagaku Music Society of Tenri University, whose speciality is that they perform not only Gagaku music and dance but also very rare Gigaku mask drama, whose performance traditions seem to have died out by around the tenth century in the Heian period. It was revived by Prof Sato and his students in 1981.<sup>36</sup> As a Gagaku musician I had been familiar with making or fixing wind instruments used in the culture. The experience in Japan enabled me to join domestic and international concert tours including Australia and to think deeply about cultural and musical sustainability as a result of restoration.

The short tubes that we sawed could not produce the low-pitched sound that is characteristic of the *yidaki*. After talking to his senior Jakamarra, Jangala admitted that he had been wrong to instruct to cut the woods so short. However, I did not want to ignore Jangala's memory that the instrument was bent. The character of the *kurlumpurrngu* is difficult to verify, as it is difficult for Jangala to remember the various ways the senior dancers had used their instruments, as he was only about eight years old at the time. There is also a risk in relying on the view of Jakamarra, who is the oldest person in the community and may have difficulty to clearly recall his youth even though he must have been one of the dancers or players.

However, as psychologists have concurred that 'in the neurons whose visual response was increased by the addition of sound the audio-visual integration was dependent upon the sound of the action matching the sight of the action' (Barraclough et al. 2005:377), I thought

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<sup>36</sup> This was with the cooperation of former court musicians of the Imperial Household, a television producer of NHK Japan Broadcasting Corporation and a dyeing artist who researched the material and colouring in ancient times. They still perform the drama with one-million-dollar costumes of Yakushiji Temple and Todaiji Temple.

highly of the fact that the male and female Elders unanimously agreed that the *kurlumpurrngu* made a low sound. I decided to arrange a compromise between the curve point of the wood and its relatively long size to make a deeper sound (see figures 3.55, 56, 57). Compared with the shorter pieces, this modification clearly made a pleasant sense of resistance to the player's mouth. Having seen and played it, Jangala gave his approval to call it *kurlumpurrngu*. Despite having said that the instrument must have been straight in his memory, Jakamarra admired the sound of this revived *kurlumpurrngu*. From that moment, the art workers at Lajamanu began to chop more wood and to connect the short ones to copy the model.



**Figure 3.55: Various sizes of the provisional tubes**



**Figure 3.56: The successful *kurlumpurrngu* (c. 85 cm in external length)**



**Figure 3.57: Beeswax was added to the mouthpiece to make it soft to the mouth and to adjust the size of the internal diameter**

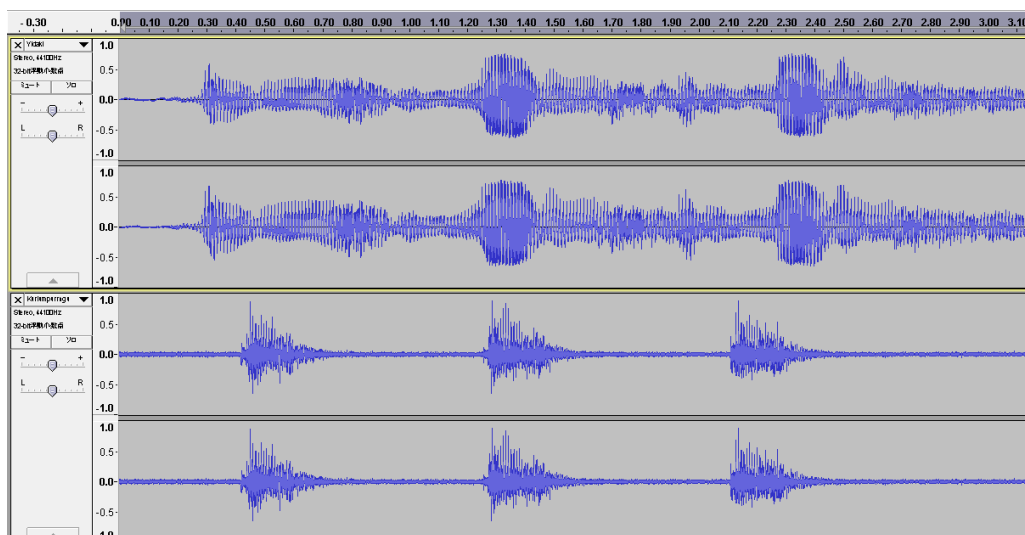
As the movement of the player-dancer will be discussed later, here I discuss the sound quality. One of the successful examples of a blow analyses the pitch of the decay and sustained sound after the attack phase and before the release of a blow. This sound frequency fundamentally ranges from about 95Hz (about F#<sub>2</sub> in scientific pitch notation) to 105Hz (about A#<sub>2</sub>) but in fact it contains a number of non-harmonic overtones so that the sound does not articulate musical notes. In each affricative-sound-like note made with almost the same embouchure as used in the *yidaki*, frequency modulation from high to low or a quick glissando can be slightly heard although the lower sound fades out immediately. In contrast to the *yidaki*, which is usually played with a continuous low drone or blown overtone by circular breathing, the ideal presentation of the *kurlumpurrngu* gives only a short bass note (see figure 3.58). Another difference between the *kurlumpurrngu* and the *yidaki* – especially when it is used in popular Western music – is that the pitch level of a *kurlumpurrngu* does not affect songs and vice versa.<sup>37</sup>

In the system of Hornbostel and Sachs (1961:24-27), this musical instrument can be incorporated in ‘423.121.11 Without mouthpiece (Some alphorns)’ or ‘423.121.21.<sup>38</sup> Without mouthpiece (Asia)’ (see table 3.1). However, if its sound was caused by a slapping hand with a single compression and release of air, the *kurlumpurrngu* would be classified in ‘413 Plosive

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<sup>37</sup> This is a controversial view in the case of *yidaki*. The drone pitch of typical didgeridu according to Fletcher (1983) is B<sub>1</sub>, E<sub>2</sub>, or C<sub>2</sub>, while it is said that unlike western music, the pitch of the drone need not to be related to that of the song (Clements et al. 2009).

<sup>38</sup> An analysis of the Warlpiri classification of musical instruments could be a subject for further research.



**Figure 3.58: Comparison of the sound waves of *yidaki* (above) and *kurlumpurrngu* (below)**  
The sound of *yidaki* in Bidjurdurr 1 in *Didjeridu Master* by David Blanes (1998), analysed with the software Audacity.

**Table 3.1: Classification of Hornbostel and Sachs**

|                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 AEROPHONES                                                                        |
| 42 Wind instruments proper                                                          |
| 423 Trumpets                                                                        |
| 423.1 Natural trumpets                                                              |
| 423.12 Tubular trumpets                                                             |
| 423.121 End-blown trumpets                                                          |
| 423.121.1 End-blown straight trumpets (The mouth-hole is neither curved nor folded) |
| 423.121.11 Without mouthpiece (Some alphorns)                                       |
| 423.121.2 End-blown horns (The tube is curved or folded)                            |
| 423.121.21. Without mouthpiece (Asia)                                               |
| 413 Plosive aerophones                                                              |

Excerpt from Hornbostel and Sachs (1961:24-27).

aerophones' such as an Udu, a pot drum used in Nigeria.<sup>39</sup> While I did not recognise during my

fieldwork that the categorisation of the instrument would become controversial, Steve

Jampijinpa and I found at another souvenir shop in Darwin short tubes identical to the ones that

we made at Lajamanu. These tubes were decoy Emu Callers. Jampijinpa enthusiastically said to

me that the hand movement used to beat the decoy reminded him of female *Yawulyu* dancers

<sup>39</sup> Previously, examinations of rhythmic mode in Central Australia have centred on combinations of tempo, percussion and syllabic rhythms. The inclusion of *kurlumpurrngu* patterns in this approach is worthy of investigation, as a possible future research investigation. See also discussions concerning correlations between rhythmic mode and mood (Marett 2005) or subject (Anderson 1995) in the playing of *yidaki*.

hitting their legs. In Purlapa, seated female participants join the ceremony by slapping their legs to accompany the songs sung by male Elders. Nash taught me that in certain traditions in Australia, Emu Callers could also be played by blowing. It is possible that the *kurlumpurrngu* was originally an Emu Caller and then adapted to accompany Purlapa as suggested by A. Moyle (1981:327-328) that ‘emu decoy’ may have been a precursor of the didjeridu.

There are several other anecdotes about the tube. Jangala one day joked that the short bent tube looked like a big pipe. One female with a serious look said that Elders called this a pipe for *Janyungu* or tobacco. It was difficult to confirm if they were speaking metaphorically, or if there was a similar-shaped traditional pipe and if the musical instrument was conventionally used as a pipe as well. Nash one day told me that he had heard how the Central Australian ‘trumpet’ was used in a ceremony: the user drew smoke (from a fire) into it and then blew the instrument so the smoke would come out in an impressive way. As chewing tobacco existed in their tradition, Teddy Jupurrurla still mixes decomposed cigarette and ashes, sticks it behind his ear, and sings traditional Purlapa songs.

Jangala also plays a religious role as the Pastor of the Community Church and talked about how the *kurlumpurrngu* is used to connect with the Bible. Although the verse ‘with the sound of God’s trumpet’ in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 seems to have been translated into Warlpiri as ‘*jitirni kurlumpurrnguju marrara-nyayirni*’, the current 2001 version of the *Yimi-nyayirni-wangu kaatu-kurlangu* (Warlpiri Bible) replaced the traditional word with the English loanword *turampiti* (trumpet) as in ‘*jitirni Kaatu-kurlangu turampitiji marrara-nyayirni*’. Nash (2011b)

explained in his blog about this transition of the Bible translation with the linguist Steve Swartz.

Furthermore, Jangala (2011, pers. comm., 2 April) alluded to the plan that he might use the *kurlumpurrngu* at a Christian event such as Easter Purlapa or Christmas Purlapa in the future.

According to Jerry Jangala's childhood memories, the *kurlumpurrngu* was used at a corroboree called Jalurinjirri.

*Warnayaka people have made one of these. So, they can use it in a ceremony called Jalurinjirri. (NT Mojos 2011)<sup>40</sup>*

He did not mention the generation of the other dancers, but the instrument seems to have been played by an adult. Although the ceremony was said to have been held in the bush around *kumunjayi* Jampijinpa's country in a cold season, probably in the mid or early 1940s before the settlement was built at Hooker Creek, he was, alas, too little to recall it. Jangala remembered vaguely that he witnessed several *kurlumpurrngu* holders in their performance while Henry Jakamarra said that only one player accompanied the line of dancers. The instrument was never used for a recital, but always carried by dancers and accompanied with songs.

The choreography of this dance is almost identical to that of the Purlapa danced by the boys today. Seated female attendants are forbidden to touch the *kurlumpurrngu* or the other male dancers' instruments but are welcome to watch the performance and accompany the singing with slapping legs. This simple dance is performed during the second song of the

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<sup>40</sup> Translation by the reporter Jasmine Nangala Patrick.

Jalurinjinri ceremony. During the first song, whose lyrics are discussed later, younger men consider whether to sit and sing together with Elder singers or to keep standing and gather to the position to begin dancing. During the first highest tone in the song, facing the west, the lined dancers, who have their arms behind their backs, and the *kurlumpurrngu* players, who hold the instrument with one or both hands, stamp and approach the group of singers in the east. Jampijinpa interprets that this movement of the dancers' legs expresses intimacy with the land. The approaching dancers make their leg movement resemble stirring the soil during the fall of the melody with the tremolo of the boomerangs. Subsequently, they retreat with stamping in the third passage. This is the choreography for the *kurlumpurrngu* song.

Jakamarra demonstrated how to perform the *kurlumpurrngu* with his back slightly bent compared to Jangala's upright posture: this may be due to a difference in physical attributes (see figure 3.59). A short and low sound 'akin to a repeated cough' comes out at the point of the downbeat of the rhythm, or together with the sound of a leg stamping. This requires the exhalation of a lot of air from the mouth and the skill to make sound loud enough for all the dancers to hear.

This Jalurinjinri Purlapa is openly accessible even to the mass media. The Northern Territory Mobile Journalists (NT Mojos) and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) paid attention to the revival process of the rare instrument at Lajamanu. On the two occasions that the media filmed the rare Purlapa, boys were chosen as the dancers, as though it was customary to do so. On the first occasion, the media focused on Jangala's activity and only three

boys, including his grandson, were dancing. On the second occasion, about two dozen schoolboys and girls gathered very quickly near the Hooker Creek (see figure 3.60). At first, the children were excited to see the ABC's television camera and microphone, but once Jangala began to narrate the story of the importance of the *kurlumpurrngu* in Warlpiri in a gentle voice, they soon became calmer. Although he had not worked at the school recently, the children gave the impression that they still, to some extent, kept the tradition of respecting an Elder. Jangala, the singer, faced the east while the dancers were instructed to line up and face the west. I joined the dance on both occasions as a *kurlumpurrngu* player at the end of the line because Jangala and Jampijinpa proposed for me to be the *kurlumpurrngu* player at the revived corroborees, after seeing my earlier performance. See the musical notations (figure 3.61, 62).



**Figure 3.59: Henry Jakamarra demonstrating the dance with the *kurlumpurrngu* in accordance with Jerry Jangala's singing, Warnayaka Art Centre**



**Figure 3.60: ABC Stateline recording Jalurinjirri Purlapa danced by boys and myself with *kurlumpurrngu* and sung by Jerry Jangala, near the Hooker Creek**  
Photographed by Remeika Napangard in 2011.

As the musical style of Warlpiri songs has been discussed by several researchers (Wild 1984, 1997; Barwick 1989; Ellis 1998, 2001), singers could freely transpose an entire piece of songs into another key because of the freedom of melodic-instrumental accompaniment. One

day at the Warnayaka Art Centre, the staff recorded a song with the simplest and probably most common pitch performed by both Jerry Jangala and Teddy Jupurrurla.

# Jalurinjirri

Vocal

Boomerangs

rri Ja lu rin ji rri Ja lang kurr pa rnu Ja lang kurr pa rnu Ja lu rin ji rri Ja lu rin ji rri Ja lang

kurr pa rnu Ja lang kurr pa rnu Ja lu rin ji rri Ja lu rin ji rri Ja lang kurr pa

**Figure 3.61: Notation of Jalurinjirri**

Transcription of the song performed by Jerry Jangala, Leslie Jampijinpa, *kumunjayi* Japanangka and *kumunjayi* Jampijinpa. (2011, pers. comm., 9 March).

*Jalurinjinri Jalurinjinri,  
Jalangkurparnu Jarlangkurparnu*  
(Calling all the nation. Come and join in the celebration!)

Kurlumpurrngu-na

Vocal

Ku rlu purr ngu na ja pi pa lyi na Wa rlu na ma ta ma ta rla Ku rlu purr ngu na ja pi pa lyi na

Boomerangs

Didjeridu

12

Wa rlu na ma ta ma ta rla Ku rlu purr ngu na ja pi pa lyi na Wa ma ta ma ta rla Ku rlu purr ngu na ja pi pa

25

lyi na Wa rlu na ma ta ma ta rla Ku rlu purr ngu na ja pi pa lyi na Wa rlu na ma ta

**Figure 3.62: Notation of *Kurlumpurrngu-na* of Jalurinjirri Purlapa**

Transcription of the song performed by Jerry Jangala, Leslie Jampijinpa, *kumunjayi* Japanangka and *kumunjayi* Jampijinpa. (2011, pers. comm., 9 March).

*Kurlumpurrngu-na japipalyina,*  
*Warluna matamatarla*  
(Let the Law shine out. Prevent the flame of culture from dying out.)

As in the Italian adage '*traduttore, traditore*' ('translator, traitor'), a translator often adds a new meaning into the translated text. Originally meaning 'fire', *Warlu* (as in *warluna* above) is interpreted by Steve Jampijinpa with his father's cooperation, as the 'flame of culture'. Interestingly, these songs are made with the motif of 'calling', which might combine the two meanings. First, both the lyrics and the instrument per se are related to emu-calling. At the same time, the particular content of the second song '*Kurlumpurrngu-na*' agrees to the purpose of the Milpirri that Jampijinpa has worked for.

Unfortunately, Jerry Jangala could recall only two songs used in this ceremony. When four other Elders gathered to have a trial performance with Jangala, they were able to sing those songs in unison after his little demonstration. Teddy Jupurrurla, who is the same generation as Jangala, consented to the recording, but he could not remember any more songs because they were very little when they actually witnessed the instrument and the ceremony.

But they might create *new* Purlapa songs for the *kurlumpurrngu*. It has been argued that Purlapas, in comparison with most other Warlpiri rituals originating from the Dreaming, are performed partly for entertainment and are acknowledged as having been introduced by humans or individual spirits (Wild 1987b:109-110; Swain 1988:457; Morais 1998a:467). Jampijinpa also told me that new songs for the *kurlumpurrngu* might be conceived in their dreams through ancestral spirits. New Purlapa songs may be composed in the context of Western music. One young man, who could play the overtone of the *kurlumpurrngu* with élan, has shown an interest

in joining one of the local rock bands in Lajamanu as the first wind player. If his intention materialises and the band succeeds, Yothu Yindi-type music might emerge in central Australia.

Furthermore, the revival of the instrument might also be psychologically uplifting for community members. A local middle-aged Elder (Anonymous III 2011, pers. comm., 9 March) who lent a hand in making of the *kurlumpurrngu* said:

How amazing! It's really interesting to hear Jangala's story. We *yapa* have got didjeridu too. Top End mob have long didjeridu and we have short one.

In addition, the revival has caught the attention of the Warnayaka Art Centre, which became interested in selling *kurlumpurrngus* to people from outside the community during big events for the purpose of community economic development.

This revived aerophone might be used as body decoration on dancers which makes an effective noise rather than an instrument used solely for music. Compared with the common *yidaki*, the *kurlumpurrngu* is blown simply and intermittently like percussion: as A. Moyle proposed (1981:327-328), 'emu decoy', or probably the *kurlumpurrngu* of the Warnayaka Warlpiri, might be interpreted as an *a priori* didjeridu. Although only two traditional songs for the *kurlumpurrngu* were rediscovered, both have meanings beautiful enough to deserve to be known as a great asset to the community.

The release of music that is a fusion of the *kurlumpurrngu* with pop or rock music might promote not only the knowledge of the aerophone but also the sale of CDs of Warlpiri

rock bands, which may give psychological and economic satisfaction to the community who did not know about their cultural heritage. Under these circumstances, there is no doubt that the revival of this instrument has great potential for the community. I left Lajamanu in April 2011 with the big hope of local, particularly young, people passing on the technique to produce the musical instrument. In the following chapter, I will discuss how this is in close sympathy with the concept of Milpirri including the Emu's throat digging sticks held by Yawulyu dancers in Milpirri 2009 – it was even before the restoration of *kurlumpurrngu* – and how the Jalurinjinri Purlapa was performed in Milpirri 2011.

### **3.3. Peripheral rituals and music**

#### **3.3.1. Religion and contemporary life in Lajamanu**

In the previous section relating to the Warlpiri didgeridu, I partly showed the considerable change of attitude about Top End rock music using *yidaki* since Stephen Wild first did fieldwork in the 1960s. This section continues the discussion of the current musical style especially in terms of educational and religious aspects so that the context in which Jampijinpa decided to create Milpirri with the support of Tracks Dance Company can be clarified.

There was an event that expressed well the typical attitude related to both Western and religious *jukurrpa* life, connecting to Milpirri or Rain Cloud Dreaming. In the beginning of our presentations on Milpirri to international conferences, Jampijinpa and I sometimes used this

news of Lajamanu by calling it 'The Village with Fish from the Sky'. *Northern Territory News* reported that 'hundreds and hundreds' of small white fish fell on 'the footy oval and on the ground everywhere' from the sky (Bourchier 2010; see figure 3.63).<sup>41</sup> 'It's a very unusual event, with an updraft, (fish and water picked up) could get up high – up to 60,000 or 70,000 feet' said weather bureau senior forecaster Ashley Patterson. 'Or possibly from a tornado over a large water body - but we haven't had any reports'. It happened again in 2011. I was back in Lajamanu after it received much rain.<sup>42</sup> Lajamanu was, as ABC Rural reported (Brain 2011), almost at the risk of fuel shortage within two weeks because the electricity supply could not be maintained into the community for more than a month due to damaged and flood-stricken roads: my plan to return from the muddy desert was also extended due to the delay of the Bush Bus community service.

I became very friendly to children after grilling and frying the grace of the heavens, or small fish which seemed to be silver perch generally consumed in the NT. They were not very popular among local adults who had no habit of eating fish, but children who caught them by

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<sup>41</sup> While *The Telegraph* also picked up this issue, with its title 'Australian town, 326 miles from river, hit by raining fish' (Balmer 2010), the Hooker Creek runs only around 100 metres from Lajamanu School although it totally dries up in some seasons. This kind of river is not rare in central Australia as seen in the fact that Alice Springs has the only dry-river regatta in the world, called The Henley-on-Todd.

<sup>42</sup> The intensity of rainfall at the beginning of the year in the northern regions of the Australian continent was illustrated by the Queensland floods in 2010–11 affecting over 200,000 people. One fine day after long rainy days the whole town of Lajamanu was filled with a smell like a fish market and we found numerous small fish dead around the puddles on the street and to and fro. After the following three rainy days, I confirmed that they were vigorously swimming there. The small fish jumping on the dirt toward the pools of water could be easily caught by children and dogs. This phenomenon continued for a fortnight intermittently. On 11 March when I heard the news of the earthquake disaster in Japan, I was seeing fish in the puddles while eating kangaroo tail at a camp fire.

themselves cautiously began to eat the cuisine and effectively requested another helping. The fish might have been unexpected calcium-rich food to children.<sup>43</sup>



**Figure 3.63: ‘The fish that reportedly fell from the sky in the Northern Territory’**  
Excerpt from *Northern Territory News* (2010).

As far as I heard, many of the local residents believed that the Willy-Willy, or dust devil, carried the sky fish. Alternatively, *kardiya*, non-Aboriginal, members of the community tended to think that they climbed up the muddy street toward the puddles. It is said that similar phenomena occurred not only in the last two years but in 2004 and 1974 as well. Steve Jampijinpa said to me that this high rate of the strange phenomenon should be used as a revitaliser of the town to attract tourists.

Talking about *kardiya* beliefs, the number of the participants in Sunday church is limited, but that of the hidden Christians is immeasurable. The manager of the Warnayaka Art Centre said to me that most people in Lajamanu are Christian in some way or other, and it is

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<sup>43</sup> Addiction to junk food and malnutrition due to child abuse and neglect were heard not only on many medical reports on Aboriginal communities but also from medical staff and school teachers in Lajamanu.

similar to the result of the census (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011a) with the most common responses for religion in Lajamanu: ‘Baptist 64.5%, No Religion 17.0%, Australian Aboriginal Traditional Religions 1.8%, Catholic 1.8% and Anglican 1.7%’, although there was no definition of ‘Aboriginal traditional religions’. Jerry Jangala is an important Elder for Warlpiri ancestral rituals but at the same time the pastor of Lajamanu Gospel Church,<sup>44</sup> and has considered himself a Christian since he overcame alcoholism by coming to believe in Christianity when he was young. He is currently the unique male Elder who sings and sometimes leads women singing Jesus Purlapa, which originated from Lajamanu. His son Jampijinpa also told me one day when he was with his father that he identified himself as a Christian. A Christian couple several times invited me to their dinner after meeting me first when I was voluntarily picking up rubbish around the school and informed me on the medical status of the community, and also opined that they need more forceful Christianisation in order to conquer the dysfunction in *yapa*’s life (Anonymous VI & IX 2011 per. comm., 3 February, etc).

The physical restrictions of old age and the death of several key artists have created real problems, and it is becoming quite difficult to find sufficient numbers of singers and dancers for Christian corroborees. This problem also applies to Warlpiri traditional corroborees. At times it appears that soon, with many younger people being uninterested in these traditional art forms,

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<sup>44</sup> Jordan (1999) states that ‘Jerry Jangala has not only been a key person in the Lajamanu Church and in the development of indigenous expressions of Christianity, but for many years ministered very effectively as the Aboriginal Church Advisor to all the Baptist Aboriginal Churches’.

they may well become a thing of the past. On the other hand, it is interesting to observe that often when the younger people move into their thirties their attitude changes and they tend to begin to follow traditional rituals on certain occasions. The people themselves will have to make these decisions about their future but there is no doubt that Christian corroborees have been a genuine means of involvement in church life for many older Christians; it is an important learning medium and a quite powerful medium for the presentation of important aspects of Christianity.

Christmas time stopped the town since most *kardiya* residents work at the Shire office, Art Centre, School and Medical Centre. A few people still working at the Store organised Christmas food gifts to everyone before the pageant was performed by schoolchildren on 23 December (see figure 3.64). Jesus Purlapa sung at the park in front of the shop created the fusion of Warlpiri and Christian traditions. In the Church and at the Art Centre at Lajamanu I sometimes witnessed Jesus Purlapa songs sung only by Jerry Jangala (see figures 3.65, 66). Steve Jampijinpa acquainted me with the fact that although Jesus Purlapa belonged to Purlapas, it did not have dances, as Jordan (2003) also indicated. The performance of Jesus Purlapas is gradually disappearing today in Lajamanu as a result of the decline of the dancing age population. However, at the pageant four eager ladies, including Jangala's wife, accompanied Jangala singing with a Bible in his hand. Schoolchildren did not dance accompanied by the song but their performance continued monotonously in the sunny park surrounded by the whole community. After that, eye-catching bicycles were distributed by a local Santa Claus to all the

children after the pageant. Although on Christmas day there was no more Christmas Purlapa sung in Warlpiri lyrics or with Warlpiri traditional melodies, the Church garden was again occupied by a crowd of people, with electronic sound and gospel songs, and megaphone announcements at intervals, stating: ‘Christmas is Wapira’s [Father] Purlapa, Wapira’s Business, Wapira’s Kurruwarri [Dreaming]’.



**Figure 3.64: Nativity play performed by children and Christmas Purlapa sung by Baptist Church members, Lajamanu**



**Figure 3.65: A painting of Jesus *Jukurrpa* hung in the community church**



**Figure 3.66: Jerry Jangala Patrick singing Jesus Purlapa, Lajamanu Learning Centre**

To take an example of a song sung at Jesus Purlapa, ‘Parrajangkaju wamu wantija’ is sung by Jangala as the last piece at Easter Purlapa and explained by him that ‘Clouds coming all



Besides the typical example of Jesus Purlapa, there are other examples of indigenised Christian practices in the remote community. As coalescences of the religious or Skin Name tradition, women and men always took their separate places in the Church. On Sunday services and Christmas Day when the believers were outside of the Church, they took seats in the circle of chairs, which were still strictly separated seats for men and women. Rather more women of all generations were seen than men at the Church. Related to the male and female issue, 'bush marriage' might be another synchronism in Lajamanu. Studies have shown that Warlpiri tradition did not include a wedding ceremony in ancestral times but only multiple steps of the initiation ceremony before marital life. However, young informants certainly said that they have 'bush marriage', which has been informally practised for decades. This is one of the reasons that the teaching of Milpirri by colour coding is hoped by Elders to be accepted by young people as knowledge of the traditional system of preferred marriages.

'Sorry Business' is another practice influenced by the Gospel Church, summoning quite a lot of people, often including relatives from other remote communities (see figure 3.68). In the past, Sorry Business is said to have been performed only when an adult Warlpiri person passed away. According to Meggitt (1962), children and very old people were considered to be closer to the *jukurrpa* than to the social realm, so that a funeral might not have been required for them in the past. In the communal cemetery, crosses are planted in the sand, and flower-decorated baby's monuments were outstanding. As a non-Christian tradition, however, the formal ululations and dances by women with eucalyptus branch can still be seen in the community

where a deceased used to live. Yasmine Musharbash (2008), based upon research primarily conducted at Yuendumu, divided Warlpiri Sorry Business into several stages, such as three Sorry Meetings, Finishing up and Sweeping. I also witnessed the women's group sweeping the places where the deceased used to frequent, such as the Shire and Library, wailing ritually and continuously. According to a female informant, ladies still practise smashing their own heads with stones for mourning in Sorry Camp.<sup>45</sup> I was not allowed to join them, but I sometimes saw ladies in white paint at the store on the next morning or others who had their hair cut short for mourning.



**Figure 3.68: Female participants at a funeral, Lajamanu**

It is not simple to conclude how religiously Warlpiri people live in Lajamanu today as it would be heavily dependent on the observer's perspective. For many Japanese people,

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<sup>45</sup> Such a scene can be seen in the film *Samson and Delilah* (2009), which also shows the conventional violence against a survivor with *kuturru* (Nulla-nulla).

Lajamanu would look like a considerably Christian-based society with a church holding many religious events annually. It would be rare in a similar-size community in Japan to see a Gospel Church having Sunday Service every week, but not a Shinto shrine or a Buddhist temple.

Christmas trees on streets are familiar but a Christmas pageant is extremely rare in Japan. At the same time, if one who was familiar with Christmas pageant in Adelaide saw one in Lajamanu, he or she might consider it a trivial event. Is it either ‘traditional’ or ‘introduced’ that the crowd of children celebrated and threw white flour powder – and even eggs according to local people who consider it a Lajamanu tradition – over each other at the Youth Hall at midnight on New Year’s Eve (see figure 3.69). As Eric Hobsbawm (1983:1) mentioned, “[t]raditions” which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented’. A funeral in Lajamanu would seem very different to a majority of Japanese and Christian observers, such as Torres Strait Islanders. In order to analyse Milpirri, Wild suggested that I use Wallace’s theory which was produced after observing various movements in America. What the definition of a ‘revitalisation movement’ did not make clear was the difference from a ‘religious movement’ or ‘event’ which made me question whether this strategy would stand well. If Milpirri was a ‘revitalisation movement’, Jampijinpa must be a ‘prophet’ (the term in Wallace 1956) who has a ‘vision’ as Wild proposed. One would not criticise other religions, including Indigenous religious movements, because they are different from his or hers. Even a non-Christian could admit the character of a religion if he or she heard a story of a movement in Galiwinku. It is said

that in Galiwinku the Christian Revival Movement frequently created miracles, for instance, a man who had stopped breathing recovered and another man met Jesus (Blacket 2004).



**Figure 3.69: Flour throw by children on New Year's Eve, in front of Youth Hall, Lajamanu**

In thinking on this event, Wild believes there was also a Christian influence in this interpretation because 'Atonement' and 'Reconciliation' are Christian concepts. It is true that several important people creating Milpirri –Jangala and Lance (Alan) Box – had Christian backgrounds.

Jerry is now the Pastor at the Baptist Church and something of a spiritual leader in the community; he keeps the other foot in Warnayaka ancestral culture as a visual artist and as a performer. This is the family context in which Jerry's son Steven grew up. Jerry Jangala was undoubtedly involved in developing the idea of Milpirri. A third voice in the inception of Milpirri was a White teacher in the community school, Alan Box. Alan was Steven's supervisor in the Community Liaison Unit they constituted in the school, and also an active member of the Baptist church. The influence of Christianity on Milpirri is clear in its use of such concepts as Atonement, Justice, and Reconciliation. Alan Box left Lajamanu in 2008, but returned for the 2009 performance of Milpirri

when he made a strong impression as an interpreter of its meaning to the non-indigenous audience. (Wild 2010)

The Jardiwarnpa as a theme of Milpirri this time turned out to be explained as ‘[t]he ceremony allows the community to start afresh, with strength and hope and a renewed commitment to the traditional Warlpiri values that are embedded in the song cycles’ (Tracks 2005b). Originally, this ceremony was explained as being owned by Jakamarra-Jupurrurla Skin Groups (Red in Milpirri) as the leaders and followed by Jampijinpa-Jangala subsections (Blue) (Lander et al. 2007). Identified by Peterson (1970:200) as a ‘conflict resolution ritual’, the traditional Jardiwarnpa ceremony contained features beyond the resolution of transgressive acts such as rudeness toward kin and the violation of material relations (Dussart 2000). The interpretation of ‘conflict resolution’ ritual appears to expand from the problems of individuals or of kin groups to those of the whole community. It follows then that the power of a traditional Warlpiri ritual would be stretched from tribal-grown conflict to the ‘Atonement and Reconciliation’ among the nation. In this respect, the concept displayed in Milpirri seems not necessarily attributed to the Christian influence but rather was the product *ab antiquo*, or Warlpiri ceremony. Because Milpirri was born thanks to the existence of Jardiwarnpa ceremony, it turned out to be the most important part of each event of the series. As a result, Milpirri can be taken to be more like a ‘revitalisation movement’ of the Jardiwampa ceremony.

In addition to the church, settlers historically established schools in Aboriginal reserves.

The latter half of the history of Lajamanu School, since Hooker Creek School was there in the

1950s, is the history of bilingual education. The Bilingual Education Program began in 1974 and it is said that local people felt that it had been a success until the late 1990s ('Bi-Lingual Education Programs' 1999). A case study accounting for a benefit of the Program at Lajamanu School found evidence of measurable increases in levels of English literacy and numeracy (Purdie et al. 2008). In 2008, students at Lajamanu performed slightly above the average in mathematics and well above in literacy when compared to other schools with mainly Indigenous students (ibid.). However, since the decision to abandon Bilingual Education made by the then minister Marion Scrymgour,<sup>46</sup> Lajamanu School, one out of eight bilingual education schools in the NT at the time, also began to teach the first four hours of classes in English from January 2009 (Henderson 2009). The process of bilingual education in Lajamanu from the 1980s and opinions by community members and people concerned were reported by the Four Corners program of the ABC which returned to Lajamanu during my fieldwork in 2009. Jerry Jangala, who began teaching Warlpiri language to the students as a result of the Program, answered their interview as follows:

Only one hour (Warlpiri class) – and that one not enough, not enough for us. That's what I think, we will lose all the kids. ('Going Back to Lajamanu' 2009)

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<sup>46</sup> Scrymgour is an Australian politician and has been a member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly since 2001, representing the electorate of Arafura. She was the Labor Party Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory from November 2007 until February 2009.

Another *yapa* teacher who used to be a part of the Bilingual Education Program in the 1980s also claimed the change to be important in linguistic education.

It's really changed now. I don't even have a table of my own, to do my programming, nothing. –The kids, I think they are confusing, you know? The kids just running, running around mad because some of them don't want to listen to English all the time, you know? They find it hard. (ibid.)

In afternoon classes, Warlpiri teachers often used the Warlpiri text books published at Yuendumu School and sometimes took children to a bush class by bus. However, some little children remained in the bush after lunch and this was criticised by the media (Henderson 2009). Having 'Light Warlpiri' (O'Shannessy 2005) or an English-Warlpiri mixed language as their first language, Warnayaka children were required to study English in most of the classes and formal Warlpiri to understand their grandparents' oral tradition and their songs in Warlpiri class or on Country Visits.

The problems that schoolchildren had were not limited to their little understanding of language, but also the adverse environment where they live. School attendance rates fell from 60.6 per cent in 2008 to just 37 per cent in 2010 and enrolments fell from 216 to 157 (Schliebs 2010). A reason for truancy seems to come from children's not being able to rest well in overcrowded houses and being too tired in the morning. One of the community members confessed that his house contained three adults and twelve children including an infant (Four Corners 2009a). Some teachers (Anonymous IV & Anonymous V 2009, pers. comm., 31

October) of Lajamanu School informed me that they had not seen some of their students for several months at the school and one of them judged that about 40% of the schoolchildren suffered from neglect by their guardians from the viewpoint of failing to provide sufficient supervision, nourishment and medical care. According to a staff member in the clinic (Anonymous VI 2009, pers. comm., 29 October) who had undertaken to attend several other Indigenous communities, Lajamanu is not exceptional in the spread of diseases such as diabetes, hepatic diseases, scabies, ear disease and so forth. The school ground was crowded with rubbish as well as the other part of the town. Classes in 2009 were apparently hijacked by children who could do whatever they liked. In such a situation, the number of children that a *kardiya* teacher can control was said to be at most four or five (Anonymous V 2009, pers. comm., 31 October) although there were sometimes a few *yapa* assistant teachers in a class. Before I helped a teacher teach origami to the children, he advised me to be aware that their mental age was lower than usual. I could not simply agree with the testimony but at least some were short-tempered probably because of lack of sleep or hope for their future and others were engaged in my origami works.

One of the reasons for the decrease in school attendance seems to relate to the big change at Lajamanu School in 2010. When I returned in 2011, I was surprised at new big buildings, no more trees used for ceremonies but banana fields instead and the high fences surrounding the entire school precinct (see figure 3.70). During my stay in 2011, Warlpiri teachers who had previously worked at the school, and other non-authorised personnel were not



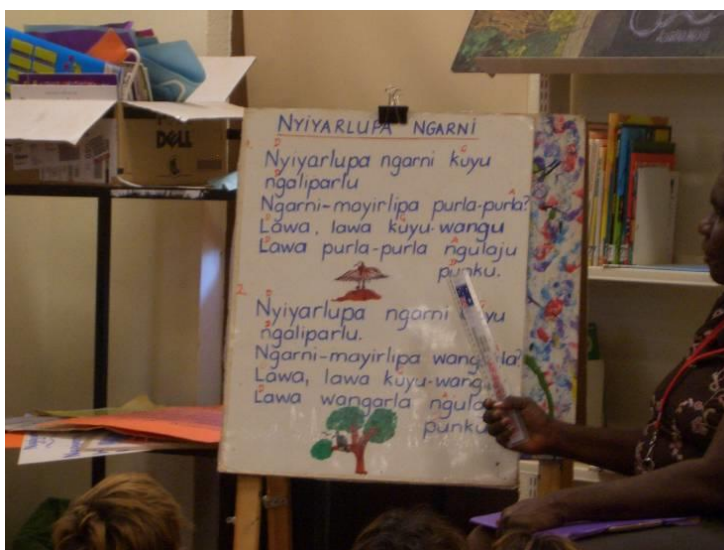
**Figure 3.70: Newly built Gymnasium, Lajamanu School**

allowed to enter the school except on 2 December when there occurred an Award Ceremony in the newly built large gym. Community parents heard how the new system and buildings were appreciated by Eva Lawler, Director of School Operations Northern Territory Department of Education, and Martin O’Hanlon, Principal of Lajamanu School. They mentioned how the school attendance rates somehow increased to compare with the previous year, when the rates dramatically decreased, which they considered to be the result of the NT Government policy banning Warlpiri language instruction for the first four hours of every school day in 2008. As reported on the shift to the English-first-four-hour system, the then NT Chief Minister Paul Henderson deplored the results of bilingual education in terms of English literacy and said ‘the worst cases came from remote schools’ (‘Chronology’ 2009). Since the Light Warlpiri-speaking children did not attend the afternoon classes as they were totally exhausted after hearing all English in the morning, the school cut down on Warlpiri language instruction to only 30 minutes per week. Furthermore, a dozen teachers who were against the new system and the then

policy of Lajamanu School were said to transfer to Kalkarindji School where there seemed to have a better education environment.

Although Lajamanu School did not fundamentally provide music classes and children did not have opportunities to learn musical instruments, when I was allowed to enter the school I saw a teacher sometimes playing the guitar for not only Western songs but also Warlpiri rhymes. An electric piano is left broken in the school, but it does not mean that the children in general do not like Western music; for example, many are fond of Disco. An interesting phenomenon that could be seen in a former Warlpiri language class was relatively new songs sung in Warlpiri. The Warlpiri rhyme, one might call it, is not only taught by Warlpiri-speaking teachers but also by the guitarist teacher who remembered some Warlpiri songs. Their melodies are simple and the lyrics are rhymed in the Western style. It is said that this tradition was born in accordance with the education system of the Warlpiri Triangle. Some members of the program composed new songs in order to teach Warlpiri effectively to children. These are seen in the documents of Warlpiri Triangle meetings held at Lajamanu in 1998 and in Willowra in 1999 which recorded the lyrics and chords of the poems (Warlpiri Triangle 1998, 1999). When I was allowed to attend Warlpiri classes, Warliri songs ‘Juju jami-pardu’ (recorded in Willowra) and ‘Niyiarlupa ngarni’ were taught there (see figure 3.71).

These songs are neither taken as orthodox, nor performed commercially. The new genre of Warlpiri music solely belongs to educational songs for children. As an educator, Jampijinpa has been anxious to sort out children’s problems including the low attendance rate. He believed



**Figure 3.71: Warlpiri yirdi taught in Yapa Class, Lajamanu School**

that the community took the school as a ‘white fella thing’ and this was a prompt that Milpirri was initiated in 2005 (McEwen 2007:25).

The Milpirri development project aimed to increase school attendance in Lajamanu, where attendance is 40 per cent to 60 per cent, and the school is viewed as ‘a white fella thing’. Steve believes the Kadiya (white fellas) at the school don’t understand the Yapa (Warlpiri) way of learning, so children are not encouraged to attend school.

In addition to preparing presentations and training in traditional songs, Jampijinpa and I had another educational scheme to make a Warlpiri song. As he told me an idea that Aboriginal Australia would have something to learn from Asian culture, I participated in creating a new learning jingle with his concept and the voice of his daughter. That was the temporary singable ‘multiplication table’ in Warlpiri language in the same way that Japanese pupils master *ku-ku* or the nine-nine table. Jampijinpa called this ‘Maths Purlapa’ and kept the sound recording in a computer available at the school (see table 3.2). However, it is not rooted in the community yet.

**Table 3.2: Lyrics of Maths Purlapa**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |  | <b>C</b><br>1    ×    1    =    1<br>Jin,            jinta-ju            jinta!<br><b>Em</b><br>1    ×    2    =    2<br>Jin,            jirra-ju            jirrama!<br><br>1    ×    3    =    3<br>Jin,            marn-ju            marnkurrpa!<br><b>Dm</b><br>1    ×    4    =    4<br>Jin,            mirti-ju            mirti!<br><br>1    ×    5    =    5<br>Jin,            rdaka-ju            rdaka!<br><b>G7</b><br>1    ×    6    =    6<br>Jin,            jilka-ju            jilkarla!<br><br>1    ×    7    =    7<br>Jin,            wirlki-ju            wirlki!<br><b>C</b><br>1    ×    8    =    8<br>Jin,            manga-ju            mangarda!<br>1    ×    9    =    9<br>Jin,            karta-ju            kartaku! |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2    ×    1    =    2<br>Jirra,            jinta-ju            jirrama!<br>2    ×    2    =    4<br>Jirra,            jirra-ju            mirti!<br>2    ×    3    =    6<br>Jirra,            marn-ju            jilkarla!<br>2    ×    4    =    8<br>Jirra,            mirti-ju            mangarda!<br>2    ×    5    =    10<br>Jirra,            rdaka-ju            karlarla!<br>2    ×    6    =    12<br>Jirra,            jilka-ju            karl-jirrama!<br>2    ×    7    =    14<br>Jirra,            wirlki-ju            karl-mirti!<br>2    ×    8    =    16<br>Jirra,            manga-ju            karl-jilkarla!<br>2    ×    9    =    18<br>Jirra,            karta-ju            karl-mangarda! | 3    ×    1    =    3<br>Marn,            jinta-ju            marnkurrpa!<br>3    ×    2    =    6<br>Marn,            jirra-ju            jilkarla!<br>3    ×    3    =    9<br>Marn,            marn-ju            kartaku!<br>3    ×    4    =    12<br>Marn,            mirti-ju            karl-jirrama!<br>3    ×    5    =    15<br>Marn,            rdaka-ju            karl-rdaka!<br>3    ×    6    =    18<br>Marn,            jilka-ju            karl-mangarda!<br>3    ×    7    =    21<br>Marn,            wirlki-ju            jirra-karl-jinta!<br>3    ×    8    =    24<br>Marn,            manga-ju            jirra-karl-mirti!<br>3    ×    9    =    27<br>Marn,            karta-ju            jirra-karl-wirlki! |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4    ×    1    =    4<br>Mirti,            jinta-ju            mirti!<br>4    ×    2    =    8<br>Mirti,            jirra-ju            mangarda!<br>4    ×    3    =    12<br>Mirti,            marn-ju            karl-jirrama!<br>4    ×    4    =    16<br>Mirti,            mirti-ju            karl-jilkarla!<br>4    ×    5    =    20<br>Mirti,            rdaka-ju            jirra-karl-larla!<br>4    ×    6    =    24<br>Mirti,            jilka-ju            jirra-karl-mirti!<br>4    ×    7    =    28<br>Mirti            wirlki-ju            jirra-karl-mangarda!                                                                                                                                     | 5    ×    1    =    5<br>Rdaka,            jinta-ju            rdaka!<br>5    ×    2    =    10<br>Rdaka,            jirra-ju            karlarla!<br>5    ×    3    =    15<br>Rdaka,            marn-ju            karl-rdaka!<br>5    ×    4    =    20<br>Rdaka,            mirti-ju            jirra-karl-larla!<br>5    ×    5    =    25<br>Rdaka,            rdaka-ju            jirra-karl-rdaka!<br>5    ×    6    =    30<br>Rdaka,            jilka-ju            marn-karl-larla!<br>5    ×    7    =    35<br>Rdaka,            wirlki-ju            marn-karl-rdaka!                                                                                                                                                        |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|        |   |           |   |                      |        |   |           |   |                      |
|--------|---|-----------|---|----------------------|--------|---|-----------|---|----------------------|
| 4      | × | 8         | = | 32                   | 5      | × | 8         | = | 40                   |
| Mirti, |   | manga-ju  |   | marn-karl-jirrama!   | Rdaka  |   | manga-ju  |   | mirti-karlarla!      |
| 4      | × | 9         | = | 36                   | 5      | × | 9         | = | 45                   |
| Mirti, |   | karta-ju  |   | marn-karl-jilkarla!  | Rdaka  |   | karta-ju  |   | mirti-karl-rdaka!    |
| 6      | × | 1         | = | 6                    | 7      | × | 1         | = | 7                    |
| Jil,   |   | jinta-ju  |   | jilkarla!            | Wirl,  |   | jinta-ju  |   | wirlki!              |
| 6      | × | 2         | = | 12                   | 7      | × | 2         | = | 14                   |
| Jil,   |   | jirra-ju  |   | karl-jirrama!        | Wirl,  |   | jirra-ju  |   | karl-mirti!          |
| 6      | × | 3         | = | 18                   | 7      | × | 3         | = | 21                   |
| Jil,   |   | marn-ju   |   | karl-mangarda!       | Wirl,  |   | marn-ju   |   | jirra-karl-jinta!    |
| 6      | × | 4         | = | 24                   | 7      | × | 4         | = | 28                   |
| Jil,   |   | mirti-ju  |   | jirra-karl-mirti!    | Wirl,  |   | mirti-ju  |   | jirra-karl-mangarda! |
| 6      | × | 5         | = | 30                   | 7      | × | 5         | = | 35                   |
| Jil,   |   | rdaka-ju  |   | marn-karlarla!       | Wirl,  |   | rdaka-ju  |   | marn-karl-rdaka!     |
| 6      | × | 6         | = | 36                   | 7      | × | 6         | = | 42                   |
| Jil,   |   | jilka-ju  |   | marn-karl-jilkarla!  | Wirl,  |   | jilka-ju  |   | mirti-karl-jirrama!  |
| 6      | × | 7         | = | 42                   | 7      | × | 7         | = | 49                   |
| Jil,   |   | wirlki-ju |   | mirti-karl-jirrama!  | Wirl,  |   | wirlki-ju |   | mirti-karl-kartaku!  |
| 6      | × | 8         | = | 48                   | 7      | × | 8         | = | 56                   |
| Jil,   |   | manga-ju  |   | mirti-karl-mangarda! | Wirl,  |   | manga-ju  |   | rda-karl-jilkarla!   |
| 6      | × | 9         | = | 54                   | 7      | × | 9         | = | 63                   |
| Jil,   |   | karta-ju  |   | rda-karl-mirti!      | Wirl,  |   | karta-ju  |   | jil-karl-marnkurpa!  |
| 8      | × | 1         | = | 8                    | 9      | × | 1         | = | 9                    |
| Mang,  |   | jinta-ju  |   | mangarda!            | Karta, |   | jinta-ju  |   | kartaku!             |
| 8      | × | 2         | = | 16                   | 9      | × | 2         | = | 18                   |
| Mang,  |   | jirra-ju  |   | karl-jilkarla!       | Karta, |   | jirra-ju  |   | karl-mangarda!       |
| 8      | × | 3         | = | 24                   | 9      | × | 3         | = | 27                   |
| Mang,  |   | marn-ju   |   | jirra-karl-mirti!    | Karta, |   | marn-ju   |   | jirra-karl-wirlki!   |
| 8      | × | 4         | = | 32                   | 9      | × | 4         | = | 36                   |
| Mang,  |   | mirti-ju  |   | marn-karl-jirrama!   | Karta, |   | mirti-ju  |   | marn-karl-jilkarla!  |
| 8      | × | 5         | = | 40                   | 9      | × | 5         | = | 45                   |
| Mang,  |   | rdaka-ju  |   | mirti-karlarla!      | Karta, |   | rdaka-ju  |   | mirti-karl-rdaka!    |
| 8      | × | 6         | = | 48                   | 9      | × | 6         | = | 54                   |
| Mang,  |   | jilka-ju  |   | mirti-karl-mangarda! | Karta, |   | jilka-ju  |   | rda-karl-mirti!      |
| 8      | × | 7         | = | 56                   | 9      | × | 7         | = | 63                   |
| Mang,  |   | wirlki-ju |   | rda-karl-jilkarla!   | Karta, |   | wirlki-ju |   | jil-karl-marnkurpa!  |
| 8      | × | 8         | = | 64                   | 9      | × | 8         | = | 72                   |
| Mang,  |   | manga-ju  |   | jil-karl-mirti!      | Karta, |   | manga-ju  |   | wirl-karl-jirrama!   |
| 8      | × | 9         | = | 72                   | 9      | × | 9         | = | 81                   |
| Mang,  |   | karta-ju  |   | wirl-karl-jirrama!   | Karta, |   | karta-ju  |   | manga-karl-jinta!    |

Composed and recored by Steve Jampijinpa, Jasmine Nangala and Yukihiro Doi

I have described so far how people in Lajamanu were largely treasuring ancestral music and took European music – Christian music and even country music – as their ‘tradition’.

The adoption of western music by many non-western cultures is a fine example, where a performance and consumption of, for instance, Bach, Beethoven, or Brahms is just as

much part of local music culture as it is part of a European culture or western art music.  
(Johnson 2002:26)

In terms of more contemporary music genres, some of them also seem to have been adopted in the programs of Milpirri. The current attitude of the community to Western and non-Warlpiri Indigenous music can be seen in the story of *yidaki*, or Arnhem Land style didjeridu.

As I partly mentioned earlier, I was able to engage in reviving a Warlpiri instrument after showing my *yidaki* purchased in Darwin. I was initially hesitant to show that foreign musical instrument to Warlpiri Elders in Lajamanu. This is because Wild had told me his view that the Warlpiri people at Lajamanu were culturally conservative and would not accept the didjeridu into their musical practice. I was afraid of the possibility to annoy them by showing them a non-Warlpiri musical instrument and to influence the friendly atmosphere.

People in Lajamanu today seem much less conservative towards other Indigenous cultures especially in respect of music than those in the late 1960s and early '70s when Wild's conducted his fieldwork. Rather, they hold positive feelings towards contemporary Top End music: many yearn to be a part of the universal Yothu Yindi rock band, some boast of having a photograph taken with Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, and children mimic the Chooky Dancers from Elcho Island at the Lajamanu Disco literally every weekend. In 2009, a *kardiya* teacher (Anonymous V 2009, pers. comm., 29 October) told me her experience of when she showed her class a video clip of *Australia's Got Talent* (2008), which broadcast the performance of the Chooky Dancers of young male Arnhem Land dancers in their hilarious interpretation of

Zorba's Dance from the film *Zorba the Greek* (1964). According to her, there was a huge cheer from all the children in the classroom on seeing the TV program. Before their appearance on Channel 7, the Dancers were noticed by ABC Radio (Barker 2008) because their performance at a festival in Arnhem Land had nearly three quarters of a million hits on the YouTube website (*Australia's Got Talent* 2008). Furthermore, the obviously similar style of Warlpiri rock music and its antecedent Yolŋu music demonstrates their positive attitude to other successful Indigenous culture.

Disco is the fashionable and almost unique entertainment for Lajamanu children. Despite its name, disco does not have a disc jockey or refreshments served in the Youth Hall, a tin-roofed building in front of the basketball court. Most of the attendees were small children. Little children tend to dance and some senior high school girls selected music in earnest using the laptop connected with a PA system. Boys were in general not as stylish in dancing as the girls, who danced with shimmying to fast music as if at an urban disco. The hall and the machinery are managed by Lajamanu Youth Development Program. When a staff member comes to open the door for the disco at around 9.00 pm, the hall immediately becomes full of children who were playing at the basketball court in the evening. It is natural in such a hot country to have both traditional important ceremonies and current entertainments at night when it cools down.

Disco has also the purpose of amusing and reviving the community by amusing children. According to the staff, the disco in Lajamanu began in the 1990s when the Mt Theo

Program used to run it. The Mt Theo Program of Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation was started by the Yuendumu Community in 1993 to address the problem of chronic petrol sniffing in Yuendumu. The establishment of Lajamanu Youth Development Program, an outreach program of Mt Theo Program, was requested in 2007 by the Warlpiri Elders of Kurra Aboriginal Corporation, a body of Warlpiri entrusted with allocating royalty funding in the Warlpiri Lands. The corporation also administers the Warlpiri Education Training Trust (WETT), which was founded as a result of an agreement between the Central Land Council and Tanami gold miner Newmont Mining (Central Land Council n.d.). The Country Visits at Warlpiri schools, as mentioned, were funded by a previous Warlpiri Triangle workshop and now also by WETT (ibid.).

There were no specific features of the favourite dance music randomly chosen by some high school girls, who were in front of the playlist of hundreds of songs in a laptop belonging to Mt Theo. The only difference between the music used in common discos and that in the Lajamanu community hall is the inclusion of some local Indigenous bands, juxtaposed with other singers such as Michael Jackson, Missy Elliot, P-Square and so forth in 2009. When I returned in 2010, Chooky Dancers of ‘Zorba the Greek’, which I mentioned above, became a standard song danced by children at disco every Friday and Saturday, and entertained especially the adult audience.

To what extent can Lajamanu be regarded as an information society? Daily musical practices of Lajamanu ranges widely owing to the mass media. The performances of local Rock

bands and Milpirri are often supported and recorded by the PAW. The branch studio of the PAW is located in the room next to the Art Centre and managed by two young men, Tasman and White. Television is so widespread that a child proudly said to me that his house, accommodating an extended family, has several television sets. The internet can be used at the school library and the community library. As I found the classes using computers much quieter than other classes in 2009, computers in the School Library were filled even more by the Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education. The access to the internet through the Community Learning Centre or Library was generally poor because of the chronic lack of librarians and the influence of the extreme climate. Once the library opened, children and their parents burst into it to play computer games, watch YouTube and do online banking (see figure 3.72). The Australian Government's One Laptop per Child Program, which provides computers to the children in Elcho Island, has not arrived in Lajamanu yet. However, there are some youngsters who have a portable media player but do not have shoes, though this scene could also be seen in Yirrkala: this is very dangerous in Lajamanu streets and parks, with much rubbish including sharp materials. Just after a regular meeting of the Warlpiri mining royalty-receiving association, several children were given a bicycle or four-wheel motorbike at the same time. Young *yapa* men with cars contribute to the sound pollution with car stereos, just like in non-Indigenous communities including even in a *kardiya* residential area (or *karlarra*, literally 'west') in the town; the residential areas are still bisected roughly into east and west, which is the last remains of historical racism in the settlement. Besides PAW Radio Network,

theoretically any people in today's Lajamanu can download their favourite music and upload their performance on the internet.



**Figure 3.72: People enjoying the internet at Lajamanu Community Library**

Adding to the difficulty of spreading Milpirri is the tendency of little contact among remote Warlpiri communities. Not only for shopping or entertainment, but also for sports games Lajamanu children often go to Katherine, around 550 kilometres to the north. There is a Warlpiri Transient Camp in Katherine South and Bush Bus serving between Katherine and Lajamanu stops there for the majority of the passengers. Several researchers recognise the close relationship between Lajamanu and Katherine or Darwin, rather than between it and Yuendumu or Alice Springs. Ottosson (2006) argued that Warlpiri people in Lajamanu interacted mainly with northern Aboriginal societies and music styles whereas people in Yuendumu were instead oriented southward, to the administrative centre of Alice Springs. Also, because there is no secondary school in Lajamanu, it has been suggested that they might choose regional secondary

schools closer to the community based in Katherine, or more boarding facilities in the existing boarding school in Katherine (Australian Human Rights Commission 1999).

While North Tanami Band and Teenage Band are already somewhat known in central Australia as I described in Chapter 2, another young ‘Warnayaka Band’ is now quite active in Lajamanu (see figure 3.73). During my fieldwork, I sometimes saw the band members practising in a studio and editing their songs in the community library. In their presentation at the 8<sup>th</sup> Symposium on Indigenous Music and Dance held at the Charles Darwin University, Inge Kral from the ANU, and Maxwell Japanangka and Shane Jupurrurla from Lajamanu introduced the work of the band. Although the availability of songs of the band is limited to the YouTube website (but there is no released CD), Lajamanu Sports Weekend is the best place to give a live performance. Children said that a Lajamanu Sports Weekend is held on long weekends in May and early June while Yuendumu Sports of a longer history is held on the Picnic Day in early August. Aboriginal communities of Nyirripi, Yuendumu, Papunya and Balgo would all make an appearance at the Lajamanu Sports Weekend for the round-robin competition in basketball, softball and football (Hunt 2009). Ottoson describes the tendency of the music performed at the event:

This night the gospel and country section includes four gospel entrants but, atypically, no country music performer. ... He [Zacharia Jakamarra Patterson] performs a gospel duo with his wife Valerie, followed by *Kumunjayi* performing a country gospel version of Bob Dylan’s “Knocking on heaven’s door” in Warlpiri. (Ottoson 2006:175-176)



**Figure 3.73: Warnayaka Band practising for Lajamanu Sports Weekend, Youth Hall**

Although I did not have a chance to join the event, I heard from informants that it includes a big musical stage, not only football. Before finishing my fieldwork, the Warnayaka Band was already preparing for the stage and rehearsing at a recently-built studio next to the Youth Hall. The Yuendumu Sports Weekend must be the biggest modern musical event for Lajamanu as some of them added that the size of the event was even bigger than that of Milpirri. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the true contemporary musical analyses of the event can be seen in those by Ottoson. Milpirri does not hold any exciting live concerts – for adults or children – as in Garma Festival but includes a few locally famous singers and exclusively uses recorded music for hip hop dance performed by children at Milpirri.

### 3.3.2. Tracks Dance Company and Jampijinpa

Tracks Dance Company direct their dance and performing arts basically to Darwin, the central desert, and Southeast Asia. Milpirri can be simply said to be one of their Indigenous projects.<sup>47</sup>

My first meeting of the company was in 2009 when Wild previously advised me to meet them before my fieldwork in Lajamanu, as he received an email from Tracks calling for volunteers in their show in Darwin. I was fortunate to participate as an usher and met the members of Tracks before Milpirri in Lajamanu.

I stayed in Darwin for several days between participating in the Garma Festival and starting my fieldwork in Lajamanu in 2009. The *Endurance Show* by Tracks Incorporated began on 12 August (see figure 3.74). First, I met David McMicken, one of the co-artistic directors of Tracks, and expressed my interest in and plan to write on Milpirri at ANU while he was preparing the night show at the velodrome. He accepted my use and analysis of the series of their events and commercial DVDs in my thesis. Also he promised to meet me in Lajamanu when their training started. When I worked as an usher for the show for four days, I enjoyed three stages built in a banked cycle-racing track in Darwin and the performers on each stage danced three times each night. They performed three times with the same music in three interpretations, such as to get on with life, fall in love, save the world, and plant seeds for the

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<sup>47</sup> According to Ausdance (n.d.) 'As Tim [Newth] and David's [McMicken] community connections deepened and knowledge became more complex they chose to specialise in one community, Lajamanu'.

future. Though working as a volunteer usher for three shows per day for several days, I found the contents of the show deserve to be seen repeatedly to understand the deep meanings.



**Figure 3.74: *Endurance Show***  
Excerpt from *Tracks* (2009d).

Though I did not recognise it at that time, they had a Warnayaka Warlpiri dancer in the *Endurance Show*. He is Caleb Japanangka, and afterwards in Lajamanu I found him to be teaching children hip hop dance with other Tracks members from Darwin. He has played a major role at the hip hop dance section of events of Milpirri. It should be noticed that, when I first met him, other people called him just a ‘dancer’ or ‘dance teacher’ in English despite the fact that Warlpiri people are reputed to be famous for their traditional dance. This might be considered that they recognised their dance as a commonplace and ‘cannot see the forest for the trees’.

The Tracks’ shows include a significant part of Indigenous performance and performers, demonstrating how important their existence was for the birth of Milpirri in central

Australia. Since musical life in Lajamanu included a great interest in Christian, country, domestic- and intertribal-Indigenous rock music, and above all children's favourite disco, as mentioned above, Tracks people had the capability to succeed in teaching schoolchildren hip hop dances in Milpirri.

As most information on the programs of Tracks residencies is available on their official webpage, it is said that the long relationship between the Tracks Art dancers and Lajamanu Warlpiri began before the establishment of their company in 1994. Back in 1988, Tim Newth, currently the other co-director of Tracks, and Sarah Calver worked on the Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre project *Living in Isolation* in Lajamanu (see figure 3.75). A Territory-wide competition in the previous year hunted for young Territorian playwrights to produce one-act scripts. With the entries of four playwrights from the NT, Tracks produced a 1988 tour to each of their hometowns including Jabiru, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, and Lajamanu. The highlight of the tour was at Lajamanu where the company narrated versions of *A Tour with a Difference* and *Walls Hill*, and performed the bilingual play, *Manangkarawardingki Malju*. The people at Lajamanu appreciated the efforts of the cast to learn some Warlpiri language from Mary Napurrula Rockman living in Darwin, and particularly the older women uttered excited cries as the younger actors burst into Warlpiri. Newth looked back at it saying that the audience were rolling around laughing hysterically.

We couldn't really see the joke but we were happy that they were enjoying themselves. Later, we discovered they were laughing at our incredibly bad pronunciation. (Newth cited in West 1995)

Elders invited the cast to stay an extra day so the Lajamanu Yawalyu women could share traditional dances with them. Newth said that the performance changed his life and gave him a different way of looking at things (Ausdance n.d.). This was how the community for the first time initiated a project and approached Tracks to help them later.



**Figure 3.75: *Living in Isolation***  
Excerpt from Tracks (n.d.a).

The company completed residencies in 1989 and 1990, a long time before Milpirri in Lajamanu. Following the success of *Desert Boy*, a play written by Lajamanu students for *Living in Isolation*, the Lajamanu School Council requested a residency of three artists, Calver, Newth and Ken Conway, to ‘work with the school community to develop traditional and modern material into contemporary dramatic performances’ (Tracks n.d.b). The residency began to develop theatrical and visual arts skills with the younger community members, culminating in a

performance and tour of other Warlpiri-speaking communities and schools in Alice Springs in 1989. Lajamanu Yawulyu Ceremonial Dancers played a role in advising visiting artists for the residencies. In the interim, Newth was invited to work with the community to carry out mural and banner projects funded by Brown's Mart Community Arts, Lajamanu School, and the Arts Council. In the following year, the second residency was presented by the Brown's Mart Community Arts and Lajamanu Community. The performance, developing around the image of Goannas and hunting and utilising circus skills, dance and visuals incorporating their Warlpiri culture and Dreamings, was held at Lajamanu and Barunga Sports Festival, Bagot Reserve Darwin, NAIDOC Ball Darwin, Yuendumu, Alice Springs, Willowra and Ti-Tree. Before the girls' Goanna dance, the North Tanami Band opened the show with their song 'Home Sweet Home'. Also in the same year, *New Ways Old Ways* chose five plays as a result of the Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre's 1989 playwrights' competition. Particular focus was placed on a play written by a girl from Lajamanu senior girls' class, *The Girl Who Was Taken Away from Her Family*. They made a Territory tour including Groote Eylandt, and were praised as follows: 'The plays covered a range of important issues, past, present, and future[,] were entertaining in their content and performed with great energy and conviction' (*Groote Eylandt Newsletter* cited in *Tracks* n.d.a).

There were several other events related to the Lajamanu community and *Tracks*, if not with Steve Jampijinpa. In the Brown's Mart Theatre, Darwin in 1994, *Sacred Space* was performed by McMicken and Calver with a strong influence of remote Aboriginal communities

including Lajamanu. In those days Tracks Dance Theatre was officially established under the joint artistic directorship of Calver, Newth and McMicken (Australia Dancing n.d.). Before Milpirri was established, Yawulyu Dancers from Lajamanu had appeared on stage on several occasions: *Opportunity of Distance Tour* (Wangaratta, Albury, Wodonga and Melbourne), and *Ngapa: Two Cultures One Country* (Darwin) in 1996 (see figure 3.76); a series of events of *Fierce*, named after Olive Pink (once labelled ‘the fiercest white woman in captivity’) in 2001 (Darwin), and in 2002 (Alice Springs); *Local* in 2003 (Darwin); and *Angels of Gravity* in 2005 (Darwin). As mentioned above, *Endurance* in 2009 included Caleb Japanangka among the dancers, and he also performed as a key dancer in *Mr Big* in 2006, *Struck* in 2008, and as a guest performer for *Lipstick & Ochre* in 2008 and joined the tour to Horsham, Victoria for the Australian Youth Dance Festival in 2006.



**Figure 3.76: *Ngapa: Two Cultures One Country***  
Excerpt from Tracks (n.d.c)

In another aspect of Tracks, there are strong ties with other Aboriginal communities with residencies and performance projects, one residency leading to another. *Jabiru Community*

*Residency* with a guest artist Debra Batton was held in 1990. The Yipirinya community of Alice Springs conducted *From Little Things Big Things Grow* in 1992, by virtue of a result of a smaller residency attached to the Lajamanu touring projects, and *Yipirinya: After the Rain* in 1994. The residency called *Wild Things* was performed by the Angurugu Community of Groote Eylandt in 1993 and 1997. As a multicultural show with people from local Catholic and Uniting Churches, the International Buddhist Temple, and Larrakia, Tiwi Island Aboriginal communities, Tracks engaged in *The Land, the Cross and the Lotus* in 1998. In the same year, students from Nguiu, one of the communities involved in the 1998 performance, performed *Kukanarri Show*, which means celebrations when the whole community comes together, and dealt with the issues identified by the Nguiu community that caused a high youth suicide rate. Tracks also welcomed the arrival of the Olympic Torch in 2000. *Janganpa* in 2003 was performed by Janganpa Dancers, traditional Elders of Anmatyerre and Warlpiri, but not from Lajamanu, in collaboration with the two artistic directors of Tracks. According to Sarah Jaensch (2006), one of the biggest challenges for Newth and McMicken was the choreography for the opening ceremony of the 2005 Arafura Games, the performance by 450 people representing the territory's multicultural society. Following the huge success of the ceremony, the company was again chosen to direct the largest performance event in the NT in 2007. It fascinated a live local, national and international audience of over 14,000 and a television audience throughout Australia and Southeast Asia. These events were held successfully by the company in the same years of the first two Milpirri in 2005 and 2007.

### 3.4. Summary

This chapter has sketched the present context of musical, ritual and civil life in Lajamanu where Milpirri was created in 2005. The fieldwork and analysis of the ancestral music in Kurdiji created a determination for a comparative study of Aboriginal music with Asian music. The experience of reviving the *kurlumpurrngu* and Jalurinjiri Purlapa which have the Emu Dreaming as well as Jardiwarnpa – the main theme of Milpirri – made me undertake further research on contemporary Warlpiri educational songs and compose Maths Purlapa with Jampijinpa and his daughter.

The discussion above about daily musical activities of Lajamanu shows that this remote community was in the process of using information technology for creating, producing, and – probably more importantly – maintaining ancestral musical tradition. While the school does not emphasise musical education, schoolchildren never stop dancing disco on weekend nights. Although there are few stages for local bands performing Aboriginal rock and reggae, the community resounds with universal youth music from the community hall, throughout the day from private houses, and in the night from cars driven by young adults on sandy streets. Other individuals enjoy their favourite songs on the internet in the libraries and with their iPods. On my return to Lajamanu for Milpirri 2012, at least two people told me about the experience of eating ‘sky fish’, and other Elders in the Art Centre sat in front of the screen repeatedly to see Warlpiri video clips, such as *A Walbiri Fire Ceremony: Ngatjakula* (2000), *Blood Brothers* -

*Jardiwarnpa: A Warlpiri Fire Ceremony* (2007) and *Samson and Delilah* (2009) when I prepared them to show to them.

It is also clear that *yapa* people in Lajamanu had given their performances with Tracks Incorporated before Milpirri was born. The arrival of Tracks not only brought entertainment to the community but also drew out their ability, especially that of female Elders, to work well with modern dancers from *kardiya* society and to dance in front of an audience from other communities. In the context that they had their traditional public music and dance, or Yawulyu, they became actively engaged with Tracks and this significant friendship contributed to the establishment of the possibility for Milpirri starting in 2005. Also, while some bands consisting of relatively young men had performed Western music at the Lajamanu Sports Weekend, many schoolchildren loved Disco and rock music but did not have opportunity to show their performance before the meeting with Tracks. It is understandable that they were eager to perform their original song and dance at an event such as Milpirri.

## Chapter 4. Evolution of Milpirri

In this chapter, I will describe the development of the series of Milpirri from 2005 to 2012 in terms of its program with the theme of remarkable Warlpiri rituals. First, it will start with the role of Tracks Incorporated which was responsible for the creation, management, and dance training of children for the festival. Their meeting with Jampijinpa will be mentioned in connection with the program of the first Milpirri. In order to analyse the first two Milpirri (2005 and 2007), I made much use of the DVDs produced by and on the official website of Tracks in addition to gathering information from the people I have known since my first visit to Lajamanu in 2008.

Several documents written directly by Jampijinpa were available to read before beginning fieldwork in Lajamanu. When I first visited the remote community, he gave me both a Warlpiri Skin Name and his new book in 2008 with his autograph. The ideology for the creation of Milpirri written in *Ngurra-kurlu* (Patrick et al. 2008) should be considered for a deeper interpretation before the analysis of the program of the event. The several pieces of writing and presentations by Jampijinpa and others can be used to examine the core of the event from several aspects such as the original definition of Milpirri, the colour code invented for the event, and the cosmology of *ngurra-kurlu* which link to the selection of the rituals for the program (see figure 4.1, table 4.1).



**Figure 4.1: Ngurra-kurlu Diagram being drawn by Jampijinpa**  
Screenshot of the movie clip *Ngurra-kurlu* (2008).

**Table 4.1: Ngurra-kurlu ideology**

| Direction | Meaning  |
|-----------|----------|
| North     | Law      |
| South     | Ceremony |
| East      | Skin     |
| West      | Language |
| Centre    | Country  |

The summary of the discussion in Holmes and Patrick (2013).

Since 2007, Jampijinpa had more chances to give presentations all over the world besides publishing his book. He participated with Wild in the Colloquium of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM), ‘Indigenous Music and Dance as Cultural Property: Global Perspectives’ held in Toronto, Canada. Later in the same year, he was also a guest speaker at the World Indigenous Peoples’ Conference on Education in Melbourne. In 2009, he was a guest speaker at ‘Paroles d’Autochtones’ conference at Lyon, France, and made a presentation at the Charles Darwin University as mentioned earlier. These were before I joined Milpirri 2009.

The word *milpirri* has been known to authors of Warlpiri dictionaries. In his *An Elementary Warlpiri Dictionary*, Ken Hale (1995) translated the word as ‘cloud’ (a noun) in English. Back in 1975 the Reverend Laurie Reece explained *milpiri* as ‘clouds’, and especially ‘white clouds’ in his dictionary. Related words are also indicated as *matai* or ‘dark clouds’, and *mangkutu* or ‘clouds, cloudy sky, cloudy day’. Jampijinpa did not deny those traditional explanations but added further interpretation:

Milpirri is the Warlpiri name for a rain cloud. At this level, Milpirri describes the process of rain clouds building in the wet season, sending out lightning and thunder, and resulting in life-giving rain that transforms the deserts of central Australia. (Patrick 2008b:53)

In another case, Jampijinpa deliberately concentrated on the etymology of Milpirri as *Milpa* (eyes) and *rri* (Running or flowing), translating into English ‘Time for the tears’ when we gave a presentation where the common theme was ‘laments’ (Patrick & Doi 2011a).

The name for the event derives from the creator’s parentage. Jampijinpa with his father Jerry Jangala sometimes taught me about their totemic story for my interviews in Lajamanu and Lulju Outstation in 2009. I also relied on his presentation (prepared with Alan Box) at ANU in 2008 before I arrived at the University. According to the paper of the presentation (Patrick 2008b), Jampijinpa declared his intention to name ‘Milpirri’ with the Dreaming related to cumulonimbus clouds for the event of a set of dances, Songlines, paintings, body paintings and performances that communicate this story and that assist with the telling of the values that underlie it, depicted as follows:

Milpirri is a jukurrpa (dreaming) from the Jangala/Jampijinpa clan [patricouple], of which the author is a kirda, or trustee. This jukurrpa is from the Warnayaka Warlpiri. In a place near Kulpulumu, two young warriors called wammajarrijarra were hunting in the area for kanyarla (euro kangaroos). The two young warriors lit a fire to flush the kangaroos out of the bush, but they realised that they had created a big bushfire that raged for days and was expanding. The bushfire created a big pillar of smoke that built

up in the sky. The clouds were drawn into the pillar of smoke and created Milpirri, which then sent rain and drenched the land, putting out the fire. (Patrick 2008b:53)

Regarding the idea of Milpirri, Jampijinpa has introduced it with a striking metaphor.

The metaphor of ‘cold air and the hot air’ is probably most notable to the participants and researchers of the biennial event, so that it would be naturally paralleled with ‘salt and fresh water’ of Garma Festival as mentioned in chapter 1. Here is an example of the explanations by Tracks of Milpirri using that key word:

In the desert, when the cold air and the hot air come together, the Milpirri heavy rainstorm cloud is formed, a powerful dreaming for desert people, and a key to the survival of the Warlpiri people, bringing rain, new growth and nourishment for the people and their culture. (McEwen 2007:24)

The rising hot air and the falling cold air create the Milpirri clouds and describe the meeting of two very different cultures and ways of life. At the point of meeting there is a clash. The thunder and lightning portray the pain and confusion that came about at the meeting of traditional Warlpiri and mainstream European culture. However, the metaphor goes on to suggest that there is a way of merging the two, without violating either, to create refreshing and life-giving results. (ibid.:53)

Milpirri is the collision of opposites. Hot air and cold air clash together forming the milpirri thunder clouds. (Documentary Australia Foundation n.d.)

Furthermore, in terms of the understanding of the meaning, I noticed later during my fieldwork in 2009 that people including Jampijinpa added new definitions of ‘Milpirri’. I heard

another usage of the term *milpirri*, other than the event per se, from both Tracks members and other Warlpiri speakers: they could call young schoolchildren ‘Milpirri dancers’, who are dancing and training for hip hop at the event, or sometimes outside of the community, as I will mention an event in Melbourne in 2010. I heard the secondary expression from not only Tracks people but also local people who joined traditional dancers since my first participation in Milpirri. This proves how important the element of hip hop dance is in the event which Jampijinpa produced with Tracks Dance Company.

The colour code for Warlpiri Skin Groups must be regarded as one of the most successful inventions by Jampijinpa in the Milpirri project (see table 4.2, figure 4.2). The special colouring system designated in order for the audience to identify the performers in the individual groups has become rooted in the community including Elders and children, and all the teaching staff in this event. The colours were allocated to four patricouples/semi-patrimoieties, which Jampijinpa explains by the term ‘clan’, from eight Warlpiri subsections, and the purpose of the simplification is for the education of the traditional Warlpiri marriage system, proper roles in rituals and individual art designs. Patricouple membership is passed on through the male line. Jampijinpa explains the reasons for the four colours with ancestral relation to each patricouple.

Blue was assigned to the Jangala/Jampijinpa clan, because many of the jukurrpa stories in that clan are ngapa (water) stories. We assigned green to the Japanangka/Japangardi clan because many of their jukurrpa stories are about vegetation. The

**Table 4.2: Subsections and Milpirri Colouring**

| Colour group | Subsections                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Blue         | Jampijinpa, Jangala / Nampijinpa, Nangala       |
| Yellow       | Jungarrayi, Japaljarri / Nungarrayi, Napaljarri |
| Red          | Jupurrurla, Jakamarra / Napurrurla, Nakamarra   |
| Green        | Japanangka, Japangardi / Napanangka, Napangardi |



**Figure 4.2: Jampijinpa teaching children which arm to put a colour armband on**

Jakamarra/Jupurrurla clan was assigned red because many of their stories are about animals that are eaten as meat (*kuyu*). Because the Japaljarri/Jungarrayi clan has many bird stories (*jurlpu*), we assigned them the colour yellow. (Patrick 2008b:55)

Besides the establishment of the patrilineal colouring system, the term *kuyu* was effectively explained in relation to the patrimoiety.<sup>48</sup> As the traditional meaning of *kuyu* in Warlpiri is ‘meat’, the book *Ngurra-kurlu* (Patrick et al. 2008:22) mentioned that ‘Kuyu is the Warlpiri word for meat, and Wanta [Jampijinpa] sees a link between the primary importance for living of both meat and ceremony’. Further, the book and video ‘*ngurra-kurlu*’ explained in English as if the grouping of *kuyu* patrimoieties were fixed (i.e. *yarriki* = Japaljarri / Jungarrayi Skin Group’), but indeed they are movable as I listed in table 4.3. In other words, *kuyu-wapirra-jarra* (fathers) is a patricouple and *kuyu-wurruru* (‘son-in-law’ or Poison Cousin) is a mothers-in-law-son-in-law couple. To see the meaning of ‘Poison Cousin’, the preferable marriage law in Warlpiri

<sup>48</sup> Before the appearance of Milpirri, *kuyu* was known as ‘[f]lesh which gives form and substance to all that bears his/her name: the clans, animals, plants, phenomena, etc.’ (Glowczewski 1989:129).

**Table 4.3: Kuyu relationship**

| Ego \ Matrimoiety Opponent  | Kana-ngaja    | Yankirri      | Kana-ngaja    | Yankirri      | Kana-ngaja    | Yankirri      | Kana-ngaja    | Yankirri      |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|                             | N/ Jampijinpa | N/ Jangala    | N/ Jungarrayi | N/ Japaljarri | N/ Jakamarra  | Na/ Jupurrula | N/ Japangardi | N/ Japanangka |
| N/Jangala + N/Jampijinpa    | Wapirra-jarra | Wapirra-jarra | Kirda         | Yarriki       | Wurruru       | Wurruru       | Yarriki       | Kirda         |
| N/Jungarrayi + N/Japaljarri | Yarriki       | Kirda         | Wapirra-jarra | Wapirra-jarra | Kirda         | Yarriki       | Wurruru       | Wurruru       |
| Na/Jupurrula + N/Jakamarra  | Wurruru       | Wurruru       | Yarriki       | Kirda         | Wapirra-jarra | Wapirra-jarra | Kirda         | Yarriki       |
| N/Japanangka + N/Japangardi | Kirda         | Yarriki       | Wurruru       | Wurruru       | Yarriki       | Kirda         | Wapirra-jarra | Wapirra-jarra |

For a Jampijinpa man, another Jampijinpa must be his brother, Jangala must be his father or son; and Nampijinpa/Nangala must be his father's sister, sister or daughter (*kuyu-wairra-jarra* and in the same colour group). Napurrula must be his mothers-in-law (*kuyu-wurruru*). Milpirri colouring system does not accord with *kuyu-kirda* and *kuyu-yarriki* groupings. For instance, Yellow Jungarrayi and Green Japanangka belong to *kuyu-kirda* and Yellow Japaljarri and Green Japangardi belong to *kuyu-yarriki*.

tradition needs to be understood (see figure 4.3), and will be discussed in detail at the following

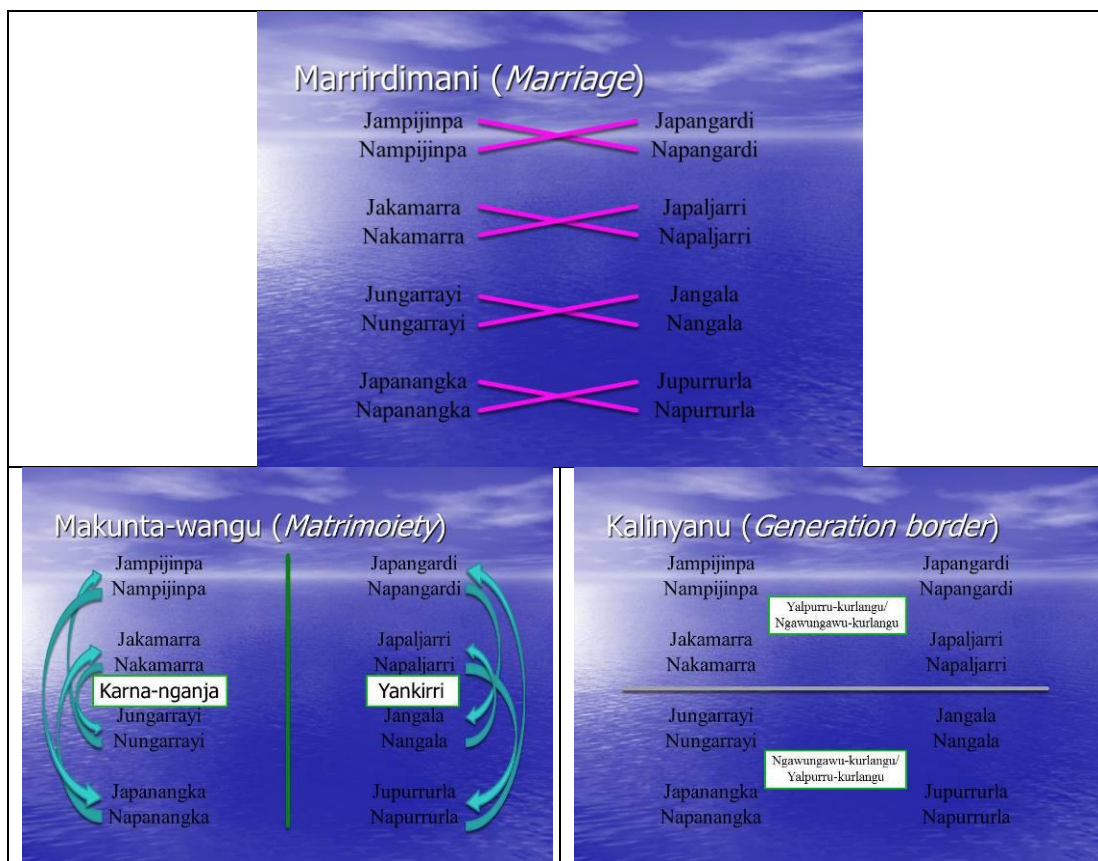
chapter from the viewpoint of the different marriage system from the current *kardiya* society.

*Kuyu-kirda* (owner) and *kuyu-yarriki* (another term for *kirda*) rely on one's matrimoiety (*karna-nganja* or *yankirri*). Thus, Jampijinpa explained the additional meaning of *kuyu* (*-kirda*), which is different from the division of *kirda-kurdungurlu* in ceremonies (see table 4.4).

Jampijinpa commented that the colouring system for patricouples had taken root among schoolchildren as a result of the success of the instruction.

It is amazing, but despite never having been part of Warlpiri culture, these colours have been integrated into the culture to such a degree that children will tell you that they are part of red group or blue group when discussing their clan membership. (Patrick 2008b:55)

For instance, in my own experience, as soon as I was granted my Skin Name, Jungarrayi, in



**Figure 4.3: Diagram of Warlpiri preferred marriage**  
These diagrams were made with Jampijinpa using PowerPoint.

**Table 4.4: Kirda-kurdungurlu relationship**

|                        |            |                           |            |                        |
|------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| Kirda/<br>Kurdu-ngurlu | Japangardi | Jardiwarnpa/<br>Ngajakula | Jampijinpa | Kurdu-ngurlu/<br>Kirda |
|                        | Napangardi |                           | Nampijinpa |                        |
|                        |            |                           |            |                        |
|                        | Japaljarri |                           | Jakamarra  |                        |
| Kurdu-ngurlu/<br>Kirda | Napaljarri |                           | Nakamarra  | Kirda/<br>Kurdu-ngurlu |
|                        |            |                           |            |                        |
|                        | Jangala    |                           | Jungarrayi |                        |
|                        | Nangala    |                           | Nungarrayi |                        |
|                        |            |                           |            |                        |
|                        | Jupurula   |                           | Japanangka |                        |
|                        | Napurula   |                           | Napanangka |                        |

2008, some children around me chatted whether I belonged to the same colour and Dreaming direction as them or not, when I did not really understand because I had read mainly writings by anthropologists researching the traditional Warlpiri kinship system without the colouring code. In later visits I also witnessed schoolchildren sitting down on worn-out four colour mats

following their Skin Names during the outside Warlpiri classes and school assemblies in their normal school days, or out of the Milpirri training periods (see figure 4.4).



**Figure 4.4: School assembly using four colour mats for Warnayaka children, Lajamanu School**

The prime mover of Milpirri was not merely the kinship colouring code. The cosmology of *ngurra-kurlu* has been epitomised in the event through the historical Aboriginal constellation of the Southern Cross. This story lies partly in each ritual applied in Milpirri, including the Emu Dreaming Songline of Jardiwarnpa Ceremony, a special message of ‘mothers’ in initiation ceremony, and Jalurinjiirri Purlapa using *kurlumpurrngu*. As I did not join the first two Milpirri, I made the most of the fieldwork during their initiation ceremony in 2010-2011 when Milpirri was not held. In 2007 Jampijinpa first delineated the Kurdiji ceremony using or coining the Warlpiri expression of *ngurra-kurlu*.

This idea of Milpirri has been well-accepted by certain non-Indigenous people since about the second event. For instance, Jampijinpa won an Innovative Curriculum award for his

work in applying the ideology of *ngurra-kurlu* to classroom education in that year. At the same time, a systematic explanation was expressed in his book *Ngurra-kurlu: A way of working with Warlpiri people* (2008) with Miles Holmes and Alan Box who were Milpirri concept advisers. The second presentation was given at the Garma Festival 2008 with Michael laFlamme of the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre Project. He also made a short video clip on the *ngurra-kurlu* philosophy, which is available on YouTube (*Ngurra-kurlu* 2008).<sup>49</sup>

The theme for 2007 was the Kurdiji Ceremony, and the performance told the story of how mothers hand over their sons to the men to be initiated into manhood and begin the lifelong task of learning what it means to be a Warlpiri man; a Kurdiji, or shield, for his family, for the community, and for the Warlpiri *Ngurra-kurlu* (the five elements of a Warlpiri world and life view). (Patrick 2008b:56)

While *ngurra-kurlu* was the main idea studied in the book, one of the important theories in order to connect it to the program of Milpirri 2007 was that Jampijinpa clarified the meaning of *yapa* as a whole ‘Aboriginal’, by mentioning ‘every country’s got their own version of *ngurra-kurlu*’ (*Ngurra-kurlu* 2008). The concept was regarded as the common Aboriginality which is adopted throughout the Australian continent. The Aboriginality seen across the continent and its common hope in relation to *kardiya* society was to be more intelligibly asserted in the Milpirri

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<sup>49</sup>As stated by Patrick et al. (2008:3), ‘[t]he original video was sent to Melbourne as Wanta’s acceptance speech for an Innovative Curriculum Award he received in relation to the use of *ngurra-kurlu* in education’.

program in the same year with the use of the panels of the Coat of Arms. This will be discussed in the section on Milpirri 2007.

The success of the publication owes much to the advisors of the concept of the first Milpirri. As cited several times above, Alan Box wrote a paper on Milpirri with Jampijinpa which was presented at the Australian National University's Symposium on Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2008 and the paper was published later without his name (Patrick 2008b). He was a teacher in the Lajamanu School and Jampijinpa's supervisor as the Community Liason Officer from 2003 until 2007, so that Wild (2010) took him as 'A third voice in the inception of Milpirri' as we discussed the Christian influence from him and Jampijinpa's father, Jerry Jangala in Chapter 3.

## **4.1. Milpirri 2005**

Milpirri, launched in 2005, was the product of the ideas and efforts of both Tracks and Jampijinpa. As I already mentioned in the last chapter, Lajamanu community had established friendly relations with Tracks Artists since even before the company's foundation. The first contact of Tracks with the community was through Tim Newth, who originally trained himself as a visual artist usually of still images. After his training he began working with dance companies to further explore his interest in the visual through movement. The side who struck up a conversation was Jampijinpa. The meeting between them seemed a significant opportunity

for realising his dream. He still remembered the success of the *Living in Isolation* in 1988 which left a positive impression of Tracks people among the Lajamanu community, both young and old. With an idea in his mind, Jampijinpa approached Newth on one day of his later visits to ask about the possibility of continuing to put on performances about Warlpiri lives for a few years.

Can you help us make a performance that will enable the school to understand what two-way really means? (Patrick 2008b:55)

This is the way by which Jampijinpa sought to persuade Newth. Although it cannot be confirmed how they built consensus on the detailed concept of the Warlpiri term ‘Milpirri’, Newth ‘agreed to do that’ (ibid.) in terms of an event having children’s hip hop dance taught by Tracks.

The process of the creation of the first Milpirri was also described in the homepage of Ausdance (n.d.) from which a dancer/instructor came and helped Tracks people. According to that, Newth, McMicken and two young dance trainees travelled to Lajamanu from Darwin three times during three months’ preparation for the first show. They worked with Elders, the community council, the school and students just like I saw in 2009. Newth summarised the importance of the process as follows:

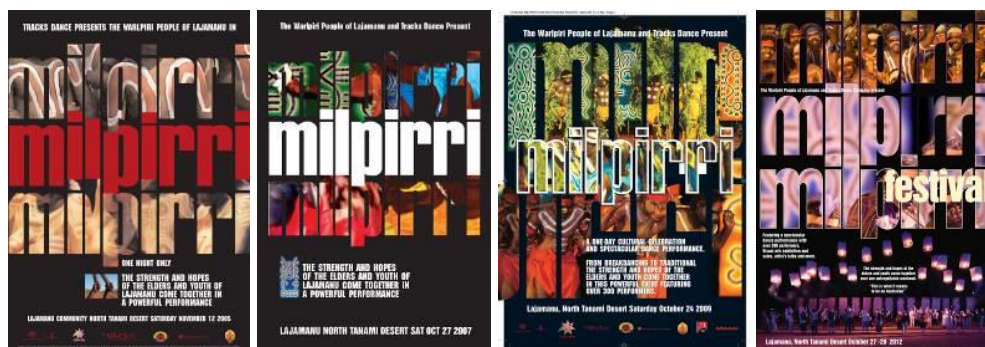
Indigenous people respond to stories, the telling of their stories from the past to the present. In this way we can begin to get an understanding of the Milpirri dreaming and how they see their school and the relationship it has to their lives. (Newth in Ausdance n.d.)

The series of Milpirri commenced with the theme of ancestral Jardiwarnpa ritual. As discussed earlier, this ceremony had not been held recently, except for several of its songs sung spontaneously or by request. People involved in Milpirri tended to insist that Jardiwarnpa had been reawakened on the occasion of the first Milpirri in 2005 after ‘nearly 30 years’ (Tracks 2005b; McEwen 2007:25) of being absent from community life.

As it turned out, the first Milpirri featured four stories from the songlines leading into the Jarda-warnpa [Jardiwarnpa] Ceremony—one story from each of the clan groups. We then arranged a traditional performance from the men’s side, a traditional performance from the women’s side, a contemporary dance routine from the young boys and an action dance from the young girls for each of the four stories. That is, we had four stories, each told four different ways. (Patrick 2008b:55)

Teaching hip hop and break dance to the schoolchildren, the directors of Tracks developed a sound track for the performance with Elders, the council members and members of two bands—the North Tanami Band and the Lajamanu Teenage Band. The material produced by the community was shaped for the stage with lighting at the basketball court, which was unusual for community performances. The banners, which can teach children for which clan design they should be responsible since they came into this world, remind me of the fact that Milpirri, like formal performance of Gagaku in Japan, stands in need of symbolic decor. Jangala’s Milpirri painting was discussed in Chapter 3. Tracks believed that ‘this will bring the magic of high quality theatre to the community audience’ (Ausdance n.d.). According to the

DVD of Milpirri 2005 (Tracks 2005a; see figure 4.5) performances contained 16 sections (eight traditional, seven contemporary, and one fusion piece) culminating in the Jardiwarnpa ceremony. For traditional pieces, Jardiwarnpa and Purlapa dances were performed by men and Yawulyu dances by women; for contemporary, hip hop was performed by schoolchildren (boys and girls) with Tracks' interpretation and instruction. Basically each scenario had the set of all the different types of each colour group; however, children's performance was not classified by their Skin Name colour but school grade. All of the dances played a role in contributing to the stories, the messages and the manner of the performance. The number of the performers of Milpirri on 12 November 2005 was recorded in the Tracks homepage as 161 (56 men, 29 women, 35 boys and 41 girls).<sup>50</sup>



**Figure 4.5: Milpirri DVD Covers of Tracks Dance Company**  
DVDs from left Milpirri 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2012.

The scenario of the first Milpirri consists of prologue, four acts and finale (see table 4.5.

For the colouring and traditional subsections, see table 4.2.). Traditional Jardiwarnpa ritual was

<sup>50</sup> According to the webpage of the Tracks (2005b), the breakdown was 17 Senior Men, 26 Senior/Traditional Women, 39 Traditional Men, 35 Male Youth and 41 Female Youth.

performed not merely in the finale but as the consistent theme of the whole event because each title of the acts was attributed to an aspect of the ceremony.

**Table 4.5: Scenario of Milpirri 2005**

| Warlpiri name | English name     | Group  | Notes                                |
|---------------|------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| Milpirri      | Rain clouds      | Blue   | Prologue: Invitation to join in      |
| Pilapakarnu   | Waterbirds       | Blue   | Celebration                          |
| Warlawurru    | Wedge-tail Eagle | Yellow | Protection                           |
| Wardapi       | Goanna           | Green  | Guidance                             |
| Wampana       | Wallaby          | Red    | Unity                                |
| Jardiwarnpa   | Fire Ceremony    | All    | Finale: Atonement and Reconciliation |

Being titled ‘Invitation to join in’ and accounted for as owned by Blue group, the first dance had the concept of *Milpirri Jukurrpa* or a Rain Dreaming as the representative of Jampijinpa-Jangala patricouple. It was danced while introduction of Milpirri was being narrated with the recorded voice of Jampijinpa. The *Milpirri Jukurrpa* Dance itself was performed after 2007 while this Milpirri 2005 had the people who belong to the same Skin Group playing a role in the Act 1 ‘Celebration’, subtitled *pilapakarnu* or Waterbirds (Dance). Each colour group performance was thus begun as male and female traditional dance and boys’ and girls’ contemporary dance. In the traditional scene, lined-up Jardiwarnpa dancers consisted of Blue group men and mixed colour women including Yellow and Red at random. Also, in the contemporary part, children performed an acrobatic flip of all the colour groups.

Subsequently, *warlawurru* or Wedge-tail Eagle (Dance) was performed by Yellow group with the title ‘Protection’. After 10 Jungarrayi-Japaljarri lined dancers gathered in the centre of the stage, mainly Yellow with some Green and Red women surrounded them with gentle jumping. Then, while Yellow girls danced with back-dancers from the other groups, rap

music accompanied boy dancers of all the colour groups. The *warlawurru* dance in this Milpirri had several dances and public songs, but did not feature the percussion beat that was performed in the initiation ceremony in 2011 and compared with Asian drums in the earlier chapter.

In the subject of ‘Guidance’, Green group danced *wardapi* or Goanna (Dance). After a traditional walking dance by male dancers, the same Green colour female dancers were digging with sticks while the other colour women were observing them ritually. A Warlpiri narration for gathering young dancers was accompanied by djembe-like sound and mixed by Tracks. In the next chapter, I will give details of how the Goanna holes represented in the dance are interpreted by local people as it was already touched on to some extent in Tracks’ home page before the Kurdiji-themed Milpirri 2007. The words to initiation novices are considered to be always remembered by Warlpiri people.

At the time of a young man’s initiation ceremony, mothers exhort their son to be guided along the straight track – following in the footsteps of those proven to be wise, and not distracted and deceived by goanna holes, which seem to promise good tucker, but actually may hide great danger. (Tracks 2005b)

The ‘Unity’ focusing ‘Wampana’ or Wallaby (Dance) was danced by Red group. The Jupurrurla-Jakamarra dancers with boomerangs were surrounded by female dancers of Red, Green and Yellow, but not Blue at that time. As soon as the girls’ dance finished, Jampijinpa announced the launch of the finale: the mixture of Jardiwarnpa ritual and the song ‘Desert People’. This song was set in the finale of Jardiwarnpa ceremony and danced by all the young

performers with the record of the song sung by the North Tanami Band, moving to the rhythmic beat:

*We are the desert people, we are the Warlpiri tribe*

*We are the people of the desert, the desert people*

From the viewpoint of the excitement of the performance, this song was potentially a theme song for subsequent Milpirri events, but it was performed only once again in 2007.<sup>51</sup> Another original song was used from 2009 onwards. Young men in traditional costume also appeared on the stage to dance in the musical interlude between the performances of the song ‘Desert People’ to perform part of ‘Jarda-warnpa’ (Jardiwarnpa). After the popular song was repeated three times and impressed the audience deeply, four male Elder dancers representing the four colour groups gathered on the stage. When their torches were ignited, the surrounding young traditional dancers were bouncing with shrill voices. Despite the advertisement of the ‘30-year revival’ of the traditional Fire Ceremony Jardiwarnpa, the important scenes of traditional dancers in the Finale were mixed with the contemporary song ‘Desert People’ piped in through the speakers. Although it was no longer a solemn ritual, under Tracks’ control of the music, no Elder performers seemed to complain about the superficial sound of ‘Desert People’. The preceding song cycles culminated in a selection of Jardiwarnpa, or ‘atonement and

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<sup>51</sup> Among several language groups in the desert areas in Australia, the Warlpiri people was especially called “Desert People” in the book by Meggitt (1962).

reconciliation' ceremony. It was said that 'this ceremony enables the four major groupings of the Warlpiri Skin system to settle disputes and work out differences' (Tracks 2005b). The fire of the ceremony was surrounded from the four directions by the representative Elder dancers from each colour group (see figure 4.6).



**Figure 4.6: Jardiwarnpa ritual in Milpirri 2005**  
Screenshot of the DVD of Tracks (2005a).

Although Elders did not expect that the performance was going to be any good, Jampijinpa mentioned later that the people involved realised that the idea of Milpirri was 'much bigger than just two-way teaching in the school' (Patrick 2008b). One of the reasons for the success of Milpirri, notwithstanding that it was the first time for the male Elders to perform on an artificial basketball court with lighting and loud speakers, can be considered to be due to Jampijinpa's relationship with them. He is accorded a considerable degree of respect, and I later noticed an increase in this respect from both young people and senior Elders in the community, so that he was admitted by Elders to Traditional Warlpiri Leadership in 2008.

With the support of the then principal of the school, Frank Atkinson and his staff, the key players in the project – Elders, young people and *kardiya* teachers – were all encouraged to be involved. The Tracks team had been working with children since the first production *Living in Isolation* in 1988, as well as with the female Elders who continued to be a major force within Tracks, performing in a number of their productions over the years. Jampijinpa and Tracks had made efforts to persuade the male Elders to participate although it seemed a little difficult at the beginning.

To be honest, the Old People did not understand what we were trying to do, even up to minutes before the performance was staged. This created a lot of difficulties for the Tracks Dance Company representatives. Many of the Old People thought that we were trying to steal and change their ceremony. However, after the performance, some of them came to the writer and said that now they understood what we were trying to achieve. (Patrick 2008b:55-56)

With the success of the first Milpirri, Jampijinpa began to be renowned both in his community and outside through several newspaper and radio interviews on Milpirri with the project slogan ‘Speak to the Land and the Land will speak back (*Wangkayarla nguruku, kapungku nguruju pina wangkami-jarla*)’ (Tracks 2005b, 2012c; Northern Territory - Eventfinder 2012).<sup>52</sup> The reason why this event was to be biennial seemed primarily a financial

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<sup>52</sup> The literature has revealed disagreement among scholars on similar animistic notion. Deborah Rose (1996:7) described the spirituality of Aboriginal people as “People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry or happy. ... Country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life”. Nicholas Peterson (2011), on the other hand, criticised new animists as ‘asserting things about Aboriginal people’s perception of the world that are unsupported by ethnographic evidence’.

issue. It is said that after the performance many community members asked when the next Milpirri would be held and there was a lot of disappointment about the fact that it would not occur until late 2007 (Patrick 2008b). With the difficulty of raising the money for a whole show, Tracks instructors Nick Power and Erwin Fenis visited again in 2006 only for workshops called *Lajamanu Residency* for the advancement of the second Milpirri. This is how Tracks has sustained their effort to maintain the relationship with Lajamanu every year. In 2006 Jampijinpa gave a presentation on Milpirri at the Key Forum of Garma Festival in Arnhem Land for the first time.

A major innovation was the establishment of the four colouring system. Although the event did not influence consistent increase of school attendance, which was the main aim of the project, the colouring of semi-moieties took root among schoolchildren through this event. That this colouring method to summarise traditional kinship made a tangible impact on schoolchildren was taken by Wild as evidence for the interpretation of Milpirri as a ‘revitalisation movement’. Apart from the interpretation of Milpirri as a ‘movement’, the success of the first show in 2005 by local people in Lajamanu determined the serialisation of the event. Not only restoring the Jardiwarnpa ceremony, but also achieving unity at least at communal level can be seen as important achievements of this event. The next chapter will reconsider the significance of the change represented by a contemporary song sung in Warlpiri as a theme music for the Milpirri series.

## 4.2. Milpirri 2007

The second Milpirri showed several developments and new features from the first. They are the source of funds, the inclusion of participants from Yuendumu, materialising the initiation ceremony, and teaching the ideas of *ngurra-kurlu* with the inclusion of the Australian Coat of Arms.

By 2007 the community received a substantial grant from a government agency and a major corporate sponsor, to be paid over three years. The Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund provided major support for Milpirri from 2007 to 2010 so that they could hold a bigger – probably the biggest – show in terms of the participants with the help of other Warlpiri communities:

Milpirri is based in the Lajamanu community but incorporates the other Warlpiri communities of Yuendumu, Willowra, Nyirripi, and Warlpiri Ngurra in Katherine. Milpirri engages the communities in music, dance, ceremonies and painting in order to stem the drift of the younger Warlpiri from their cultural roots. The result has been a strengthening of intergenerational bonds and growing self esteem among young Warlpiri. The benefits are being seen in better school results; a cultural revival; the acquisition of the many skills needed to stage a large cultural festival, and an improvement in the physical well being of those involved in staging Milpirri. (Rio Tinto n.d.)

With the process of the production of Milpirri from the creator's educational background including the Warlpiri Triangle, Milpirri aimed to include intercommunity activity from the beginning as this quotation indicates; however, the first Milpirri was performed only

by Lajamanu community members. A significant difference in 2007 was that the show introduced additional performers from outside the community. The performers of the Milpirri 2007 were 52 men (one from Yuendumu), 61 women (nine from Yuendumu), 29 boys and 42 girls.<sup>53</sup> Jampijinpa was glad to have achieved the plan:

The excitement built to such an extent that we had people from Yuendumu come to Lajamanu to be a part of the rehearsals and the performance. Yuendumu is a southern Warlpiri community, and is nearly 1000 kilometres from Lajamanu, travelling on the Tanami Track across the Tanami Desert. They made an enormous sacrifice to be with us for a week. (Patrick 2008b:56)

Several programs, used later in ANU education, can be seen in the detailed scenario of the Milpirri 2007 on the webpage of Tracks Dance Company (see table 4.6). It was the first time that the Kurdiji ceremony without secret song (*puru*) became open to the public. The performance order of colour groups that time was Green, Blue, Red and Yellow. Green group started the show with *Warlu* (Fire) Dance. This vigorous dance step by Green traditional dancers including Ngalia Warlpiri women around a fire was an important part of Marnakurrawarnu in the initiation ceremony.<sup>54</sup> After a hip hop dance by Green boys and girls in

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<sup>53</sup> Tracks (2007b) divided the performances that time into Men Dancers, Women Dancers, Singers, Male Youth Dancers and Female Youth Dancers.

<sup>54</sup> While this was not observed in the de facto circumcision ceremony (the version was Waruwarta) in 2011, ANU students danced it together with Jampijinpa and myself at Corn's winter term course Indigenous Australian Music and Media in 2012. When the traditional dance of Yankirri was taught in Corn's class, by taking up the Jalurinjirri Purlapa, Jampijinpa taught the story related to the sounds of *kurlumpurrngu* and Emu voice as mentioned in Chapter 3, and Corn explained the similarity of movement of Yankirri (Emu) dance in Milpirri 2007 and dance in Yolngu tradition with his realistic emu movement. This was one of the justifications of the ethnomusicological comparison of Milpirri with Garma Festival in 2009 in which I participated.

the show, panels of the Coat of Arms of Australia were brought by Tracks members to the centre of the basketball court, which is discussed below. Following the introduction of the program, *Yankirri* (Emu) Dance was danced by the Blue group. The number of the dancers was more than that of the first Milpirri because several male Elders also joined the dance of the initiation ritual. In the contemporary section, skilled performers, such as Caleb Japanangka from Green group, appeared even in the sections performed by different colours.

**Table 4.6: Scenario of Milpirri 2007**

| Warlpiri name | English name                                           | Group                              |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Warlu         | Fire                                                   | Green                              |
| Yankirri      | Emu                                                    | Blue                               |
| Marlu         | Kangaroo                                               | Red                                |
| Witi          | Leafy Poles                                            | Yellow                             |
| Milpirri      | Storm Cloud                                            | Blue                               |
| n/a           | ‘Desert People’                                        | All                                |
| Warluwariji   | Mothers’ Exhortation                                   | Women and boys                     |
| Wulparri      | Milky Way/‘Reminder to Pass on Deep Learning’          | Yellow and Green Men and all women |
| n/a           | ‘Kurdiji Song’/‘Lighting of the Witi and Ngurra-kurlu’ | All                                |

Jardiwarnpa dance was also performed under the main theme of Kurdiji in 2007.

Subsequent performance *marlu* (Kangaroo and Wooden banners) Dance was by Red group. The movement of ancestral male dancers with boomerangs was somewhat similar to the former Milpirri, but they had body painting this time and were surrounded by more Yawulyu female dancers. This was another Jardiwarnpa dance continued in Milpirri and it proves the authority and popularity of the almost obsolete Jardiwarnpa ritual.

*Witi* (Leafy Poles) Dance was by Yellow group. Each male dancer was tied with tall leafy poles and shaking them and themselves violently. This was another large-scale set of

dances which is easily omitted in the recent initiation ceremony (i.e. Waruwarta). Thanks to the theme taken up at Milpirri, the young performers and audience were able to recreate part of a bona fide Warlpiri initiation ceremony and this dance was clearly one of the highlights. I danced this in Milpirri 2012 and found the reason for dancers' side-walk is the handling of such tall *witi* (see figure 4.7). It took half a day to prepare them in the bush and at a bush hut of Kajirri Men's restricted area; Corn also helped us make them that year. Figure 4.8 shows the dance performed in Lajamanu in 1978.



**Figure 4.7: *Witi* Dance in Milpirri 2012 (also performed in 2007)**

Photographed by Cadden (2012). Yellow group dancers including the author (the fifth from the right).



**Figure 4.8: *Witi* Dance in an initiation ceremony in 1978**

Photographed by Kuipers (OzOutback n.d.a)

*Milpirri* (Storm Cloud) Dance has the title of the event and has been danced each time by a dancer from Blue group since Milpirri 2007. This was followed by the contemporary dance ‘Desert People’, which was called ‘Warlpiri anthem’ and performed again. The difference this time was that the adult women’s groups of all colours danced in their traditional steps in the intervals of the song. That was the beginning of *warluwariji* (Mothers’ Exhortation). Almost all the adult women dancers – extended Mothers, Grandmothers and Aunties – wore hairbands in each colour but dressed in black clothes this time, dancing in front of about twenty young boys in T-shirts arranged and laid on their backs on the ground (see figure 4.9). In the real initiation ceremony in Lajamanu with its small population, not so many boys at a time – half a dozen at most – are operated on (see figure 4.10). However, only a theatrical staging of the Kurdiji ceremony can show the digest of the rite of passage.



**Figure 4.9: Warluwariji in Milpirri 2007**  
Screenshot of the DVD of Tracks (2007a).



**Figure 4.10: Warluwariji in Waruwarta initiation ceremony**

*Wulparri* (Milky Way) Dance and its accompanying song *wantarri-tarri* was the last dance by Yellow and Green male dancers (figure 4.11, 12). Supervised by the Mothers on their

## Wantarri tarri



**Figure 4.11: Notation of Warntarri-tarri of Kurdi**

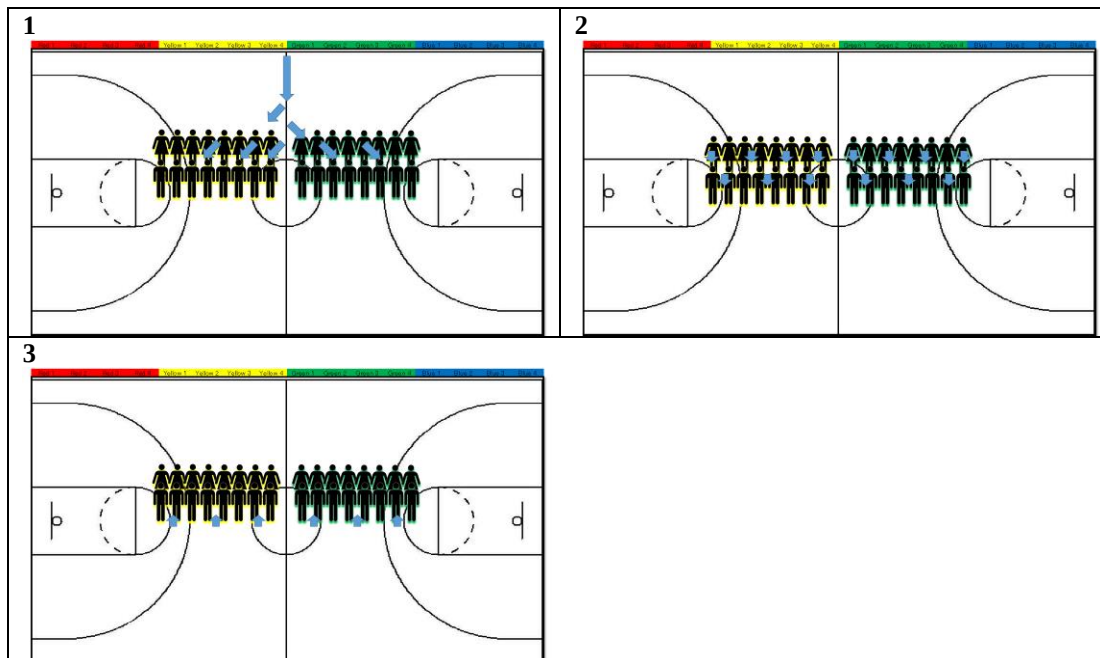
*Ya purrkurlu ngurlu*

*Ya wantarri tarri*

*Ya wantari kangu*

(From the space in the middle into the green. Journey under the gift road, Milky Way or life. Journey that needs to be taken by everybody.)

Transcription of the first song out of 3 song items sung in Milpirri 2009.



**Figure 4.12: Diagrams of Warntarri-tarri Milpirri Yellow and Green dance from Kurdi**

back, young but already initiated male dancers jumped continuously with a long yellow band in their hands. Until they passed the band to the female dancers behind, several male Elder singers being unable to stand by any longer taught them how to conduct the ritual. This (and Milpirri 2012) was the correct version to use a long band, which would originally be made of human hair and signify the Milky Way, probably because they emphasised the theme of initiation

ceremony in 2007 while Milpirri 2009 did not use the band due to the lack of preparation in the Men's Area.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to the 'Desert People' from Milpirri 2005, the program in 2007 had another *kardiya-yapa* fusion song. The name is 'Kurdiji Song', which may remind one of Marnakurrawarnu daytime songs in the Kurdiji and Waruwarta ceremonies but actually is a new gospel-like Warlpiri song made by Jampijinpa originally for lighting *witi* poles, which represents the climax of the Kurdiji and Jardiwarnpa ceremonies (see figure 4.13). One difference of Milpirri 2007 was to set alight the frame of the *ngurra-kurlu* diagram, made by Jampijinpa (see figure 4.14).

While the concept of *ngurra-kurlu* was discussed in the former chapter, the cultural education of Milpirri was not limited to *yapa* tradition (of Warlpiri or all Indigenous people) but included *kardiya*'s heraldic design, the Australian Commonwealth Coat of Arms (see figure 4.15). The project of Milpirri 2007 took up the constitution of Australia with Warlpiri interpretation through their panel display of the Australian Coat of Arms in the program. It is said that when in preparing the big panels for children's education, Elders studied the Australian Coat of Arms, the symbolism of the animals, the star and the shield (or *kurdiji* in Warlpiri) putting them into a Warlpiri context. The discovery of the coincidence with the symbols of animals surely delighted local people (see p.219, Patrick 2008b: 56):

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<sup>55</sup> This Warntarri-tarri song and dance was sometimes taught by Jampijinpa outside the community, including at a workshop at the ICTM conference in Canada and in Corn's class for undergraduate students at ANU to finalise their five-day intensive course.

# Kurdiji Song

Steve Jampijinpa Patrick

**Ballad**

1. Wa lya ngu rlu ka pa rdi mi\_\_\_\_ Ju rdu ju wi ri nya yi rni  
 2. Yu pun ju ka lu yun pa rni\_\_\_\_ Ju kurr pa kalu pu ra mi\_\_\_\_  
 3. Kirn ta ngi wi ri ka mi rilymi rily karrami warl pa wi taka wa nga mi\_\_\_\_

5 Ma ya ju ku ka wi ri ja rri mi\_\_\_\_ ya li nya ka ka rra ra\_\_\_\_  
 Mu ngang ka wi ring ka ka lu yun pa rni\_\_\_\_ tar ngang ku mu nga lyu kurra  
 Mu ngang ka nyam pu ju ngurr ju nya rni\_\_\_\_ waly kan ka kana nyi na mi\_\_\_\_

9 Ja rra ka lu Wa rlu yu la ngu ju\_\_\_\_ yarr pin ja wa rnu ka lu kam pa mi\_\_\_\_  
 Ku ja ka lu Karn ta pa ta ju\_\_\_\_ ka ka rra ra pu rdu wirn tin ja nu  
 Ma ta wa ngu ka lu Wirn ti mi\_\_\_\_ nyam pu nya ku rdiji rla\_\_\_\_

13 Pu rda nya ngul ku na ja na\_\_\_\_ pa nu nya yi ya pa ju\_\_\_\_  
 Kul pa ri ya rni ja wa ngul ku Ta rna ju ku lu ya nu rra\_\_\_\_  
 Wan karr ku lu ka ka rra mi\_\_\_\_ Pal pa wa rnul ka yam parjarni ni\_\_\_\_

17 Ku la ngan ta nga pa ju ku\_\_\_\_ wurn tu ru jang ka ka marr ma ni mi\_\_\_\_  
 Ma rda rlu ngu ru ngurr ju nyirr rni\_\_\_\_ pa lu pu ngu rra ya li rla ju\_\_\_\_  
 Mu nga wa rnu pi na ya ni\_\_\_\_ ngu rra wa la ja ku rral ku\_\_\_\_

21 Mi mi ka lu ka ka rra ra yun pa mi\_\_\_\_ Mi mi ka lu ka ka rra ra wirn ta ni  
 Nyam pu nya ka lu yun pa rni\_\_\_\_ Nyam pu nya ka lu wirn ta ni  
 Wi yarr pa rlu rlu yun pa nu\_\_\_\_ Wi yarr pa rlu rlu wirn ti ja

25 Mi mi ka lu ka ka rra ra nyi na mi\_\_\_\_ mu ngang ka\_\_\_\_ mu ngang ka\_\_\_\_ Ku rdi ji rla\_\_\_\_  
 Nyam pu nya ka lu nyi na mi\_\_\_\_ mu ngang ka\_\_\_\_ mu ngung ka\_\_\_\_ Ku rdi ji rla\_\_\_\_  
 Wi yarr pa ka lu pi na yanil ki mu ngawa rnu\_\_\_\_ mu ngawa rnu\_\_\_\_ Ku rdi ji jang

30 ka

Figure 4.13: Notation of 'Kurdiji Song'

- 1  
 Walyangurlu ka pardimi, Jurduju, wiri-nyayirni  
 Maya juku ka wiri jarrimi, yalinya kakarrara.  
 Jarra kalu Warlu languju, yarrpinjawarnu, kalu kampami  
 Purdanya-ngulkunajana panu-nyayirni yapaju  
 Kulanganta ngapajuku, wurnturujangka ka marrmanirni  
 Mirni-kalu kakarrara yunparni  
 Mirni-kalu kakarrara wirntani  
 Mirni-kalu kakarrara nyinami mungangka  
 Munangka  
 Kirdijirla
- 2  
 Yupunju kalu yunparni, Jukurpa kalu purami  
 Mungangkawiringki kalu yunparni, tanganku mungalykurra

*Kujarlu Karnta-pataju, kakarrapurdu wirntinjanu*  
*Kulpari-yarnija-wangulku, Tarnajukulu yanurra*  
*Mardarlu nguru ngurrjunyirni palupungurra yalirlaju*  
*Nyampunya-kalu yunpani*  
*Nyampunya-kalu wirntani*  
*Nyampunya kalu nyinami mungangka*  
*Mungangka*  
*Kudijirla*  
 3  
*Kirntangi wiri ka mirilymirilykarrami, warlpa, wita ka wangkami*  
*Mungangka nyampuju ngurrjunyarni, walykanka kanarlu nyinami*  
*Matawangu kalu wirntimi: nyampunya kurdijirla.*  
*Wankarrkuluku ka karrami, Palpawarnulku yankarjarni.*  
*Mungawarnulkalu pina yani ngurra walaja kurralku*  
*Wiyarrparlurlu yunpanu*  
*Wiyarrparlurlu wirntiji*  
*Wiyarrpa kalu pina yanilki mungangkawarnu*  
*Mungangkawarnu*  
*Kurdiji-jangka*



**Figure 4.14: Ngurra-kurlu sculpture set on fire**  
 Excerpt from Tracks (2007b).



**Figure 4.15: The Commonwealth Coat of Arms presented in Milpirri 2007**  
 Screenshot of the DVD of Tracks (2007a).

Unexpectedly, we discovered that the symbols appearing throughout the Warlpiri Kurdiji Ceremony also appear in the Australian coat of arms. This revelation inspired the Old People. For years they had been wanting to find a way to get Kardiya (mainstream people) to understand Warlpiri Law. For the Old People, sharing symbols that appear on Parliament House in Canberra with the symbols of the seat of Warlpiri Law, their ceremony, marked a great hope that there could be mutual understanding. The

Australian coat of arms appeared in the performance, and each of the elements in the coat of arms was acted out in traditional and contemporary music and dance, each of the clan groups taking responsibility for their part in the Kurdiji Ceremony. (Patrick *ibid.*)

Milpirri 2007 focusing on Kurdiji ceremony seems to have satisfied the two-way educational purpose for schoolchildren and additionally for adult people with the display of both *ngurra-kurlu* diagram and the Australian Coat of Arms in the program. There is a tendency of replacing Kurdiji by shortened and foreign-based Waruwarta in the annual initiation ceremonies as I witnessed during fieldwork, so that it is clear how important the role of Milpirri to recover and maintain Warlpiri ancestral rituals is.

Although the Australian Coat of Arms is not necessarily based on Aboriginal Cosmology but its animals at the sides of the shield were chosen because neither animal can move backward, only forward (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade n.d), there seems still strong respect to the nation of Australia as well as pan-Aboriginalism seen in *ngurra-kurlu* in terms of the Elders' reaction to the explanation of the symbols.

### 4.3. Milpirri 2009<sup>56</sup>

This section will provide a report of the preparation and practice of the community for Milpirri during my fieldwork in 2009. As has been written partly, this thesis makes a good use of participant observation during the lead up to and performance of Milpirri at Lajamanu. With the suggestions by Wild, I named my fieldwork project ‘Milpirri: A Revitalisation Movement in Central Australia.’<sup>57</sup> After being in the field for three months I was considering how the theory of a ‘revitalisation movement’ by Anthony Wallace could orient myself to it.

After participating in Garma Festival in Arnhem Land and the *Endurance Show* by Tracks in Darwin, I was bound for Lajamanu. In that year, mail flights between Katherine and Lajamanu were still available to the public with a more reasonable fare than chartering a plane individually. My first travel in a four-seater plane, which stopped at a few remote communities on the way to Lajamanu, made me nauseous. After arrival, the Art Centre manager and her relative gave me a room to stay in from August till November. As I had heard from McMicken during my volunteer work in Darwin, Tracks members arrived in Lajamanu on 13 September, or six weeks before the show. On the following day, recreation combining warming-up and a game for remembering names started among the Tracks instructors and schoolchildren in the small gymnasium (see figure 4.16). Until after that year, the school did not have a big gymnasium but was relatively cooperative in relation to Tracks and their project.

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<sup>56</sup> See Appendix for Tracks’ DVD of Milpirri 2009.

<sup>57</sup> This was the name used for a fieldwork grant from AIATSIS.



**Figure 4.16: Children's rehearsals with Tracks members**

The Tracks members instructed the children in two to four classes a day for six weeks (see table 4.7) with such a noise at the small gymnasium that people coming a week before the performance could barely watch their practice for more than one hour. The school attendance was increased temporarily when they taught children to dance. I did not see children or any other young members in the community practising hip hop dance by themselves when the Tracks members were not present.<sup>58</sup> When Tracks and Jampijinpa (see figure 4.17) were in Darwin to arrange music and record the narration for the show during a teaching break, no one practised at the basketball court but the disco for children continued because of their demand.

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<sup>58</sup> Hip hop was not rooted yet in the community at that time and it was not rehearsed or performed without Tracks. However, this does not mean that children and young people truly do not access hip hop and wider associated culture. The Community Library rarely opened and had intermittent internet access, but children somehow accessed on YouTube the Chooky Dancers from Elcho Island and mimicked them at the Lajamanu Disco. See also the discussion on the information society in 3.3.1.

This shows the difficulty of sustaining future hip hop events by children in Lajamanu without external help by Tracks Dance Company from Darwin.

**Table 4.7: Rehearsal schedule**

| Time                                               | Monday                                                                                  | Tuesday                                                                               | Wednesday                                                                                                                                                            | Thursday                                                                                                                   | Friday                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8.45 - 9.10                                        | Breakfast                                                                               |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                             |
| 9.10 - 10.30                                       | Normal Class                                                                            |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                             |
|                                                    | <b>Primary Boys</b><br>Roger & Olivia to supervise dance<br>Emma to take Olivia's girls | <b>Primary Girls</b><br>Liz & Belinda to supervise dance<br>Boys stay in own classes  | Normal Class                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                             |
| 11.30 - 12.15                                      | Lunch                                                                                   |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                             |
| 12.15 - 1.15                                       | <b>Secondary Girls</b><br>Sarah/Audrey to supervise                                     | <b>Secondary Boys</b><br>Shannon/Steven to supervise                                  | This slot could be possibly used for another group (primary boys if they need to be split into two)                                                                  |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                             |
| 1.15 - 2.15                                        | <b>Secondary Boys</b><br>Shannon/Steven to supervise                                    | <b>Secondary Girls</b><br>Sarah/Audrey to supervise                                   | <b>Secondary Boys</b><br>- Council - Sharron/Steven<br><b>Secondary Girls</b><br>- Music Room - Sarah/Audrey                                                         | <b>Secondary Boys</b><br>- Council - Sharron/Steven<br><b>Secondary Girls</b><br>- Music Room - Sarah/Audrey               | <b>Secondary Boys</b><br>- Council - Sharron/Steven<br><b>Secondary Girls</b><br>- Music Room - Sarah/Audrey                |
| 2.15 - 2.30                                        | Fruit Break                                                                             |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                             |
| 2.30 - 3.30                                        | <b>Primary Girls</b><br>Emma & Leah to supervise +(instead of Warlpiri Duty this week)  | <b>Primary Boys</b><br>Anne & Roger to supervise (instead of Warlpiri Duty this week) | <b>Primary Boys</b><br>- Council - Olivia/Roger to supervise (instead of Warlpiri Duty this week)<br><b>Primary Girls</b><br>- Music Room - Liz/Belinda to supervise | <b>Primary Boys</b><br>- Council - Corinne/Roger to supervise <b>Primary Girls</b><br>- Music Room - Sue/Leah to supervise | <b>Primary Boys</b><br>- Council - Gigi/Roger to supervise <b>Primary Girls</b><br>- Music Room - Peta/Annette to supervise |
| Warlpiri Duty - Teacher to rove between each group | Peta                                                                                    | Gigi                                                                                  | Shannon                                                                                                                                                              | Joanne                                                                                                                     | Sport - Sarah, Shannon, Joanne                                                                                              |



**Figure 4.17: Discussion by Wanta and Tim Newth and David McMicken of Tracks**

Other members from Tracks in Darwin arrived on 16 October to set up a sound system at the basketball court and children started after-school rehearsals there (see figure 4.18). This is another feature of Milpirri enjoying modern technology for attracting people staying

temporarily or permanently in the remote community. Around that time, Elders began to perform traditional Warlpiri songs and dances about 50 metres away but still in the contemporary dancers' sight (see figure 4.19). When the children's rehearsal ended at sunset, a few Elders began to sing Jardiwarnpa and Ngajakula songs accompanied by their decorated boomerang sticks while others sat in a semi-circle. It was totally dark when they finished singing songs, after an hour and a half. The setting up of the stage and the arrival of visitors to the community encouraged both male and female Elders to rehearse their traditional songs for the event. When I often visited the ground to prepare myself for the event, I only found children playing baseball and female Elders chatting, but male Elders tended to be in the Men's Area in Top Camp. I mentioned in the former chapter the occasions when they sang Jardiwarnpa songs in this place before and after the initiation ceremony.



**Figure 4.18: Setting up PA system, Basketball court, Lajamanu**



**Figure 4.19: Male Elders singing traditional songs after children's rehearsal, Community Area near Basketball court**

The Milpirri rehearsal for children in those days was basically an alternative school event to a daily class. I found later in other visits that 2009 was the last Milpirri that had such

cooperation from the school. The school attendance rate had been usually low, but children intently participated in Milpirri training with a lot of fun and a good excuse for not attending the other class.

Some of the female Elders sitting in line about 10 meters behind male Elders on the ground started painting their bodies in rehearsals while male singers painted only partly at the show (see figure 4.20). It is said that Tracks' audiences would not be surprised to enter a performance area and come across bare breasted women singing and painting elaborate designs in ochre and oil. Most of them were generous enough to allow themselves to be photographed. Some female Tracks members and visitors also painted themselves and/or joined Yawulyu dance on rehearsals (see figure 4.21). For example, on the night of 19 October, the rehearsal/performance was warmed up so that several male Elders also put a pole on the earth for dance, which was not even seen at the actual Milpirri night. It can be considered that a whole week leading up to Milpirri was practically a festival week.



**Figure 4.20: Senior women painting their bodies, Community Area near Basketball court**



**Figure 4.21: Yawulyu dance rehearsal with female Tracks members, Community Area near Basketball court**

Young men who were supposed to perform traditional dances in Milpirri were caught up in football practice and games. Due to the difficulty of the contact, almost all of them finally assembled on 22 October which was two days before the performance (see figure 4.22). The children's contemporary dance was nearly ready and women danced with the Elders' song without problems. However, the rehearsal was blocked by a strong thunderstorm and the youths were eventually able to practise only once in the run-through of the day before the show (see figure 4.23). At the same time, many young and old people in the community looked happy with thunder, which is suitable for the word 'Milpirri'.



**Figure 4.22: Male Elders' meeting including the youths, Community Area near Basketball court**



**Figure 4.23: Rehearsal with thunderstorm, Lajamanu Basketball court**

On 24 October, there were various events from morning onwards and it was difficult for me to choose which preparation for the night show to observe. Firstly, the Learning Centre had the Milpirri Opening session, where there was a speech by McMicken from Tracks on the nearly 20-year relationship between Tracks and Lajamanu and some comments by other people involved in creating the first Milpirri, such as Miles Holmes and Alan Box. That situation where people gathering from outside of the community discussed the importance of Aboriginal

tradition reminded me of the Key Forum of the Garma Festival. Soon after that, I was invited to the Men-Only place, or Kajirri place to see the youths painting their bodies around the Shelter, which held the most sacred objects for Warlpiri male Elders. Having asked for Jampijinpa's permission, Jungarrayi brothers painted me with the red ochre on the background and traditional design with yellow and white colour on the body and face. Subsequently some senior Elders there supervising youngsters and singing songs sometimes told me to join the performance and told my older Skin brothers to teach me how to dance. When Blue group was reaping eucalyptus trees for *witi* poles on the stage, Jampijinpa showed me a mass of raincloud pointing out in the proper direction of Milpirri. This observation corroborated the traditional belief that the rain-making songs and dances of Milpirri would result in the occurrence of rain. Each colour group has responsibility for their performance and our Yellow Group was indeed busier in 2012 to make other types of *witi* poles than were used in 2007. When we arrived at the basketball court, female dancers were also decorating their breasts with paint. Women and children showed a beam of joy to my camera probably because I was almost naked in *yapa*-way, or a painted body with a loincloth with the given colour (see figure 4.24, 25). The more the youth dancers practised around the basketball court, the more they got excited before the performance. Their rehearsal dance outside the stage looked as lively as the ones in the Waruwarta initiation ceremony I observed two years later. The lighting and film car and the Milpirri banners were ready and we waited for the beginning of the performance.



**Figure 4.24: Senior women ready for the performance, Community Area near Basketball court**



**Figure 4.25: The basketball court on the eve of the performance**

The theme of the program of Milpirri of that year (see table 4.8) was Jurntu Purlapa, explained as a piece in the Purlapa genre. Every participant wore a bracelet depending on which of four Skin colours they belonged to, and on the left or right wrist depending on their matrimoiety, saying ‘Speak to the land and the land will speak back’. A Milpirri-traditional colour coding was further enforced in that year: for instance, the children danced not only with the right colour bracelets but also the same colour T-shirts, while adult dancers performed with Jukurrpa designs on their bodies and Milpirri-coloured loin cloth. Some female dancers painted their bodies and the others put on T-shirts. However, most of the old male singers were dressed normally except for adding their colour bracelet. Even if the theme was a kind of Purlapa, there was no chance for school boys to dance one as in a school event or on a Country Visit because they concentrated on Tracks hip hop. The stage was set up at the basketball court with sixteen banners (up till 2009; see figure 4.26) behind the stage. While physical exercises for schoolchildren were in the cool time after breakfast or inside the small gymnasium in 2009 – before the new gymnasium was built – the main activity was usually after school at the old

|                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                      |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |    |    |    |
| Red 1 Warringarri                                                                   | Red 2 Kulukuku                                                                      | Red 3 Wampana                                                                        | Red 4 Wirmtiki                                                                        |
|    |    |    |    |
| Yellow 1 Nagatjirri                                                                 | Yellow 2 Kulungalinpa                                                               | Yellow 3 Warna                                                                       | Yellow 4 Mala Jila                                                                    |
|    |    |    |    |
| Green 1 Yala                                                                        | Green 2 Mina Mina                                                                   | Green 3 Kanda Mina Mina                                                              | Green 4 Wadapi                                                                        |
|  |  |  |  |
| Blue 1 Kudpulunu                                                                    | Blue 2 Miyi                                                                         | Blue 3 Pirlimjarnu                                                                   | Blue 4 Miyi Kanga Ngapa                                                               |

**Figure 4.26: Milpirri banners**

The banners belong to Tracks Dance Company. The numbering is the order of the banners in the stage of Milpirri 2009 demonstrated in figure 4.28.

basketball court and the football ground with many schoolchildren plus truants and older boys.

In the following year another big basketball court with a roof was built between the old one and

the Youth Hall, and Milpirri 2011 was held there. The 2012 event was at neither of them but at

an ad hoc stage with more banners (see figure 4.27, 28). As Tracks Incorporated (2009b)

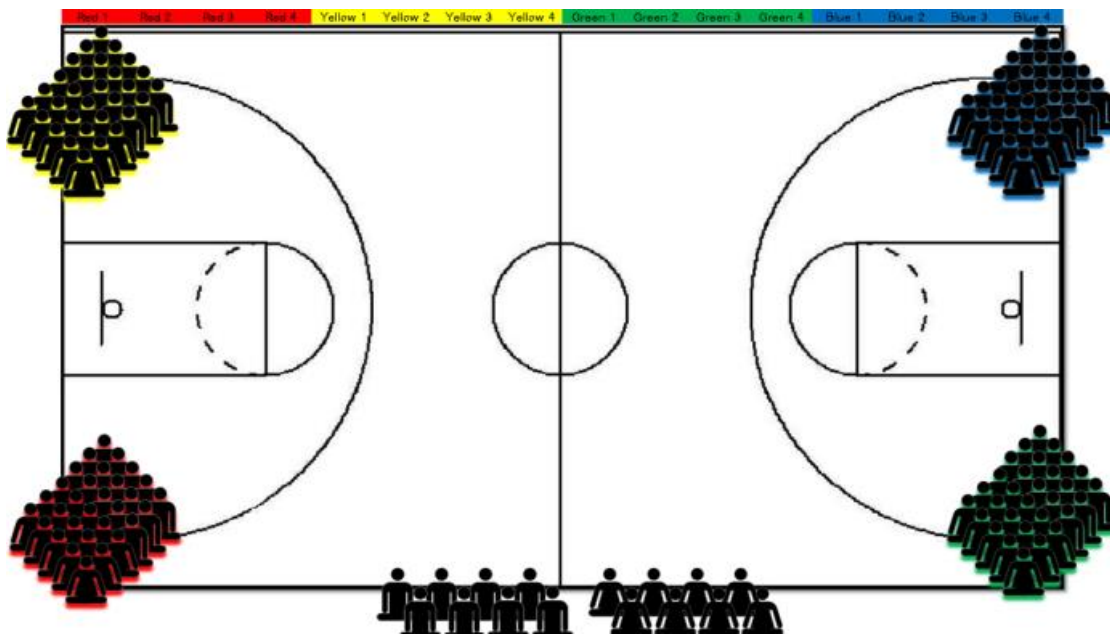
explained, the four sections of Milpirri 2009 ‘each representing a theme from the Jurntu



**Figure 4.27: Map of Basketball courts**

Excerpt from Yahoo! Maps (latitude=-18.331095357700676, longitude=130.63123002648354).

1. Youth Hall - Disko
2. New Basketball Court - Milpirri 2011
3. Old Basketball Court - Milpirri 2005, 2007 and 2009
4. Community area - Milpirri 2012



**Figure 4.28: Diagram of Milpirri place, Basketball court**  
Seated children and singers of male and female Elders

ceremony, with excerpts from the original Purlapa performance, as well as modern

interpretations performed by younger generations'; theoretically each of the colour groups was

responsible for one section. However, the traditional male dance by each colour group was

**Table 4.8: Scenario of Milpirri 2009**

| Warlpiri name                 | English name                                    | Group                              | Notes                 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Milpirri                      | Rain Storm                                      | Blue                               | Milpirri Introduction |
| n/a                           | Building Steam With a Grain of Salt - DJ Shadow | All                                | Justice               |
| Mangulpa                      | Black-headed Spear                              | Red Men                            |                       |
| n/a                           | Say What You Feel - Katalyst                    | Senior Boys                        |                       |
| n/a                           | Inner City - Arrested Development               | Junior Girls                       |                       |
| Parraja, Laypa and Ngalikirri | Coolamon, Grinding Stone / Mortar and Pestle    | Red Women                          |                       |
| n/a                           | Building Steam With a Grain of Salt - DJ Shadow | All                                | Discipline            |
| Junma                         | Stone Knife                                     | Yellow Men                         |                       |
| n/a                           | Boyz – M.I.A.                                   | Senior Girls                       |                       |
| n/a                           | Lesson 3 – DJ Shadow                            | Senior Boys                        |                       |
| Witi                          | Ceremonial Poles                                | Yellow Women                       |                       |
| n/a                           | Building Steam With a Grain of Salt - DJ Shadow | All                                | Respect               |
| Karli and Wirlki              | Boomerang                                       | Green Men                          |                       |
| n/a                           | The DJ Bacon Mix                                | Junior Boys                        |                       |
| n/a                           | Kicking and Screaming - The Presets             | Junior Girls                       |                       |
| Kana                          | Digging Stick                                   | Green Women                        |                       |
| n/a                           | Building Steam With a Grain of Salt - DJ Shadow | All                                | Responsibility        |
| Kurrwa                        | Stone Axe                                       | Blue Men                           |                       |
| n/a                           | Insight – Fort Knox 5                           | Senior Girls                       |                       |
| n/a                           |                                                 | All Children                       |                       |
| Mardu                         | Water Carrier                                   | Blue Women                         |                       |
| Karma-nganja                  | The Southern Cross and Emu                      | Yellow and Green Men and all women | Milky Way             |
| Yungkaju Kurdari              | Give Me the Crown                               | Kardiya People                     | Sky Lanterns          |

always accompanied by female Yawulyu dance, whose movement originated in the ancestral ceremony. The grouping of children's hip hop dances was determined by their age and sex rather than the colour T-shirts just as in the former two Milpirri.

The Milpirri introduction commenced with Jampijinpa's narration with the music of DJ Shadow's 'Building Stream with a Grain of Salt'. The lightning dance – solo *Milpirri Jukurrpa* Dance by a Blue male dancer – and its song by senior male Elders were consistent with those in 2005 and 2007, and its song was once sung by Jerry Jangala in my interview (see figure 3.49, 4.29, 31). The dance is essential for this event and was danced in 2012 as well. Four pairs of

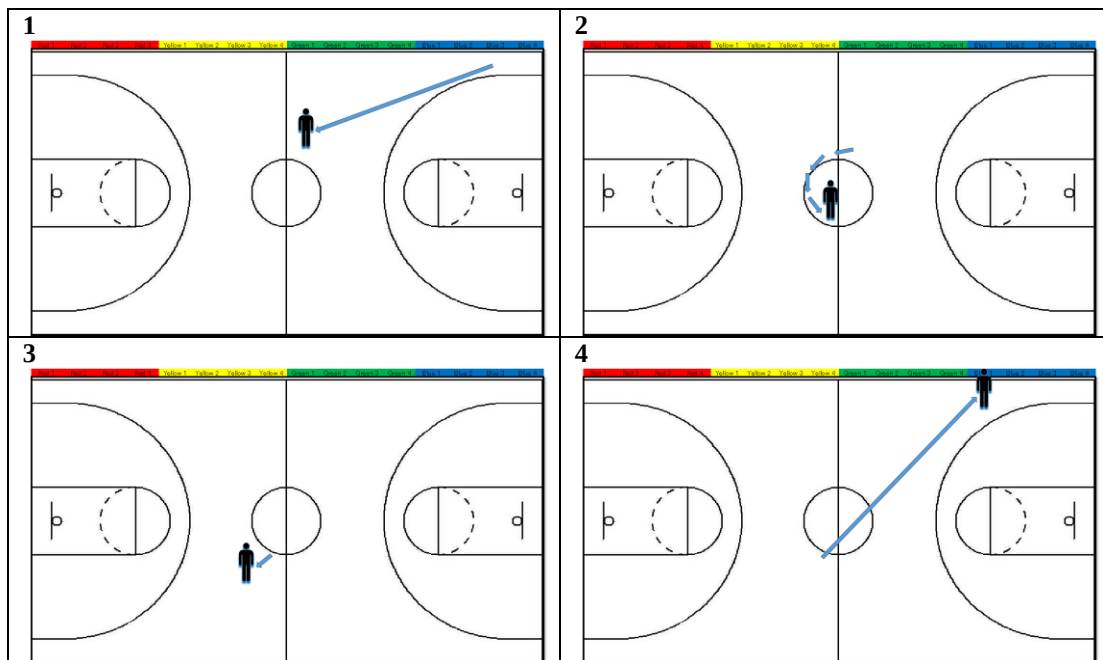
boys and girls from each colour group entered the introduction of the ‘Justice’ performance by the Red group with the explanation by Jampijinpa (see figure 4.30). This pattern with the music of DJ Shadow was repeated before each show of a colour group. Since this was the introduction of Red group, a pair of children in Red T-shirts handed a stick and a *parraja* (Coolamon) to two sitting chorus groups; one consisted of male senior Elders and the other of female senior Elders.



**Figure 4.29: Milpirri Jukurrpa Dance**  
Screenshot of the DVD of Tracks (2009a).



**Figure 4.30: Introductory interpretation with the music ‘Building Stream with a Grain of Salt’**



**Figure 4.31: Diagram of Blue Milpirri Jukurrpa Dance in Milpirri**

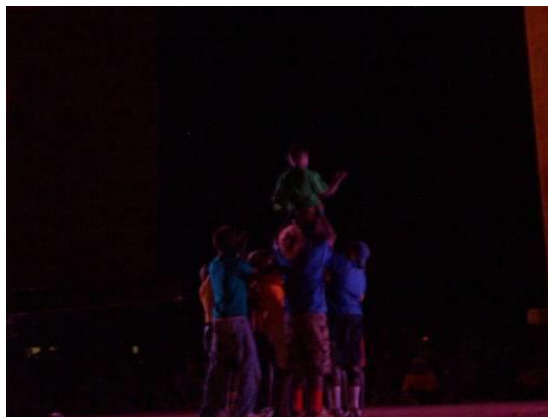
Traditional male dance, *mangulpa* (Black-headed Spear), was the first part of the Red group (see figure 4.32, 36, 37). The performance signifies ‘many important areas of law and dance the spear and kangaroo songs, two very important bodies of legal knowledge’ (Tracks 2009b). The line of male dancers led female dancers of Red group. The traditional dances of men and assisting dance of women in this year’s Milpirri were consistently performed by one colour group. After the hip hop dances, ‘Say What You Feel’ by senior boys and ‘Inner City’ by junior girls of any colour groups (see figure 4.33, 34), traditional female dances, *parraja* and *laypa* and *ngalikirri* (Grinding Stone / Mortar and Pestle) were danced and sung by women, about a half of whom wore body painting and the other Red T-shirts (see figure 4.35, 38, 39).

Ngurlu (grain) is winnowed in the *parraja* and then ground with the *laypa* and *ngalikirri* to make damper. This highly developed skill symbolises the tact, discretion and subtlety needed to understand how to live by *kuruwarri*. (Ibid.)

The next scene was our Yellow group performance titled ‘Discipline’ starting with the DJ Shadow’s song, Jampijinpa’s narration and submission of a hooked boomerang and a painted stick from a Yellow boy and girl to the Song-men and -women. The traditional male dance expressed the *junma* (Stone knife) creating ‘the chest scars that are administered ceremonially as a sign that one has demonstrated learning and self-discipline’ (Tracks 2009b; see figure 4.40, 44, 45). Given a Eucalyptus leaf bunch, I joined the skilled Skin brothers and fathers in the snake-shaped queue wearing Yellow design and clothes. Local people in



**Figure 4.32: *Mangulpa* by male Red dancers**



**Figure 4.33: Senior boys dancing with ‘Say What You Feel’**



**Figure 4.34: Junior girls dancing with ‘Inner City’**  
Screenshot of the DVD of Tracks (2009a).



**Figure 4.35: *Parraja* and *Laypa* and *Ngalikirri* by Red female dancers**

Lajamanu said that I was the first Yellafela person who performed their traditional dance. At a specific point, we ritually rubbed the earth with the leaves and the following women dug with their *witi*. Senior schoolgirls’ dance ‘Boyz’ and senior boys’ dance ‘Lesson 3’ were comparatively well-prepared and delighted the audience (see figure 4.41, 42). The traditional female dance of Yellow group was called ‘*witi*’ as they hold *witi* poles (see figure 4.39, 43, 46). The *witi* are elucidated as ‘a pair of ceremonial poles that symbolise choice and accepting the consequences of those choices’ (ibid.).

After a similar performance by the four student pairs, the act entitled ‘Respect’ was performed by Green group. Adult men’s dance was called *karli* and *wirlki*, both of which mean

## Red Male Dance Song 1



## Red Male Dance Song 2



**Figure 4.36: Notation of Milpirri Red male dance song from Jardiwarnpa**

1.

*Warna ngamirliya*

*Kurlu ngamirliya*

(Rock Wallaby is moving along. It is happy to travel with a snake into the ceremony camp)

Transcription of the second song out of 3 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.37.1, 2, 3

2.

*Warla yakarla jurlkangu, warla yakarla jurlkangu*

*Kinti jarlana, kinti jarlana*

(Everybody come together and sit down to take a rest)

Transcription of the third song out of 4 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.37.4, 5, 6.

‘boomerang’, the latter being especially a hooked boomerang (see figure 4.47, 51, 52). The

boomerang is interpreted as ‘a token of respect’, and it is said that ‘the highly prized no. 7

[‘hooked’] boomerang is traditionally exchanged between a teacher and student’ (Tracks2009b).

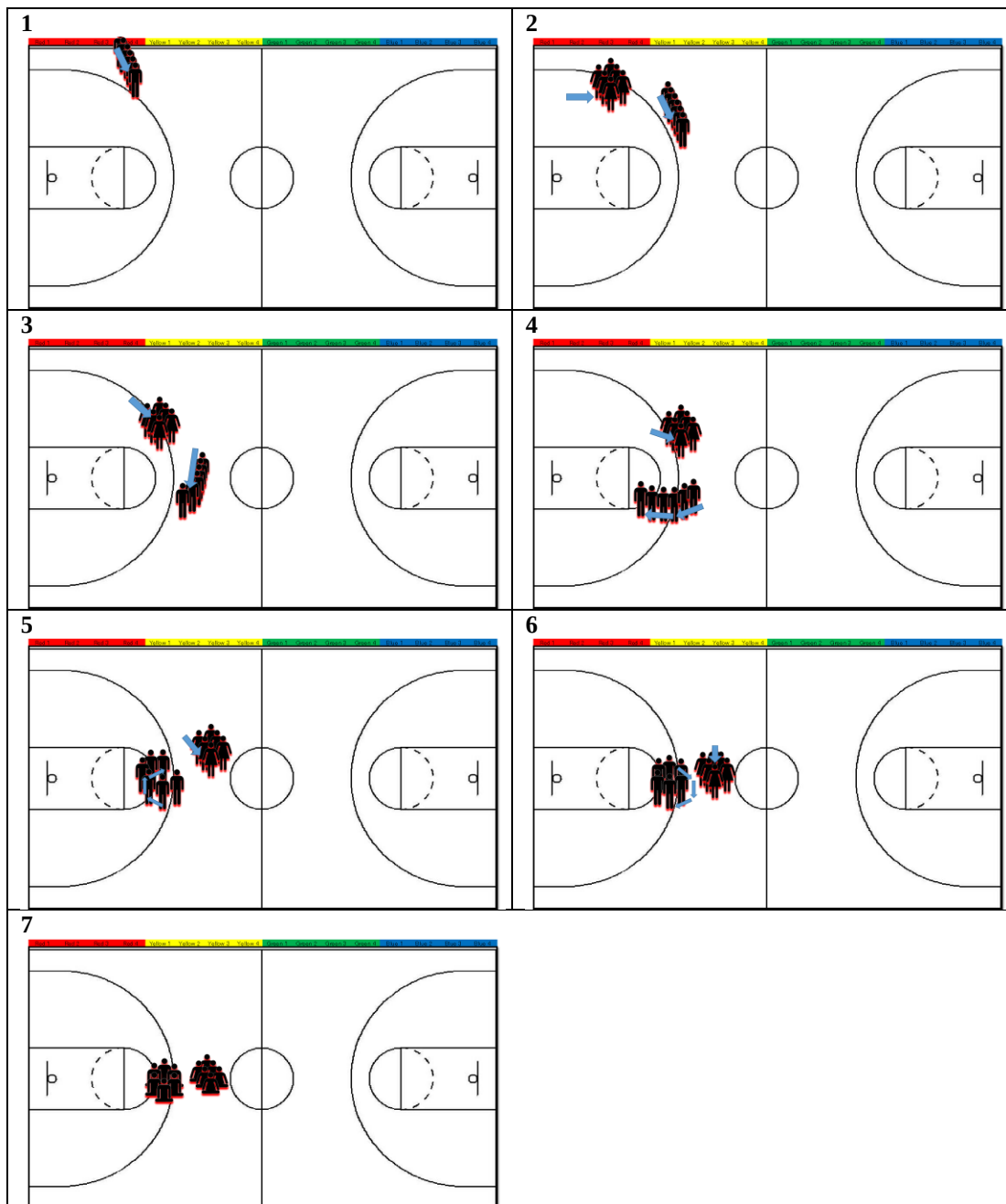


Figure 4.37: Diagram of Milpirri Red male dance from Jardiwarnpa

While junior boys danced DJ Bacon's Mix and all of them were doing their best in the rotation of their solo dance, junior girls dancing 'Kicking and Screaming' was not so skilled (see figure 4.48, 49). Traditional Yawulyu dance had usually been well-accepted by the audience, and so was *kana* (digging stick) by women in Green T-shirts (see figure 4.39, 50, 53). As the *kana* is explained to be 'the pointers next to the Southern Cross and points to the emu's throat, showing

## Red Female Dance Song 1



## Red Female Dance Song 2



**Figure 4.38: Notation of Milpirri Red female dance song**

1.

*Ngurlu ngka yurnkarli karlirla, ngurlu ngka yurnkarli karlirla*

*Ngurlujapa karna kani, ngurlujapa karna kani*

(Carrying seeds with a coolamon in a large green country. Going with a coolamon to the green country)

Transcription of the third song out of 6 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.39.1, 2, 3, 4, 5

2.

*Mangurlula japarna yiripirli yirlana, mangurlula japarna yiripirli yirlana*

*Purlijirri purlijirri yirlana, purlijirri purlijirri yirlana*

(To make dumper trace and gather seeds. Put dumper into fire to cook.)

Transcription of the first song out of 2 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.39.6, 7

where food goes' (ibid.), the myth of 'the Emu in the Sky' can be considered inevitable in the

event. In the following Milpirri (2011) the sound of 'the emu's throat' was played with the rare

instrument *kurlumpurrngu*. This is further evidence that Elders of the community had some

knowledge of the instrument even before Milpirri 2011 which was the first showing of the

restored *kurlumpurrngu*.

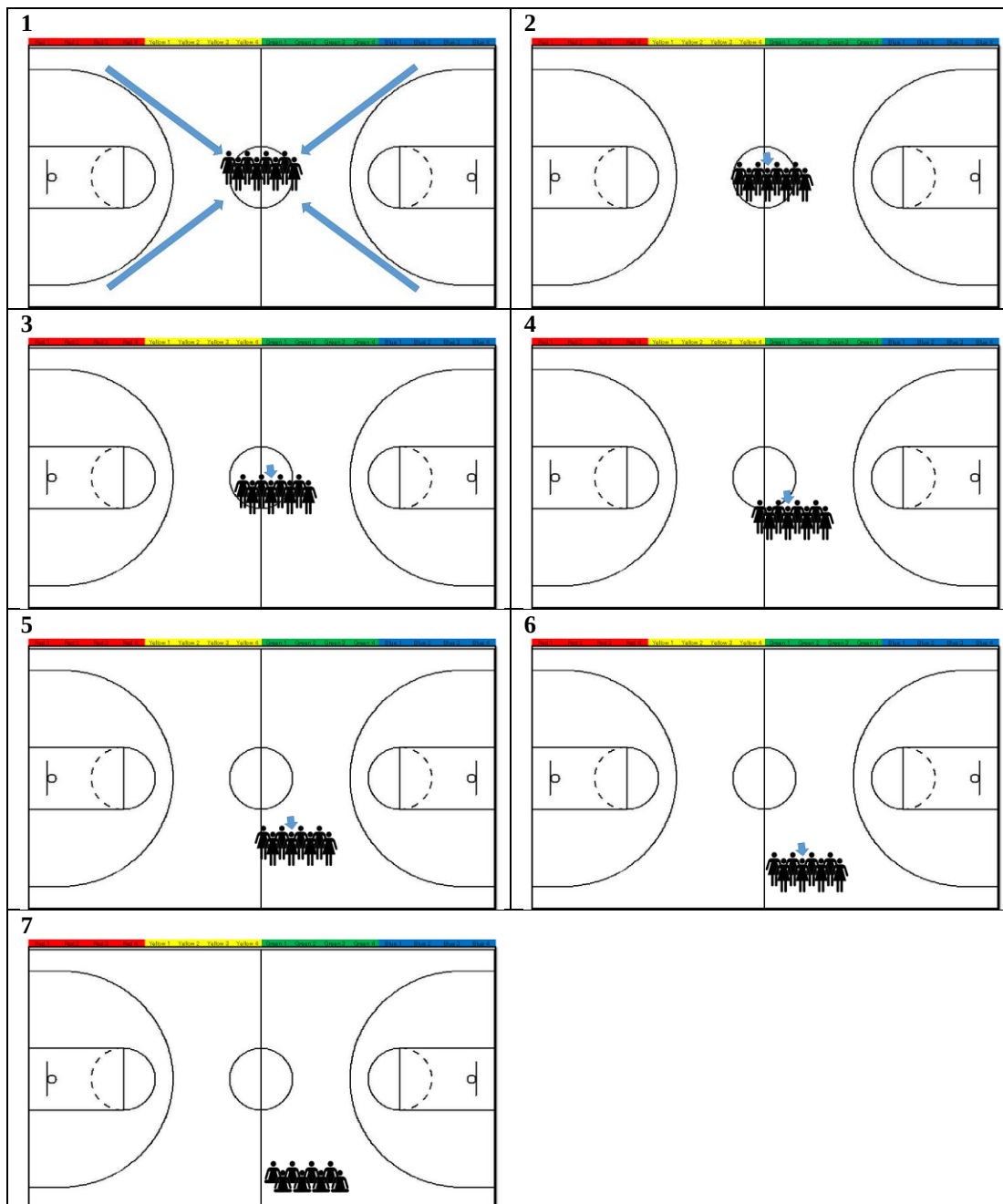


Figure 4.39: Diagram of Milpirri Yawulyu dance

Finally in the four body performances, ‘Responsibility’ was conducted by the Blue group after the four pairs’ action and the theme music of DJ Shadow. Adult Blue men performed traditional circle dance, *kurrwa* (Stone Axe), with women mainly from Blue and a few from the other colour groups (see figure 4.54, 58, 59). The *kurrwa* is said to have been ‘given ceremonially to signify that someone is ready to have the responsibility of using it



**Figure 4.40: *Junma* by Yellow male dancers**  
Photographed by Connors (2009). Yellow group dancers including the author (rightmost).



**Figure 4.41: Senior girls dancing with 'Boyz'**



**Figure 4.42: Senior boys dancing with 'Lesson 3'**



**Figure 4.43: *Witi* by Yellow female dancers**

wisely' (Tracks, 2010). Soon after this, the traditional Yawulyu dance *mardu* (Water Carrier) was performed by three body-painted women and the others in T-shirts from Blue group (see figure 4.39, 55, 60). Subsequently, hip hop music 'Insight' by Four Knox Five was performed by senior girl dancers. In the same song, as its role used to be 'Desert People' in the former shows of Milpirri, all children gathered to dance on the stage of the basketball court (see figure 4.56). After the finale dance by children, *karna-nganja* (or the Southern Cross and Emu dance) was performed that year again as in 2007 with the song *warntarri-tarri* (see figure 4.11, 61). 'Milky Way Finale' was performed by Yellow and Green male dancers, including myself, and all the adult women (see figure 4.57). The way that young adult dancers learned on the stage

## Yellow Male Dance Song 1



## Yellow Male Dance Song 2



**Figure 4.44: Notation of Milpirri Yellow male dance songs from Ngajakurla**

1.

*Ngayirlinti-wa kurlukarrapa*

(All the birds including Galah coming into Ngayirlinti Country, east of Lajamanu, for fighting)

Transcription of the first song out of 5 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.45.1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

2.

*Ngayirlinti-wa janukarrapa*

(The birds are flying into Ngayirlinti, landing in to make him a contact to the earth)

Transcription of the first song out of 2 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.45.6, 7.

from a few Elders might be in response to the Milky Way Dreaming being considered as ‘a road

of learning’ (ibid.) from which novices are not supposed to wander off. This ritual dance was

done again in 2012.

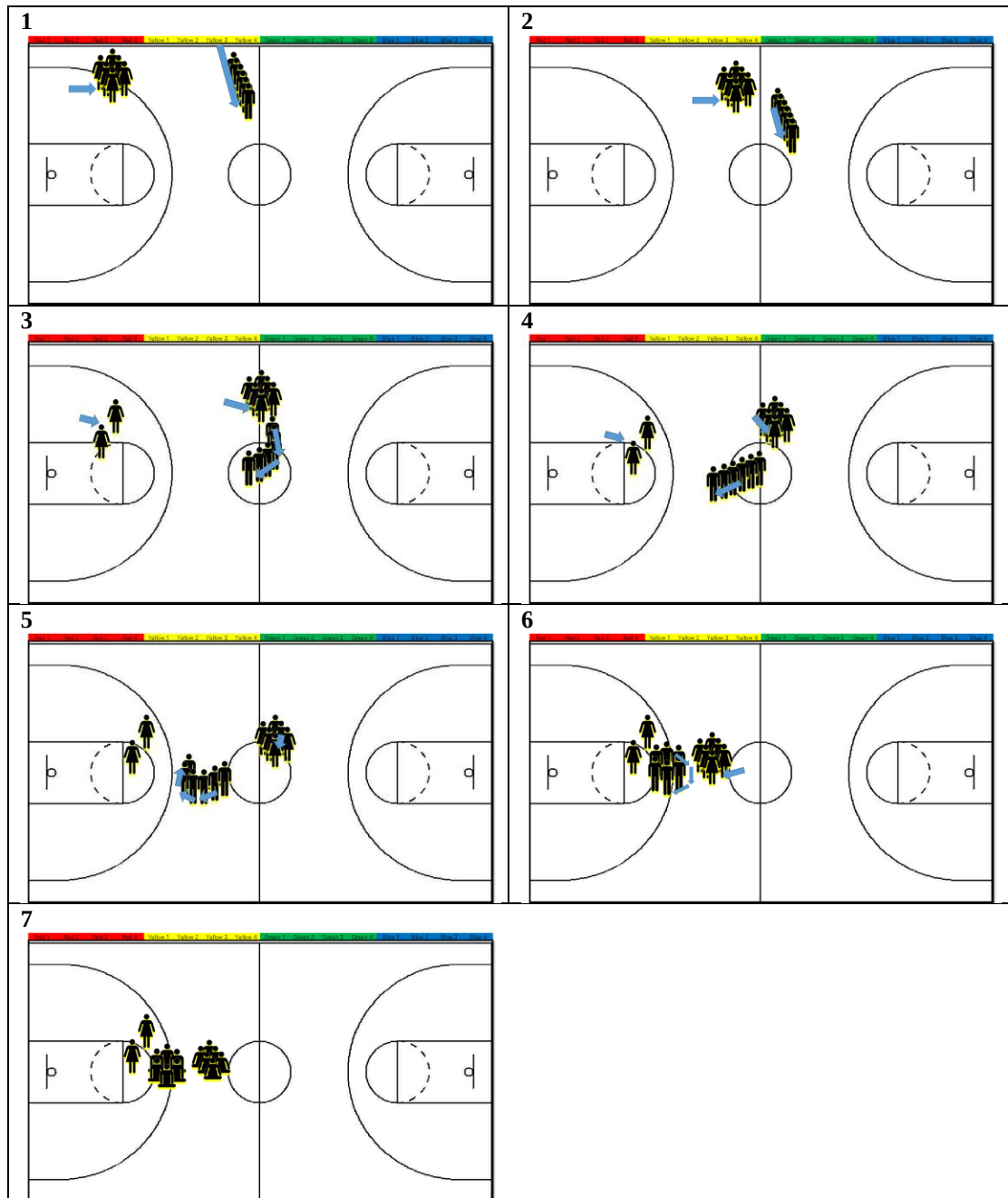


Figure 4.45: Diagram of Milpirri Yellow male dance from Ngajakurla

It was the first trial to use flying lanterns in the finale of the event in 2009 (see figure 4.62). This was prepared and performed by *kardiya* people following Jampijinpa's idea that Milpirri – or cloud made by the hot and cold elements – should be made by both *yapa* and *kardiya*, and it was a secret to the other *yapa* performers until the last moment. Three days previously, visiting participants were taught in private by the Tracks members and Jampijinpa

## Yellow Female Dance Song 1



## Yellow Female Dance Song 2



**Figure 4.46: Notation of Milpirri Yellow female dance**

1.

*Ngatijirri yulyparlila, ngatijirri yulyparlila*

*Jiwarnjiwarnpanga, jiwarnjiwarnpanga*

(Birds, Yinapaka, always go straight away. Budgerigars N/Jungarrayi and N/Japaljarri take off to meet N/Jupurrurla and N/Jakamarra.)

Transcription of the first song out of 4 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.39.1, 2, 3, 4

2.

*Nyinalulu ngatijirri, nyinalulu ngatijirri*

*Nyinalu wantinja ngatijirri, nyinalu wantinja ngatijirri*

(Ngatijirri, budgerigar go further to the ground of the land)

Transcription of the first song out of 2 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.39.6, 7

how to launch the lantern at a place far from the rehearsal stage. I had a unique experience as a

*yellafella*, who joined both *yapa* dance and *kardiya* performance. All of the flying sky lanterns

(which had been imported from Thailand) successfully rose from the hands of school teachers,

Shire workers, Medical centre workers, shop assistants and Wild, who came to Lajamanu to

participate in Milpirri of that year. It had a new original song, ‘*Yungkaju Kurdari*’ (‘Give Me

the Crown’), written by Jampijinpa and sung by Zac Jakamarra Patterson of the North Tanami



**Figure 4.47: Karli and wirli by male Green dancers**



**Figure 4.48: Junior boys dancing with 'DJ Bacon Mix'**



**Figure 4.49: Senior girls dancing with 'Kicking and Screaming'**



**Figure 4.50: Kana by female Green dancers**

### Green Male Dance Song



**Figure 4.51: Notation of Milpirri Green male dance from Ngajakurla**

*Ngarrampalanyanu karlikilamani*

*Jimpirr marungka marungka*

(You have to put yourself in a part of lots of boomenrangs, or restore respect of the law, do not be attracted by goanna hole. A big group of people have boomerangs.)

Transcription of the third song out of 5 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.52.

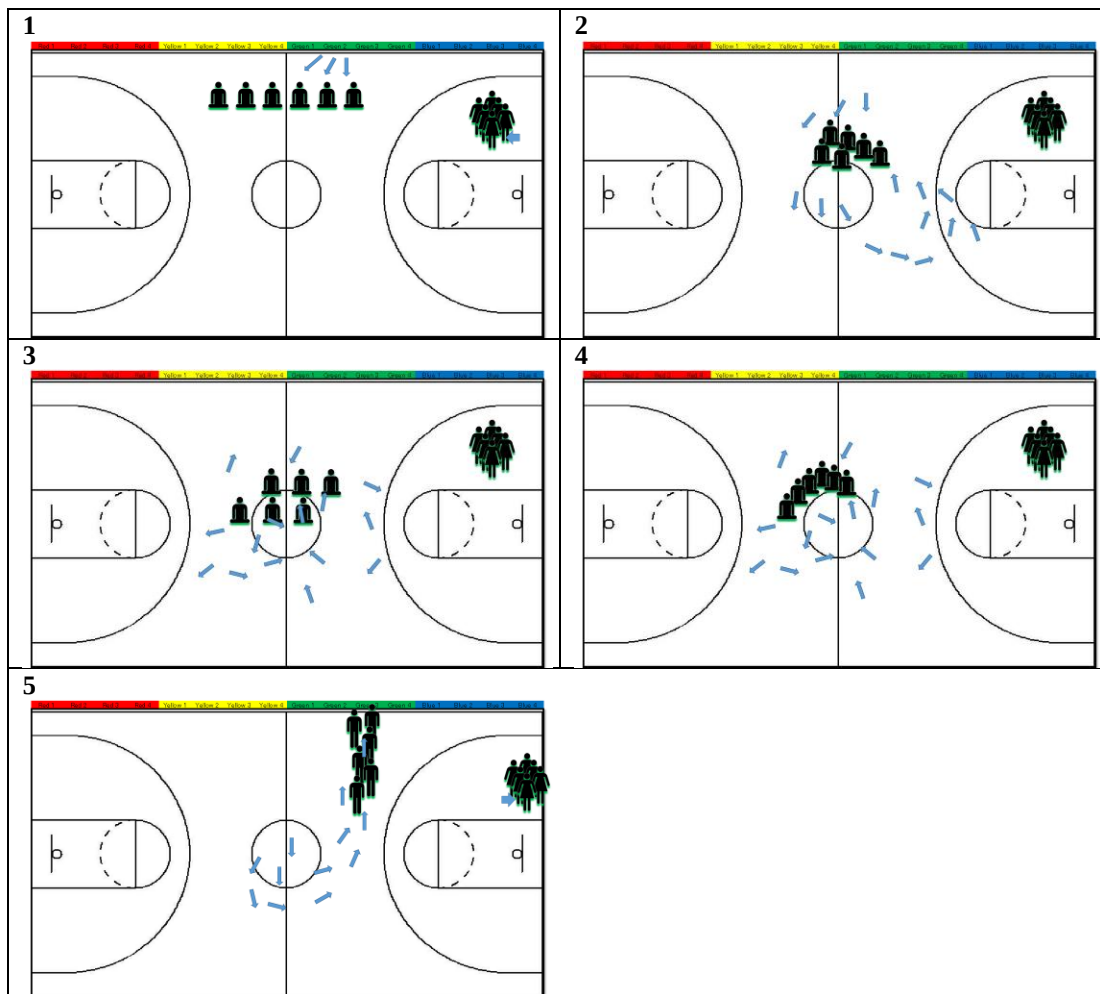


Figure 4.52: Diagram of Milpirri Green male dance from Ngajakurla

Band and Kenneth Jungarrayi Martin of the Lajamanu Teenage Band (see figure 4.63, 64). The *yapa* performers shouted with joy and grinned when the lanterns flew away and started to show themselves like the Milky Way. At that Milpirri, people seemed to be more impressed by the lanterns in the sky than by the *witi*-fire which had been cut off from fresh trees several hours before and did not burn well. Theoretically, fire was crucial for the night event of Milpirri: Jardi-warnpa Fire Ceremony in 2005; lighting the *ngurra-kurlu* frame in 2007; and flying sky lanterns in 2009. It was noted that ‘[i]n a western paradigm fire usually means the end of

## Green Female Dance Song 1



## Green Female Dance Song 2



**Figure 4.53: Notation of Milpirri Green female dance songs**

1.

*Nganangka nganangka kana jurrparlina, nganangka nganangka kana jurrparlina*

*Parlija kana jurrparlina, parlija kana jurrparlina*

(All the trees of minamina N/Japangardi N/Japanangka stand up and grow up. Stand up like a digging stick.)

Transcription of the second song out of 4 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.39.1, 2, 3, 4

2.

*Ngayilung kurlungu*

*Parlinya parlang kurlangula*

(Facing to the east where the sun rises. Face to face with a digging stick)

Transcription of the song item sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.39.7

something, but Wanta notes that in the Warlpiri worldview it is associated with revitalisation'

(Patrick et al. 2008:38).

Overall the performance was successful and well received by the audience. The number of performers in the three Milpirri events has small differences. There were several participants (Gurindji people) from Wave Hill, but no Warlpiri dancers from Yuendumu this time. It is said that in 2007 people from Yuendumu made a significant investment of time and resources to be with Lajamanu community members for a week to be a part of the rehearsals and the performance. Hence the role of Milpirri might have slightly changed from an entirely Warlpiri event into a region-based and intertribal one. It was the first time that as many as fifty *kardiya*



**Figure 4.54: *Kurrwa* by male Blue dancers**



**Figure 4.55: *Mardu* by female Blue dancers**



**Figure 4.56: All children dancing with 'Insight'**  
Screenshot of the DVD of Tracks (2009a).



**Figure 4.57: *Karma-nganja* by Yellow and Green dancers**  
Screenshot of the DVD of Tracks (2009a).

people came to Milpirri and it seemed to be slowly moving toward the purpose of 'meeting of traditional Warlpiri and mainstream European culture' (Patrick 2008b:1). While according to the evaluation consultant, Miles Holmes, 490 people assembled for the performance, honestly I found it difficult to count the exact numbers because I often witnessed people exiting from their adjacent houses. From the point of view of the external Warlpiri community, it was obvious that the participants from Yuendumu in 2009 were less than the record in 2007. Rather, the Royalty Money Meeting during my fieldwork had more people from other Warlpiri communities than people taking parting in Milpirri, and some of them were camping out in the bush for lack of other accommodation, which reminded me of the Garma Festival. Holmes interviewed people

## Blue Male Dance Song 1

Ja nga la Ja nga lu ta Ja nga la Ja nga nga lu Ja nga la Ja nga lu ta Ja nga la Ja nga nga lu

Ja nga la Ja nga lu ta Ja nga la Ja nga nga lu Ja nga la Ja nga lu ta Ja nga la Ja nga nga lu

Ja nga la Ja nga lu ta Ja nga la Ja nga nga lu

## Blue Male Dance Song 2

Lu ta ma lu ta ma wi ri wi ri Lu ta ma lu ta ma wi ri wi ri Lu ta ma lu ta ma wi ri wi ri

Lu ta ma lu ta ma wi ri wi ri Lu ta ma lu ta ma wi ri wi ri Lu ta ma lu ta ma wi ri wi ri

Lu ta ma lu ta ma wi ri wi ri Lu ta ma lu ta ma wi ri wi ri Lu ta ma lu ta

## Blue Male Dance Song 3

Wa ngi ri wa ngi ri pa ra wa ngi ri pa ra Wa ngi ri wa ngi ri pa ra wa ngi ri pa ra Wa ngi ri

wa ngi ri pa ra wa ngi ri pa ra Wa ngi ri wa ngi ri pa ra wa ngi ri pa ra Wa ngi ri wa ngi ri pa ra

wa ngi ri pa ra Wa ngi ri wa ngi ri pa ra wa ngi ri pa ra Wa ngi ri wa ngi ri pa ra ta wa ngi ri pa ra

**Figure 4.58: Notation of Milpirri Blue male dance songs from Ngajakurla**

1.

*Jangala jangalurta, jangala jangangalu*

(I am a Jangala man, traveling from the east to the west, having a stone axe or responsibility)

Transcription of the first song out of 2 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.59.1, 2

2.

*Lurtama lurtama*

*Wiri wiri*

(Sound of stone axe and tree, sound of contacts)

Transcription of the first song out of 2 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.59.3, 4

3.

*Wangirri wangirri para*

*Wangirri para*

(Running away because Demon is coming toward the sound)

Transcription of the song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.59.5

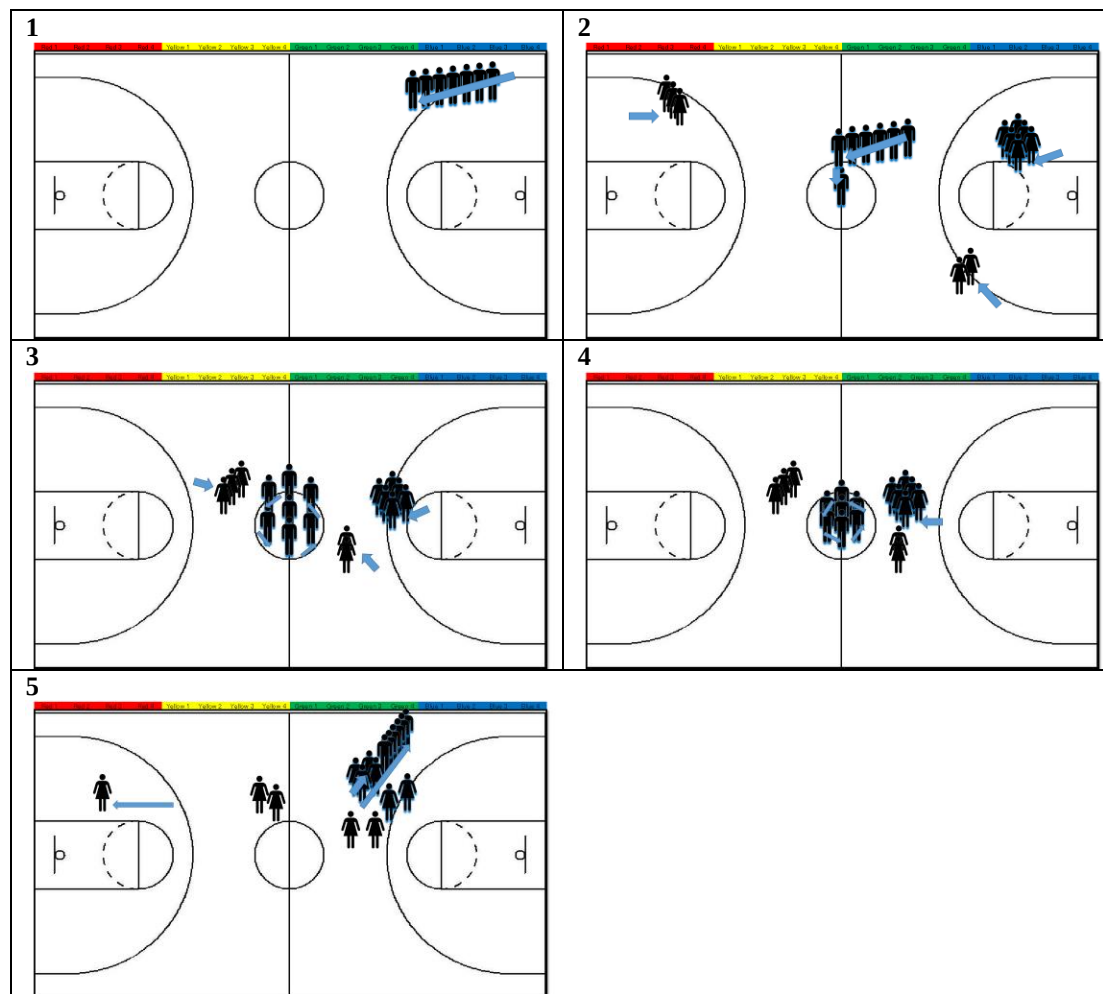


Figure 4.59: Diagram of Milpirri Blue male dance from Ngajakurla

about whether they were as content with Milpirri 2009 as they were with the other two Milpirri.

Here are some responses.

## Blue Female Dance Song 1



## Blue Female Dance Song 2



**Figure 4.60: Notation of Milpirri Blue female dance songs**

1.

*Pantijirra lukaluka*

*Kurduwa kurduwa yananyampa*

(Milky dirty water is running into the waterhole called Pantijirra)

Transcription of the second song out of 4 song items sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.39.1, 2, 3, 4

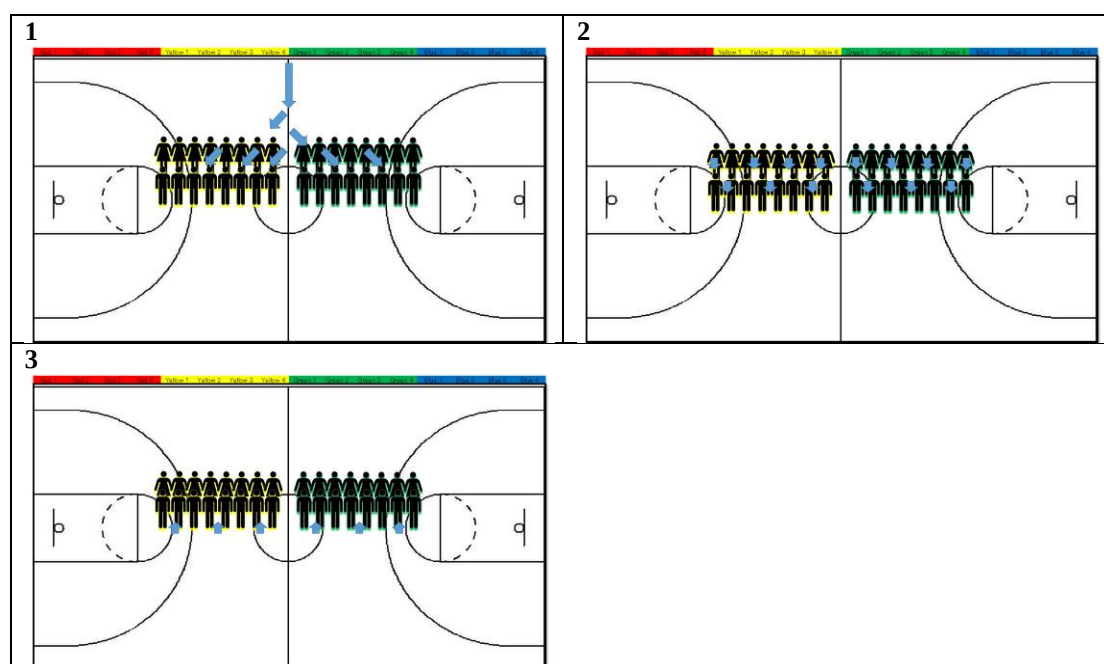
2.

*Ngayilung kurlungu*

*Parlanya parlang kurlangula*

(Facing to the east where the sun rises. Face to face with a digging stick)

Transcription of the song item sung in Milpirri 2009. For the dance see figure 4.39.7.



**Figure 4.61: Diagram of Milpirri Yellow and Green dance from Kurdiji**



**Figure 4.62:** Sky Lantern being flown by *kardiya* people with ‘*Yungkaju Kurdari*’ (‘Give Me the Crown’)



**Figure 4.63:** Recording original song ‘Give Me the Crown’

Zac Jakamarra Patterson (The North Tanami Band) playing the keyboard in the right photo; Kenneth Jungarrayi Martin (The Lajamanu Teenage Band) on the left and Steve Hannon on the right in the left photo.

“I can’t thank you guys enough. Milpirri is the biggest and most exciting thing to happen to Lajamanu and we all really appreciate it.” Andrew (Lajamanu Air Chief Pilot)

“I loved old men dancing, I loved old women dancing – I watched old yellow men and yellow is my skin group.” Comments from Grade 3,4,5 class

“[I’m] really looking forward to future dances with Milpirri.” Myra Herbert Nungarrayi. (Warlpiri Elder and Dancer) (Tracks 2009b)

Tracks instructors in general also considered it a successful performance. The boys were praised for dancing well, although they were younger generally than the hip hop dancers of the former shows. Many boys were energetic enough that they improvised the dance without

# Give Me the Crown

Steve Jampijinpa Patrick

$\text{♩} = 128$

Dm B♭ Dm B♭ C Dm B♭

6

Yung ka ju— ku rta ri— Yu ngu ma— ju—

C Dm B♭ C Dm B♭

13

mi lya pi nyi— Ngarr pa ra wa na ma— Ya ni mi— ma nu

C Dm B♭ C Dm B♭

21

ya ni rra— Ka nunju— ngu rlu ma— Paa pa rdi mi

C Dm B♭ C Dm B♭

29

kan ka la rra— Yung ka ju— ku rta ri—

C C7 Fm/B♭ F/B♭ F B♭ C

55

Yung ka ju— Yu ngu ma ju mi lya pi nyi Yung ka ju—

C7 Fm/B♭ F/B♭ F B♭ C Bm

64

Yu ngu ma ju mi lya pi nyi Yung ka ju—

B♭ Dm B♭

74

Yu ngu ma ju mi lya pi nyi—

Figure 4.64: Notation of ‘Give Me the Crown’

*Yungkaju kurtari...*

*Yungurnaju milypinyi*

*Nyarrparawana-rna*

*yani-rni manu yanirra...*

*kanunjungurlu-rna*

*paapardimi kankalarra*

*Yungkaju kurtari.....*

*Yungkaju... Yungurnaju milypinyi!!*

*Yungkaju... Yungurnaju milypinyi!!*

*Yungkaju... Yungurnaju milypinyi!!*

(Give me the Crown

So I can understand [make sense]

Wherever... whenever I [learn about the world's]

incomings and outgoings.

[Knowing] from the bottom...

I can take off and soar towards the heavens.

Give me the crown.

Give it to me... [the crown], so I can learn and understand [make sense]!!)

hesitation; at the same time, in the rehearsals I often observed that they could not wait for their

turn to dance although they needed to keep watching the other boys dancing or listening to

Tracks teachers' instruction. Young children's attitude to their dance seemed to deteriorate in the latter part of the show. Tracks people decided to take boys for the Dance Award Ceremony in Melbourne in 2010. Although some of the girls made mistakes at the performance, the members of Tracks seemed satisfied because they knew the difficulty of teaching them. In reality the performance was the first time for the girls to dance themselves; they were still dependent on the way the Tracks instructor showed them in the wings even in the run-through. It is possible that the girls prefer casual disco dance to Milpirri performance: One is entertainment without constraint and even amused children on the night after the big show, and the other is a community-wide event and possibly taken as a formal show or traditional public entertainment like Purlapa, which is more serious.

Male and female Elders generally struck me as wanting to contribute to the performance. From one aspect, they live a modern life in one of the most remote communities in Australia. Even during a formal rehearsal some singers were talking on their mobile phones, and I saw more of this situation in the initiation ceremony in 2012. They looked like professional singers when they began to sing songs on cue from Tracks. Indeed, some were worried and asked me, as they mistook me as a Tracks member, probably because I put on a Tracks' T-shirt, when they would obtain the payment for the performance. As I mentioned in the former chapter the impression given by the oldest Elder Jakamarra on my first visit, the Elders were definitely absorbed in monetary concerns.

On 27 October, I participated in a ritual called *Kura-paka* or blanket exchange (see figure 4.65). This is another phase of their traditional and modern mixed life. They said that I deserved to join in it because I joined the traditional dance with them. Female Elders stepped with brand-new blankets in their arms to the back of the Male Elders' semi-circle. This marked the Closing Ceremony of the Milpirri: it is further evidence that Milpirri is treated by the community as a kind of a traditional ceremony, just like the exchange in Marnakurrawarnu in the initiation ceremony (see figure 4.66). They also had an after-concert-lottery and I picked up one of the tickets for the performers, who live in a mixture of both traditional and modern society.



**Figure 4.65: Blanket exchange after Milpirri 2009, Community Area near Basketball court**



**Figure 4.66: Blanket exchange during Marnakurrawarnu ceremony, Top Camp**  
Images of *kumunjayi* people are hidden.

Jampijinpa himself seemed to regard Milpirri 2009 as a success, although not as much as the one in 2007. He already had a wish that the fourth Milpirri would realise his vision for the future of a Warlpiri 'convergence' in the Tanami Desert. While the traditional ceremony Jurntu was rarely known to researchers (for example, Wild recorded the songs of Jurntu about 40 years

ago but did not analyse it<sup>59</sup>), Jampijinpa was able to insert the teaching of the Jurntu ceremony into Milpirri with the help of the Elders. He has been teaching people the relationship between the direction, the human body and totemic Emu. The three Warlpiri names for Emu were introduced in Milpirri 2009 as he ritually confirmed this story. It is natural enough to conclude that the traditional Jurntu Purlapa conceptualised the educational structure which he adopted for the theme of Milpirri 2009 just as the first Milpirri in 2005 was based on the ancestral Jardiwarnpa teaching 'Atonement and Reconciliation' but not really on Christianity or Jampijinpa's imagination. Furthermore, in 2009 he created the new song 'Give Me the Crown' which turned out to be used repeatedly, with the key word 'the Crown'. It will be clarified in the following chapter how this could make one think of something connected with political utopia in the continent of Australia.

To rethink the definition of Milpirri, there were several occasions that contributed to a development of my understanding of 'Milpirri'. I heard the members of Tracks Dance Company and Lajamanu boys using the term not merely for the event of Milpirri. It came to light that in June 2010 Australian Dance Awards in Melbourne invited Lajamanu boys as hip hop 'Milpirri dancers' of 'Lesson 3' by DJ Shadow. At this point, 'Milpirri' Dance was interpreted by Tracks as any hip hop dances performed by Lajamanu children. This usage can be considered to be popular, and young adults in Milpirri held the same attitude when they used the expression. It was impressive that young initiated Skin brothers behind the Milpirri banners were watching

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<sup>59</sup> The photos of Lajamanu men dancing Jurntu Purlapa were taken in 1983 (Glowczewski 1983).

their junior friends' hip hop dance and saying 'I miss Milpirri dance'. They might not be satisfied with the traditional dance, which has been passed down only with rough movements – but later I knew they have deep meaning – while it took six weeks to learn the hip hop dance at a former Milpirri. As I mentioned above, they did not come up to the Milpirri rehearsal until the run-through, but enjoyed playing football instead. The reason might be because they thought that they did not need a rehearsal for conventional dances and/or they could not get a national award with those dances however hard they practised them. It is possible that Jampijinpa himself also slightly changed the definition of Milpirri. He said to me one day in Canberra, 'I want to bring "Milpirri" to Canberra in future' (2011, pers. comm., 21 April). After I asked what he meant, he explained, 'to bring kids from Lajamanu and dance Purlapa just like in Country Visits'. While the term 'Milpirri Dance' was widely used as hip hop by Tracks and other young people, he used it as both hip hop and traditional Purlapa, or 'any kind of dance by Lajamanu children'. It has been proved that Milpirri has a strong focus on educational factors to teach children dancing in general and have them watch their Elders' traditional music and dance. In comparison with the Garma Festival, there were many similarities, but with differences, for example in the fact that Milpirri has not included traditional dance by either boys or girls, which is ostensibly similar to Wild's observation of Warlpiri rituals in the late 1960s and also MJ Morais (1998) for Willowra Warlpiri.

## 4.4. Milpirri 2011 and 2012

I made short visits to Lajamanu in October 2011 and October 2012 to participate in Milpirri. In this section I will describe mainly the trip in 2011 when I had another reason to see the progress of building up the *kurlumpurrngu*, as I completed only one of them in April. This short trip from Canberra was with Yanhui Zhao, an associate professor of Nanjing Normal University, China.<sup>60</sup>

On the way in the Bush Bus from Katherine to Lajamanu, there was an incident that could connect the relationship of Aboriginal studies and ‘Yellow Fellow’ that this thesis has taken up. When I was away from the bus at the stop in Top Springs, Mr Zhao was being asked by Gurindji passengers to Kalkaringi whether he was Japanese or not. Joining their conversation and introducing myself as Japanese, I heard that they knew ‘Mino’ (Minoru Hokari) and the news of his death. Here again I noticed how eminent he was in the neighbouring community. I decided to write a respectful antithesis to his thesis.

In Lajamanu, Mr Zhao and I could not stay in the Longhouse, which was full during Milpirri just as I expected. When we were thinking where to camp outside, the manager of the Art Centre again asked the permission of the Elders to allow us to stay in the Centre. When I was preparing the swag to sleep in, a media person, Stewart Carter, came up to me saying, ‘I am very pleased to meet you. You are famous here in Lajamanu.’ He was working for PAW and asked me to agree to give interviews on the story of *kurlumpurrngu* during our stay. I was glad

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<sup>60</sup> Our Qantas flight to Darwin via Brisbane included Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu who was at Floriade almost at the same time with the visit of Queen Elizabeth II.

to know that I had achieved something even if it was less than that of Hokari in the neighbouring community.

As I had feared, the hollowed logs that I left for the local artists in April had not been touched since then. I continued making instruments as long as possible during the stay and tried to work with other Warlpiri people including Ivan Jungarrayi, who is good at playing the *kurlumpurrngu* by imitating the sound of *yidaki*. When we exhausted the logs, Jerry Jangala took us to the bush to collect more with Stewart Carter from PAW Media. In that October, Jangala was usually staying at his Outstation and invited us there twice with other *yapa* and *kardiya* guests. Twice in the short stay, Jangala, Jampijinpa and I performed at Lulju Outstation Jardiwarnpa songs and Jalurinjirri Purlapa using the best *kurlumpurrngu* from the Art Centre.

Formerly, Tracks Dance Company expected that Milpirri 2011 would be big and held in the Granite, which is located approximately 300 kilometres south of Lajamanu, but actually it was only a workshop on a smaller scale. The reasons are not only the lack of funding but also the dismal mood of the community due to continuous deaths of several important male Elders in the year. There seemed to have been objections from other male Elders to Milpirri being held and it was only Jangala from among them who joined and performed on the night. Jampijinpa had also had a difficult time connecting Tracks and the local Elders' council right up until the show started, so that Tim Newth was asking Jangala about program details in the small chaos before the show.

As another important issue, the new official policy of Lajamanu School did not permit Tracks to train students during the daytime class. The training sessions at school used to be eight hours per week for six weeks in the former years; however, it was only half an hour a day at this time. The little time for training at the Learning Centre after school and the difficulty of meeting with Jampijinpa agonised Tracks members, including the other director McMicken. Yet they got through a small version of Milpirri and later called it ‘Milpirri Showing 2011’ on their website (Tracks 2011; see table 4.9). With the assistance of the funding bodies,<sup>61</sup> there were about two hundred people in the audience (ibid.) including Allan Marshal and his student from Deakin University as in 2009, and anthropologist Jennifer Biddle who has also had relations with Lajamanu as long as Tracks. The show was performed at a new basketball court but did not have any banners.

**Table 4.9: Scenario of Milpirri 2011**

| Program             | Performers         |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Jalurinjiri Purlapa | Male adults        |
| Hip hop dance       | School boys        |
| Hip hop dance       | School girls       |
| Hip hop dance       | Tracks instructors |
| Yawulyu Ngatijirri  | Female adults      |

On the evening of the event, a dozen female Elders began to paint each other while singing Yawulyu Ngatijirri (Budgerigar) which was to be danced at the end of the program. They only had traditional body paintings at this show. Regarding male performance, Tracks

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<sup>61</sup> ‘Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund, GMAAAC (Granites Mines Affected Areas Aboriginal Corporation), Newmont Asia Pacific, Lajamanu Progress Association, Tracks is assisted by: the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body; and the Northern Territory Government’ (Tracks 2011).

decided to have the *kurlumpurrngu* performance as advised by Jangala who since our visit to his Outstation had been willing to do the rare male ceremony despite the atmosphere of ‘Sorry Business’. While I was waiting for the performance with two *kurlumpurrngu*, one of which I had just finished making, Tim Newth and Jangala asked only me to dance with the musical instrument. However, I immediately asked Caleb Japanangka, who was supervising schoolchildren and waiting for his own turn at hip hop dancing, the favour of dancing the traditional Purlapa with me (see figure 4.67). It was easy for him, a hip hop and traditional Warlpiri dancer, to master the dance with the instrument, and eventually it became the first time that the *kurlumpurrngu* dance was performed by more than one dancer, including *yapa*, although the Purlapa did not include boys as it did when ABC media recorded their dance in April. The Milpirri Showing was launched with Jangala’s Warlpiri explanation to boys, followed by songs of the important instrument when Japanangka and I started dancing with *kurlumpurrngu* at the centre of the new basketball court under the big roof which could protect people from rain.

After the boys’ and girl’ hip hop dances finished, there was a performance by three male Tracks instructors: David McMicken, Nick Power and Japanangka (see figure 4.68, 69). In spite of the absence of male Elders, the audience was pleased by Yawulyu dancers who had stronger connection with Tracks Dance Company (see figure 4.70). Some of the old ladies showed their dance not only on the stage but also several times before then at the Art Centre, having had more visitors from outside of the community during the Milpirri time. Thanks to

their traditional performance with body painting and the existence of the theme Ngatijirri, this Milpirri was able to differentiate itself from the former only hip hop workshop for children such as had occurred in 2010 between the Milpirri shows.



**Figure 4.67: Jalurinjirri Purlapa with 2 kurlumpurrngu**  
Photographed by Yanhui Zhao in 2011. Caleb Japanangka (left) and the author (right).



**Figure 4.68: Hip hop dance by boys**



**Figure 4.69: Hip hop dance by Tracks instructors**



**Figure 4.70: Yawulyu dancers and singers**

In the finale of the show, on the suggestion of Jangala and Tracks, Mr Zhao played on his Chinese flute an Australian folk song, ‘Click Goes the Shears’ (Roud #8398), which amused especially some generations of the audience including *kardiya* people. This paralleled the structure of the program in the former Milpirri: the order was male adults, boys, girls, female

adults and non-*yapa* or fusion performances – ‘Desert People’ and Jardiwarnpa, *ngurra-kurlu* firing and flying lanterns for reconciliation between *yapa* and *kardiya*. At the end of the song, Tim Newth declared that 2012 would be a formal and big Milpirri. Although it was clear that Tracks people had some criticism of the school and Jampijinpa, Newth later said to me that ‘this Milpirri is successful because it reflects the current situation of the community’ (2011, pers. comm., 28 October).

It was next day at their house in the Outstation when I had the chance to hear Jampijinpa’s feedback. I pressed him and some other local people to take me and other external visitors to the bush for Witchetty Grub hunting which also occurred after Milpirri 2009. Garma Festival provided various outdoor events for international tourists as I will compare in the following chapter. At the second invitation to Jangala’s house, there was again the *kurlumpurrngu* performance in front of other guests (see figure 4.71).



**Figure 4.71: Demonstrating *kurlumpurrngu* at Lulju Outstation**  
Photographed by Edith Lesley in 2012.

Jampijinpa: First one, Jalurinjinri. It's a place of that one. But the meaning for it is 'to call all people to come'. *Yuwayi*. So, it's a calling song. *Yuwayi*.

Jangala: *Jinta, Jirrama, Marnkurrpa!* One, Two, Three!

[Songs of *Jalurinjinri* and *Kurlumpurrngu-na*]

Jampijinpa: This one, next one ... Talking about. Show that thing, Jungarrayi. That thing called *kurlumpurrngu*. I don't know if you going to the blog [of David Nash (2011a, 2011b)] in the computer, there's a little debate saying where that thing come from. But no one did know about Warlpiri having a small didjeridu. But we've been call 'em *kurlumpurrngu*. I didn't see it when I was small, he [Jangala] saw it. *Yuwayi*. They were doing Warlpiri dance. But it's good with Jungarrayi's [Doi] help, we were able to bring this back to wake this one up again. They say...

Jangala: Yeah.

Jampijinpa: And it's all going back to the Emu that and it's named after that *kurlumpurrngu*, he's named after the sound of the Emu noise. You know that Emu noise?

[Hand slapping sound of *kurlumpurrngu*]

Jampijinpa: That one. Yeah. That's Emu sound. That's the sound it makes.

Jangala: Booh, booh, booh [in low voice] we blow like that.

Jampijinpa: That's why that its name after the Emu sound but it recently ... Early this year or last year?

Doi: The beginning of this year.

Jampijinpa: Yeah we, Jungarrayi help, and with help of old people. That was going to be featured in Milpirri, but it maybe next year neh? *Yuwayi*. (Jampijinpa & Jangala 2011, pers. comm., 29 October)

Although Milpirri 2011 was small, there were several occasions of *kurlumpurrngu* performances during the short stay. My plan to analyse Milpirri as *matsuri* rather than *festival* was almost completed when I returned to Lajamanu. I thought it more possible to do so successfully after the favourable outcome of reviving *kurlumpurrngu* with Elders and with my experience of making and restoring some instruments and culture in Japan. As Corn succeeded to invite Jampijinpa to ANU with a Discovery Indigenous Project Fellowship from the Australian Research Council, I had more time to talk to Jampijinpa even after the fieldwork and travel with him.

In October 2012, I returned to Lajamanu together with Corn, Lee Anne Proberts (Research Assistant to Corn and Jampijinpa), and three other ANU students to participate in Milpirri. I stayed there for a short time to witness only the synopsis of the program.

In a phrase, Milpirri was back: The number of visitors, performers, and variety of the program were much bigger than that in 2011 (see table 4.10). The show had a formal theme of Pulyaranyi, banners were added and their designs were fully respected as per tradition (see figure 4.72, 73). Tracks members stuck to their hip hop dance, with more sophisticated fusion with traditional Yawulyu songs and dances. I prepared *witi* for our performance and danced again with my Skin brothers as we did in 2009. At the renovated Warnayaka Art Centre, which attracted many customers and functioned as a temporary accommodation for some visitors, the first *kurlumpurrngu* (didjeridu) and other masterpieces, including beautifully decorated *kurdiji*

(shields) and *mirta* (narrow shields), were on display in the window – just as they would be in a museum – instead of being used only in performance.

**Table 4.10: Scenario of Milpirri 2012**

| Warlpiri name | English meaning                   | performers                              |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|               | Milpirri Introduction and Welcome |                                         |
| Yankirri      | Emu                               | Blue Group                              |
|               | Speak to the land                 | Whole school with Yawulyu dancers       |
| Yinapaka      | Bird                              | Blue female group                       |
| Warlu         | Fire                              | Green Group                             |
|               | Animals and Fire                  | Junior students                         |
| Walmajarri    | Two hunters                       | 1 Yellow and 1 Green male               |
|               | East Wind                         | Older girls                             |
|               | North Wind                        | Older boys                              |
| Marlu         | Kangaroo and shields              | Red male                                |
|               | Fire                              | Juniors and Senior Boys                 |
|               | West Wind                         | Younger school group                    |
|               | South Wind                        | Champions group and Middle-school group |
| Witi          | Leafy Poles                       | Yellow male                             |
| Pulyaranyi    | Winds of Change                   | Tracks dancers and whole school         |
| Wulparri      | Milky Way                         | Yellow and Green Groups                 |
|               | Lighting of the Witi              |                                         |
|               | Sky Lanterns                      | Kardiya people                          |



**Figure 4.72: Respectful touch on the banners in Milpirri 2012**



**Figure 4.73: Respectful touch on painted *kurdiji* in the initiation ceremony**

Short visits reuniting with local people after fieldwork encouraged me to write and interpret Milpirri in a *yellafella* way with a positive impression as a *yellafella* assistant for the wind-instrument restoration and the warm reception as a dancer in Milpirri. Furthermore, Milpirri 2012 was officially called ‘Milpirri Festival’ including on the Tracks website (Tracks

2012d, ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences 2012; PAW media 2012; Kral & Schwab 2012; Visit Vineyards 2012). This also suggests that although the difference from Garma 'Festival' might well lie in the lack of 'traditional dancing' by children, it does not help us to understand the essence of Milpirri which will be discussed finally in the following chapter.

## **4.5. Summary**

This chapter has described the development of the event mainly from the viewpoints of the musical program and the meaning of the term Milpirri itself. Through the series of events, there was definitely a communal success. Since the first Milpirri seen in the literature and DVDs of Tracks, the event has had the significant role of preserving endangered ancestral ceremonies including Jardiwarnpa, Kurdiji and Jurntu Purlapa. The fourth Milpirri even restored a very rare instrument and its ceremony. For the contemporary sections, there was a clear sense of belonging and achievement so that young adults who had left school were envious of the Milpirri hip-hop dancers who were still schoolchildren. The inconvenience of transport and accommodation, the few varieties of optional events such as Aboriginal art shopping and limited outstation picnic before and after the night show, and negative voices against the event from schoolteachers were compensated for by the actual participation and observation by community members and visitors. These might make the prejudice on Milpirri, smaller and less developed than Garma Festival. The following chapter attempts to uncover the instinct worth of

Milpirri by detailing the remaining points including the deep meaning of the ‘Crown’, the Aboriginal concept of Emu Dreaming, and the reason for the lack of Purlapa dancing for children through comparative studies.

## Chapter 5. Milpirri-*Matsuri* Hypothesis

This chapter aims to analyse the phenomenon Milpirri from an independent standpoint. Thus far the possibility of calling Milpirri a purlapa in Warlpiri was considered with the cosmology of *ngurra-kurlu* based on the Jukurrpa. Also the event has been more frequently called ‘Milpirri Festival’ in English since around 2012 including at the official webpage of Tracks. There is nothing wrong in introducing the event as a ‘festival’ to English speakers; however, this section will consider further a term more similar to the original concept of Milpirri. The suggestion here is *matsuri*.

I am not going to express a reckless view that an Aboriginal event in the NT of Australia is rooted in an island country in Asia. While it is still impossible to find scholarly agreement on the origin of the First Australians, it would be impossible to conclude either that the idea of the event is found somewhere in Asia or that the model of the event is in Japan without nationalistic prejudice. However, the purpose of the thesis is to justify the comparison between *matsuri* and Milpirri, and for Milpirri to have the potential to improve the cultural status of Aboriginal people in the Commonwealth of Australia.

This chapter will be divided into two main parts. In the first part, collected data and literature related to comparative studies will be discussed to justify the analysis of Milpirri in comparison with Japan’s *matsuri* tradition, combining the concepts of festival, ritual and

marriage. Following this, why an Asian term can be used in the context of Milpirri being involved with issues of two-way education between *yapa* and *kardiya* people will be discussed.

After giving the reasons to bring my own understanding of *matsuri* to the interpretation of Milpirri, the comparison begins with three sections in the latter half of the chapter: to consider Milpirri as a *matsuri* in surface, mental, and political similarities respectively. This will lead to the final theory that being regarded as an Australian Aboriginal version of *matsuri*, Milpirri could be reconciled with the Indigenous people's claim expressed in the song 'Give Me the Crown'. One of the results of putting Milpirri in the category of *matsuri* will be the revelation of the hidden message of 'the Crown'. The claim of the song, through its lyrics, can be interpreted to mean what *yapa* people require of the *kardiya* nation, that is, the 'authority' or 'the position as the symbol' of Australia, to be given to Aboriginal Elders as the descendants of ancestral gerontocracy. This idea will be explained through the parallel with the position and role of the emperor, who has played the role as the 'ritual king' since the theocratic ancient Japan and as the 'symbol of nation' in the constitution.

## **5.1. *Yapa, kardiya and yellafella* in Milpirri**

This section, the first half of the chapter, lies at the heart of the discussion on the background of the comparison with more than two musical anthropological traditions in order to justify the interpretation of Milpirri as parallel to *matsuri*, which belongs to the mainstream culture of

Japan. Three stages will be followed in the approach to this uncommon comparison. First, the comparative analysis of Aboriginal ‘festivals’ will show the similarity and probable roots of Milpirri, but will not prove its worth with the English word ‘festival’. The frequent criticism of Milpirri is that it is different from the Garma Festival because it does not feature the traditional dance by Aboriginal children. Furthermore, for all its being a secondary festival, one is hesitant to say that Milpirri is as successful in its biculturalism as the Garma Festival. If the real value was not clear in the comparison with other Australian events, it is necessary to draw a parallel with something else.

Second, the arguments turn to the literature on comparative studies. Generally the comparison of diverse cultures has had difficulties since around the time that the methodology of comparative musicology became obsolete. However, some theories have been given to justify the non-mainstream interpretation from non-European perspectives. *Milpirri jukurrpa* and its connection with *Yellafella* Business or Asian matters, not just Japanese, can be told by Jampijinpa through his modern interpretation of Emu Dreaming and his honest confession that he heard a mysterious story about *yellafella* when he was young. Thus the research on Milpirri can be legitimately compared with *Yellafella* Business. It was found that the Flying Emu in the Sky, according to Jampijinpa, can signify that the path of the initiated boys must not be America (‘the Goanna Holes’) but Asia (‘the north’). This explanation with the support of Jangala can

also be compared with the story about President Kennedy narrated by Old Jimmy when he was interviewed by Minoru Hokari in the neighbouring community Daguragu.<sup>62</sup>

Before seeing the hypothetical meaning of Crown in the following section, the general sense of it needs to be based on careful research. Although the interpretation of the event by the comparison with *Yellafella* Business was approved by Jampijinpa with the consideration of Dreaming, it was still not clear which Business in Asia was appropriate for the analysis. *Matsuri*, the culture of Japanese mainstream, can be rationally taken with the historical aspects on racial discriminatory issues through the names of ‘Crown’ and *terra nullius*. Popular views comparing Australian Aboriginal issues with Japanese Ainu issues will be reconsidered on their similarity in this section in order to advocate the comparative study of Aboriginal tradition and *matsuri* of the mainstream of Japan.

### 5.1.1. Among *yapa*: Milpirri and Garma Festival

This section begins with the discussion of the reasons why the English term ‘festival’ does not always fit the phenomenon of Milpirri in comparison with other Aboriginal festivals, one of

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<sup>62</sup> On the way to and in Lajamanu, I had several chances to hear about ‘Mino’[Hokari] from Gurindji and a few Warlpiri people who knew him when he was alive, and his great fame among local people can be respected. However, his approach to historical study seems problematic in several points. He thoughtlessly paralleled two controversial histories of the mass killing of Indigenous Australians and the ‘Nanking Massacre’, and concluded that revisionist-denialist historians ‘deny and/or fabricate history’ (ibid.:53). He swept aside opposing opinions and just called them ‘idiot debate’, but he introduced himself as ‘I am a historian’ (ibid.:31). He made these words in the dialog with ‘a grassroots activist/sociologist’ who also denied the revisionists’ claims but had no chance to debate with historians who argue that there was no massacre of civilians in Nanking and/or that there was no evidence of comfort women enforced by the Japanese military during their rule in Korea.

which occurred in Warlpiri Country and another in Yolŋu. The main reason for the selection of the Garma Festival of Traditional Culture, an annual event held in Gulkula, northeast Arnhem Land to celebrate Yolŋu cultural inheritance, as the juxtaposition is that the similarities can be readily seen between the two. Both of them are events operated and performed mainly by Australian Indigenous people of specific language groups; and besides, they are comparatively newly born even though neither of them has a short history. The two-way cultural celebration is the main purpose that both events commonly aim to achieve. On the other hand, there are differences from the Garma Festival, including that children do not perform traditional Aboriginal dances in Milpirri like children do in the Garma Festival. A criticism of Milpirri by teachers at Lajamanu School is the lack of Indigenous dance with educational purposes. Non-Aboriginal bodies including Tracks Dance Company tend to emphasise the positive reputation of Milpirri for their publications, but several negative voices were collected during my fieldwork. In addition to the issue of Purlapa dances, Milpirri had several other differences from Garma Festival, which will be discussed below. Finally, the reason why Milpirri does not feature Purlapa authentic dance for children will be analysed in this section.

The comparison of these two events has been recommended by my supervisory panel. Stephen Wild first advised me to participate in Garma Festival in northeast Arnhem Land on the way to Lajamanu to observe the Milpirri in 2009. For Indigenous festivals in Australia, he listed in his article on Aboriginal festivals Kyama Corroboree, Kimberley Arts and Culture Festival, Stompem Ground, Yuendumu Sports Weekend and Torres Strait Islander Festival among others

(Wild 1998a). Among these he chose Garma Festival for me to compare with Milpirri for deeper understanding. My other supervisor Aaron Corn also suggested that I should continue comparing the two festivals because the origin of the bicultural celebration in Milpirri should be found in Garma. Corn participates annually as a specialist of Arnhem Land music, even co-authoring books with M. (name avoidance) Yunupirju, one of the founders of the Garma Festival. Corn also interviewed Jampijinpa (Patrick 2008a) and reinforced the idea of the two-way cultural concept residing in Milpirri, a secondary festival after the prior Garma Festival, comparing the corresponding metaphors: Milpirri (cumulonimbus) made from ‘hot air and cold air’ and ‘Garma’ (a lagoon) from ‘salt water and fresh water’. Corn conducted the first interview with Jampijinpa to learn the routes of the Milpirri theory (Patrick 2008a) and had worked with him mainly since Jampijinpa’s successful invitation to Canberra in 2011. He also participated in Milpirri 2012. It is also said in the report of the Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund that ‘the first Milpirri, inspired by the Garma Festival of Arnhem Land, was held in 2005 by the Lajamanu community and emphasised performance and visual arts’ (Rio Tinto 2008:18). There can be no objection to Milpirri being connected with the Garma Festival. Here, we will see the background of the festival in Arnhem Land and the comparison will be done drawing on both the literature and the data I collected in the field.

The Garma Festival is a celebration of the tradition of ‘Yolŋu’, the word that Indigenous people of east Arnhem Land use to call themselves.<sup>63</sup> Fiona Magowan (1994) noted that Yolŋu popular music and dance had sometime been used as a symbol of identity in welcoming government officials and saying farewell to Euro-Australians. She suggested that Yolŋu identity is a reaction to fluctuating external influences and at the same time adapting to the changing nature of internal social relations. This thesis is comparable to Steven Knopoff’s (1992) implication of the juxtaposition of ancestral and contemporary elements in Yolŋu clan songs.

There was little research on the connection of the systematic relationship of moiety and Skin Names between Yolŋu and Warlpiri until Jampijinpa demonstrated the comparison with the Emu Dreaming. Yolŋu groups are connected by a complex kinship (*gurrutu*) and language system.<sup>64</sup> This system governs fundamental aspects of Yolŋu life, including responsibilities for ceremony and marriage rules. As is often cited, Yolŋu life is divided into two moieties: *Dhuwa* and *Yirritja*. Each of these is represented by people of a number of different clan groups, each of which have their own lands, totems, philosophies and languages. A popular theory is that

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<sup>63</sup> According to Magowan (1998) Yolŋu men and women live in complementary ritual worlds, with varying degrees of access to musical knowledge and its sacred power as each person automatically belongs to either of the patrilineal exogamous moieties.

<sup>64</sup> The language groups consist of a dozen dialects, collectively called Yolŋu Matha. There are several ways of counting the number of languages: it is said more than sixty patrilineal Yolŋu mala (clan groups) (Zorc cited in Corn & Gumbula 2004; Bagshaw cited in *ibid.*) and the Yothu Yindi Foundation (2012) announces 10 clans per each moiety. *Ethnologue* (2013) shows four dialects with 10 subdivisions belonging to Yuulngu, or Yolŋu Matha, categorised as belonging to the linguistic family of Pama-Nyungan, which also contains Ngarpa, or a parent language of Warlpiri. English can be anywhere from a second to a thirteenth language for Yolŋu speakers, just as it can be in communities of the Tanami area.

‘Among the Top End people these moieties are generally referred to as “Yirritja” and “Dhuwa”, but among the Central Australian people like the Warlpiri there are no separate names’ (OzOutback n.d.b). Table 5.1 shows Jampijinpa’s interpretation of the relationship between the Skin Groups of the two language groups, a part of the document files he gave to me. He proposed that each Warlpiri *makunta-wangu* (matrimoiety. See figure 4.3) should have their own Dreaming name in relation to Emu names in accordance with Jardiwarnpa songs. There can be seen common features in their ancestral ideas with his attempt to match the social interaction terms between Warlpiri and Yolŋu. As a difference *yirritja* and *dhuwa* in Yolŋu are patrimoieties, whereas *karna-nganja* and *yankirri* in Warlpiri are matrimoieties.

Table 5.1: Warlpiri and Yolŋu Skin Name relationships

| DHUWA                          |                       | YIRRITJA                |            |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Balang                         | m (Japanangka)        | Jupurrurla              | Ngarritj   |
| Bilinydjan                     | f Jungarrayi          | Napurrurla              | Ngarritjan |
| Burralang                      | m Japanangka          | Jangala                 | Bulany     |
| Galiyan                        | f Napanangka          | Nangala                 | Bulanydjan |
| Wamut                          | m Japaljarri          | Jampijinpa              | Gadjuk     |
| Wamutjan                       | f Napaljarri          | Nampijinpa              | Gutjan     |
| Gamarrang                      | m Japangardi          | Jakamarra               | Bangadi    |
| Gamanydjan                     | f Napangardi          | Nakamarra               | Bangaditja |
| Makunta - wangu (karna-nganja) |                       | Makunta-wanu (Yankirri) |            |
| Jampijinpa                     | (Gudjuk) Gadjuk       | Bulany (bulanji)        | Jangala    |
| Nampijinpa                     | Gutjan                | Balanydjan              | Nangala    |
| Jungarrayi                     | (Gala) Balang         | Wamut                   | Japaljarri |
| Nungarrayi                     | (Galadjan) Bilinydjan | Wamutjan                | Napaljarri |
| Jakamarra                      | Bangadi               | Ngarritj                | Jupurrurla |
| Nakamarra                      | Bangaditjan           | Ngarritjan              | Napurrurla |
| Japanangka                     | Burralang             | Gamarrang               | Japangardi |
| Napanangka                     | Galiyan               | Gamanydjan              | Napangardi |

Tentative explanation by Steve Jampijinpa on 2 April, 2011.

Yothu Yindi, a Yolŋu rock band, largely contributed to the establishment of the Garma Festival under these circumstances. Due to the impact of the band, which had hit records sung in English and Yolŋu Matha, and to a lesser extent other Indigenous bands playing this kind of material, there is great public awareness now of Indigenous languages. Yunupingu, the lead vocal of the band, oversaw bilingual education as a former principal at Yirrkala School. In 1977 Yunupingu earned a restricted teaching certificate and began teaching at the Yirrkala School. In 1985, while teaching at Galiwin'ku in Elcho Island, Yunupingu wrote his first song, 'Djäpana'. The characteristic of the band Yothu Yindi, formed by Yunupingu with his nephew Witiyana Marika in 1986, took the Western pop/rock band format and at the same time applied it to the Indigenous song series while augmenting its sound with traditional instruments of the *yidaki* and *bilma* (or pairs of hardwood clapsticks). Having been restricted to school holidays in the early years, tours were conducted in Townsville, South Korea, USA and Canada in 1988. Upon return to Australia they recorded their debut single *Mainstream* released in 1989 and a second single *Djäpana* was released in the same year. In 1990 they toured in Australia, Papua New Guinea, Hong Kong, New Zealand, and the UK. In that year, five clans of the Yolŋu formed the Yothu Yindi Foundation to promote Yolŋu cultural development. Chairman of the foundation is Galarrwuy Yunupingu, who was named Australian of the Year in 1978 and an older brother of M. Yunupingu. In 1993 the latter was also named Australian of the Year. Thus, the process of how the Garma Festival was born is largely related to the band Yothu Yindi.

Until after the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Australia had several other Indigenous festivals (see Wild 1998b) and some of them might well be compared with Milpirri. Since 1972, but much earlier informally, Broome, with multi-cultural influences stemming from an Aboriginal and Japanese heritage, began the Shinju Matsuri Festival. Putalina Festival in southern Tasmania has celebrated Aboriginal culture with music, dance and festivities since 1984. The Barunga Festival held annually in Bamyili, NT began in 1985. It is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015. Laura Aboriginal Dance and Cultural Festival, which is a biennial three-day gathering dedicated to celebrating local dance and arts from across the Cape York region, was established in the early 1980s. Wardarnji Festival created in 1993 is now one of the biggest Indigenous celebrations on the Perth calendar. The former Queensland Minister for Health, Mike Horan, asked the producers of the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge to find a way to get more Indigenous students to attend school in 1997, and as a result Croc Festival was started in Weipa in 1990. In the same year, the first Garma Festival was launched in the NT. It would be natural to assume that Milpirri is highly influenced in terms of an Aboriginal festival by Garma Festival.

The similarity of the two founders of Milpirri and Garma is that they are both Aboriginal educators. Yunupingu had a long teaching career as well as being Yothu Yindi's principal songwriter. As the first Arnhem Land Aboriginal graduate of a university, taking a Bachelor of Arts (Education) from Deakin University in 1988<sup>65</sup>, he became the principal of the

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<sup>65</sup> Charles Perkins was the first Aboriginal graduate of a university, graduating from Sydney University in 1966.

Yirrkala School and commenced to introduce a two-way curriculum of both Yolŋu and Balanda (non-Aboriginal) education processes. In 1998 Yunupingu was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Queensland University of Technology ‘in recognition of his significant contribution to the education of Aboriginal children, and to greater understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians’. Owing to the commercial success of their songs, the Yothu Yindi Foundation became financially stable enough to produce the Garma Festival from 1999. Their sixth album, *Garma*, was released in 2000.

The primary aim of the Garma Festival has not fundamentally changed since its inception, and key forums have been held in each festival to cover a wide range of topics. These forums aim to develop the profile of the Garma Cultural Studies Institute, and to highlight the issues faced by Yolŋu and other Indigenous peoples.

The Milpirri creator, Steve Jampijinpa of Lajamanu, heard of the success of the Garma Festival in Arnhem Land. He was not a lead singer in a rock band like Yunupingu but was a bassist at the local North Tanami Band from 1989 to 1994 and certainly was an old fan of Yothu Yindi and Yunupingu. In this context, the author heard before attending Garma Festival that it had a certain influence over Jampijinpa until his first attendance at the festival in 2006 after the success of the first Milpirri in 2005.

The author took part in Garma in August 2009 before doing fieldwork in Lajamanu and seeing Milpirri in October of the same year. In this section I will report on the experience of the Garma Festival and explore the provenance of Milpirri by drawing an analogy between the two

events, focusing on the points that support the idea that the concept of Milpirri originated in the Garma Festival.

The Garma Festival generally made a great impression on the author and was found later to be run by enthusiastic voluntary staff much more than the smaller event in Lajamanu. I was a little nervous about my solitary journey to Arnhem Land but found it relatively convenient to fly with Qantas to the comparatively small Gove Airport at nearby Nhulunbuy which was full of tourists for the festival. Though I thought I could directly go to the site and did not make any hotel bookings, one volunteer at Garma told me that participants had to stay at another place until the festival site in Gulkula opened the following day. Gulkula, about 40 kilometres from Nhulunbuy, is the location formerly used for funeral ceremonies by Yolŋu people and now for the Garma Festival. The volunteer was nice enough to give me a lift to Nhulunbuy City and, because all the hotels were booked out, to inquire of the mining company Rio Tinto for accommodation for a visitor. It was the first impression that the festival was well-organised and had good volunteers and service for the participants.

Next day I began staying in one of thousands of tents erected in the festival area. I participated in the Key Forum Program as a registered student. The Forum featured an Indigenous economic development stream that year. Indigenous (mainly Yolŋu) and non-Indigenous speakers from different fields gave presentations in the main part of the whole event. I found later that Steve Jampijinpa from Lajamanu also joined in with presentations on Milpirri at the Garma forum in 2006 and 2008. All the participants were welcomed by 'new traditional

dance’ on the Open Day at Yirrkala School on 7 August. This is when I talked for the first time to Yunupingu, who was watching students and adults dancing in the school yard (see figure 5.1). I talked to him to introduce myself and told him that I still remembered when I first heard the sound of didjeridu and a song of Yothu Yindi through a TV commercial around 1993-94 in Japan. The commercial was for Australian tourism (Ōsutoraria Seifu Kankōkyoku) and used ‘Djāpana’. Various temporary facilities were established such as a Panel Gallery during the day, a Film Screen, and a dining hall which had a long queue for every meal.



**Figure 5.1: M. Yunupingu and the author**  
Images of *kumunjayi* people are hidden.

After various programs, an audience of some hundreds of people enjoyed traditional Bunḡul dance performed every evening around the big white sand ceremonial ground at the centre of the Gulkala by several clan group members, including little children. On the final evening, *Balanda* participants in the Cultural Tourism program took part in the last Bunḡul with the guidance of Yolḡu dancers. There was also great excitement about the children’s vocal and

*yidaki* performance in the cover songs of Yothu Yindi. Their free popular songs lasted until late every night at the temporary stage in the natural site.

As mentioned above, I had obtained some information about it before attending the Garma Festival, which is known worldwide. Browsing the internet, I even found that some *yidaki* players from Japan had attended the Masterclass held during Garma. Although I took a didjeridu workshop during the first semester at the ANU and planned to join the class as well in the Garma, it had been temporarily cancelled owing to the mourning of an Elder since 2007. However, it was impressive that an old Yolŋu *yidaki* player and his family asked me if I was from Japan and told me that they still remembered playing with some good Japanese *yidaki* players at former festivals.

One of the outstanding similarities between the two events is the claim from the current Indigenous communities. Yirrkala, the largest Yolŋu community in Gove Peninsula with a population of around 800 people (East Arnhem Land Tourist Association n.d.), is similar in size to Lajamanu. Art and craft is important in both communities. As the earliest record of contact of Yolŋu people with outsiders is said to have been with the Macassan traders in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the situation is different from that of Warlpiri people in central Australia who had first contact with British explorers in the late nineteenth century. The goal of both festivals is to seek ways how Aboriginal (Yapa/ Yolŋu) and non-Aboriginal (Kardiya/ Balanda) people can work together and understand each other, and it is interesting to compare their natural-born metaphors: ‘Salt and fresh water’ in Garma and ‘hot and cold air’ in Milpirri.

*Marnangkarrarla kaji-pala warlungku manu warlykangku warlpangku jinta-jarrimi  
Milpirrirlilki kapala yirrarnilki ngapa wiriki nganti kajilipa-nyanyi Milpirri yanirlipa  
nyanungu-kurra pinagku yungurlipa marda rarralya miyarluju nyina.*

(In the desert, when the hot and cold air merges, a Milpirri storm cloud forms, creating rain. The Milpirri is something we move towards with hope and anticipation of growth, and new life.) (Tracks 2005b; see table 5.2.)

**Table 5.2: Comparison of Garma and Milpirri**

|                                  | Garma                           | Milpirri                         |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Founder                          | M. Yunupingu                    | Steve Jampijinpa                 |
| Producers                        | Yothu Yindi (internal)          | Tracks Dance Company (external)  |
| Main performers                  | Indigenous (Yolŋu) people       | Indigenous (Yapa) people         |
| Main visitors                    | Non-Indigenous (Balanda) people | Non-Indigenous (Kardiya) people  |
| Metaphor of mixing two cultures  | Salt and fresh water            | Hot and Cold air                 |
| The relation of Mother and Child | Yothu Yindi                     | Kurdiji                          |
| Occasion                         | Every year since 1998           | 5 times 2005-2014                |
| Duration                         | Approx. 5 days                  | 1 night                          |
| Place                            | Sacred Festival Area            | Basketball Court                 |
| Traditional Education            | Kunapipi/University             | Kajirri/University               |
| Children                         | Traditional dance and rock band | Hip hop dance                    |
| Attractions                      | Variety                         | No Variety (except bush walking) |
| Accommodation/ Camp              | Variety                         | Limited (Longhouse)              |
| Catering                         | Yes                             | No (Shop)                        |
| Public transport to venue        | Yes                             | Limited (Bush bus)               |
| Alcohol policy                   | No alcohol permitted            | No alcohol permitted             |
| Entry permission                 | Registration and fee            | Central land council             |

The eye-catcher for ethnomusicologists of both events is the performance of traditional music and dance by both adults and children. Both of the festivals aim to preserve their ancestral songs and dances: Kurdiji, Jardiwarnpa, Purlapa and Yawulyu in central Australia, and Manikay and Bungul in Arnhem Land. In performance of the Manikay genre, Yolŋu singers use the *bilma* and *yidaki* as accompanying instruments. Purlapa in Warlpiri tradition also uses the Karli (Boomerang) or Tururru (clapsticks), and, occasionally *kurlumpurrngu* (didjeridu), which

later we would find related to Emu Dreaming. In his presentations and lectures with Jampijinpa, Aaron Corn has implied the connection of Emu Dreaming among Yolŋu and Warlpiri peoples. Traditionally, Yolŋu people of all patrifilial groups believe that ancestral beings of *wantarr* era formed the landscape, just as the Warlpiri believe that ancestral beings of *jukurrpa* formed the desert landscape. The supernatural beings are thought to create ritual musical performance: the words, rhythms, melodies and accompaniments to Manikay as well as to Purlapa.

The existence of an intergenerational factor is another similarity between the two festivals. Unlike ‘New Business’ in the past of Lajamanu, children are the focal point of both Milpirri and Garma. The two Aboriginal traditions have focused their concentration on education of the young. Until 1980 Dhupuma College was a dedicated regional boarding school for promising remote-area Indigenous students and educated many of today’s Yolŋu leaders. Yalmay Yunupingu, M. Yunupingu’s wife, commented on *The Australian*’s (Robinson 2009) interview: ‘That was a really successful school. We have got a lot of successful students that came out of that college’. The first Key Forum of the Garma Festival in 1999 was titled ‘Bush University: Natural and Cultural Resource Management’ (Henry 2008:60), when one of the most significant events called *the Maak ceremony and presentation* was given to representatives of the Australian university community, as the first step in the establishment of the Garma Cultural Studies Institute (Cultural Survival 2002). The significant similarity here is that

Warlpiri Kajirri rituals, part of which might have originated as Kunapipi in Arnhem Land, also applied such an expression as ‘high school’ or ‘university’ in Warlpiri English.<sup>66</sup>

This might be caused by the fact that the founder of each of the events was an Aboriginal educator: Jampijinpa for Milpirri and Yunupingu for Garma. The annual Garma Festival was launched in 1999 by the Yothu Yindi Foundation which was established in 1990 by the globally successful band of the same name. Its leader was Yunupingu, a former principal at Yirrkala School. On this point, the situation was slightly different from Lajamanu School, which did not experience having a local Warlpiri principal. The television program Four Corners (2009b) comparing the two communities reported:

Meanwhile the visit to Yirrkala produced a very different picture. Yirrkala is a community in north east Arnhem Land with a long cultural tradition and a strong view about preserving its language. The community has produced some of the country’s best known Aboriginal leaders, including well known musician [name withheld] Yunupingu who oversaw bilingual education as a former principal at the school. There the community simply told Four Corners they wouldn’t be taking any notice of the minister’s directive.

Milpirri had, thus, various similarities with Garma as can be seen above and the strong influence can be interpreted as the evidence that Garma could be, in great part, the parental and

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<sup>66</sup> Worms (1952:557f) believes that Kunapipi complex originated near Warlpiri territory and diffused to Arnhem Land, whereas Meggitt (1967:87) assumes that it originated in the Roper River area of Arnhem Land.

ideal event for Milpirri. However, if only the similarities were emphasised, Milpirri on logical grounds might be considered as merely a copy of the successful Garma Festival.

In the fieldwork conducted in 2009 I was willing to gather honest feedback from people involved with the Lajamanu School to receive a hint for deciding whether to consider this event as a ‘revitalization movement’, ‘festival’ or something else. After I discussed this issue many times with Wild, whose opinion was to regard it as a form of ‘revitalization movement’, I interviewed some *kardiya* teachers at the School. I found their comments considerably different from those recorded by Holmes for publicity and reported on the Website of Tracks Dance Company. In opposition to the all-positive feedback I cited in Chapter 4, several teachers doubted the success of the bicultural education purpose of Milpirri and even criticised the musical contents of the show.

“I’m suspicious about how much the children were taught the abstract slogans of the Milpirri of this year ‘Justice, Respect, Discipline and Responsibility.’”. (Anonymous V)

“First two was best. Not this Milpirri.” (Anonymous VIII)

“Some *yapa* women were complaining about the attitude of some girls waiting for the performance.” (Anonymous VI)

“Children don’t perform Aboriginal dance.” (Anonymous VII)

“It’s sad that some women painted their body but the other wore T-shirts probably because they think it’s embarrassing”. (Anonymous VII 2009, pers. comm., 31 October)

Let’s focus on some parts of Milpirri which do not exist in the Garma Festival. In addition to the various similarities in the cultural and temporal points, a deeper understanding of

the originality of Milpirri requires analysis of differences which were less focused on in the literature on Milpirri. Investigation of the parallels with Garma Festival helped to reveal the origin of Milpirri's conspicuous flank of the two-way cultural celebration in the modern context of Aboriginal Australia, but did not reveal the essence of Milpirri by concluding that the metaphor 'the crash of hot air and cold air' was a copy of 'the margin of salt water and fresh water'. It would be necessary to investigate the points where Milpirri is different, that it is independent, and that it is worth researching even though a less successful bicultural celebration than its precedent Garma in Arnhem Land.

One of the most visible differences of Milpirri is that schoolchildren do not dance traditional Purlapa but perform breakdance instead, whereas the hundreds in the audience of Garma are impressed with children's Bunḡul (see figures 5.2, 3). After Milpirri 2009 several teachers found it perplexing that the children do not perform any Aboriginal dance. Basically in Milpirri, all the Warlpiri traditional dances have been performed by adult members and all the foreign hip hop dances by children with a few exceptions.<sup>67</sup> Boys joined a little in the Mother's dance in 2007 by laying themselves down on the ground as a part of ritual, but they have not danced any Purlapa in Milpirri so far.

There are several more differences between the two events and most of them represent missing in Milpirri. The Garma Festival has not only the Key Forum in which I joined, but also

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<sup>67</sup> Caleb Japanangka is a unique adult who joined in Tracks' dance and I, a *Yellafella* man, also joined in Warlpiri traditional dance.



**Figure 5.2: Children joining in Bungul in Garma Festival**



**Figure 5.3: Children performing hip hop in Milpirri**

the Indigenous Cultural Tourism, the Indigenous Students' Program, and the Youth Forum all held for the visitors, while Milpirri hardly formulated events external to the performance itself. As I mentioned earlier, the opening session at the Learning Centre in Lajamanu where people could also purchase artworks was a little similar but much smaller version of the Key Forum in the Garma. In Milpirri, on the other hand, the bush walking and witchetty grub hunting near Lulju Outstation only for Jampijinpa's friends from outside of the community has the potential to become a good memory for the visitors just like an Indigenous Cultural Tourism event in Garma. Although public access to Lajamanu is limited to only two buses a week and passengers must stay at least several nights, there are no camping areas with water or toilet like the Garma site. The special nature of the event place – one is the naturally beautiful Gulkula and the other is the basketball court surrounded by houses – might well differentiate the impression of the visitors. Milpirri does not require an entrance fee, but this does not mean that it is more public and open than Garma, which requires a substantial fee but provides detailed information online to participants. In the website of Milpirri 2012 (Tracks 2012d), as another factor that causes

difficulties to tourists, Tracks began by announcing the requirement of the permission of the Central Land Council although the permit system had been abolished by the government since 2007:

If you are hoping to attend Milpirri 2012, you must first organise a permit to visit the community. Permits can be arranged online through the Central Land Council and need to be done well in advance.

The atmosphere of the event may have been influenced by the background of its creation, not only because Milpirri was a second hand event after the Garma Festival.

Jampijinpa and his community had a negative experience at the commencement of the Milpirri event, as could be imagined from the origin of the word Milpirri in *milpa* ('tears'). Milpirri is said to have been created '[f]rom the turmoil and chaos' and the rain was thought to be 'giving new life to the desert surrounding Lajamanu' (Documentary Australia Foundation n.d.).

Although I heard this story from Jampijinpa, it was hardly mentioned by the supporters including Tracks and Alan Box in comparison with the catch phrase 'Hot air and cold air clash', as it was calmly cited by PAW Media.

There was a suicide in Lajamanu, maybe two years earlier before the Milpirri, actual Milpirri event. For that loss for that young fella, it was like, having the cuts taken out of the Warlpiri Nation. How do we find a way to teach ourselves again? And remind ourselves that each one of us is precious. (ibid.)

To shift the discussion to the reason why Milpirri children do not have traditional dance but only hip hop in the program, the literature on Purlapa dance for children is firstly considered. There is an opinion that boys before their initiation did not dance in Warlpiri tradition as was the observation of Wild (2010) saying that ‘traditionally young Warnayaka joined adult performances of singing and dancing in their adolescent years’. However, there are at the same time several documented cases of boys’ performance of Purlapa including photos taken by Ludo Kuipers in 1976 (after Wild’s initial fieldwork). Furthermore, in Lajamanu I found boys’ Purlapa and girls’ Yawulyu currently performed during Country Visits, which originated as a school event in the 1970s, when bilingual education was launched. It is possible that informants in the late 1960s and early 1970s told Wild that boys were not allowed to dance in formal rituals, but it is difficult to find a persuasive argument in the literature that would explain the reason for the lack of boys’ Warlpiri dance in Milpirri since 2005.

In this context, it must be most appropriate to presume that because one of the main purposes or educational aspects of the Milpirri is to increase school attendance, the event has imported hip hop dance popular with children, notwithstanding if they could traditionally dance Purlapa or not. Jampijinpa said that he was contemplating the future Milpirri featuring children partly as traditional dancers saying that ‘I want to bring ‘Milpirri’ to Canberra in future’, or ‘to bring kids from Lajamanu and dance Purlapa just like in Country Visits’. In this sense, the new usage of ‘Milpirri’ did not include any longer the current situation that boys had not performed Purlapa. Milpirri 2011 came near to including boys’ Purlapa when I and Caleb Japanangka with

*kurlumpurrngu* were dancing Jalurinjirri Purlapa on the stage, and many of the boys must have remembered that they danced with me in accordance with Jangala's singing in front of ABC's camera in April. It seems, however, that Milpirri has only been focussing on hip hop with children in order to improve their school attendances with the intention to connect them with traditional dances in future.

Milpirri consisting of the administration and contemporary performance largely depending on Tracks people can be attributed to the lack of notable popular songs or contemporary dance in Warlpiri society, in comparison with the Yolngu society where Yolngu children can copy their parents' songs at the night stage of Garma Festival. There might be an overestimation of boys' hip hop dance in the Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Achievement in Youth or Community dance. However, the Warnayaka boys do not have a chance to perform Rock music while Yolngu boys enjoy their performance of conventional Yothu Yindi bands every night in front of the big audience in the Garma Festival. Milpirri children explode their passion all at once to get flattery from parents and Elders who have performed traditional dance and to get amorous glances from other boys and girls.

The better interpretation of the focus on hip hop music is probably to regard the event as a Purlapa itself and it would be normal if it was regarded as a contemporary Warlpiri convention which educates children in a traditional way, frequently estimated by anthropologists as indulging infants (Keen 1988; McKnight 2003).

From the first white observers in Australia to the most recent anthropologists, all seem to agree on one thing: Aboriginal parents were very indulgent towards their children. As one early writer remarked, 'Childhood is an untrampled one of little discipline and much affection.' (Nowra 2007:22)

This point of view can answer the question of the conflict of emotions between Jampijinpa and other *kardiya* teachers about Milpirri education. If it was not extraordinary and rather taken as a virtue to spoil children in Aboriginal society, Milpirri could be considered to retain authentic methods to teach children with what they only enjoy as an escape from normal mathematics and English classes. However, this seemingly does not connect with the 'Justice' and 'Respect' in English that Milpirri advocates, so that it can give negative impressions to *kardiya* teachers.

In short, in comparison with the Garma Festival, Milpirri is less successful as a modern Indigenous 'festival' especially in bicultural and economical aspects. There can be seen several restrictions on Milpirri when taken as a descendent event of Garma. The access to and stay in Lajamanu would be regarded as much less convenient than in Gulkula. Thanks to the comparison with Milpirri, the economic success and international recognition of Garma Festival can be understood, partly owing to the merits of children's performances of traditional Yolngu dance on a beautiful stage and traditional Aboriginal rock live at the night show. Milpirri is more dependent on external support for the contemporary music for children. One of the great differences from the 'river merge' (Garma) was that 'thunder' (Milpirri) is formed from the mixture of internal ancestral ritual performance and external music culture to attach children to

the ideally bilingual school and the importance of a community filled with a wide range of services.

While it would be a correct to call the event in English a ‘festival’ for outside tourists to Lajamanu, to consider the honest feedback of the local people, Milpirri would be far from a ‘movement’. Rather, it could be taken as nothing but a rehash of the Garma festival, which is of a greater size and internationally recognised. How can this thesis make ‘an original contribution to knowledge’ in Australia if the research subject was an insipid and immature ‘festival,’ an Indigenous project of non-Aboriginal Tracks Dance Company? With this question, I entered into my second fieldwork and had two more short travels to Lajamanu in 2011 and 2012, and an answer could be found by making another unique comparison, not taking it merely as a diminutive ‘festival’. Notwithstanding these aspects, it might be too easy to conclude that Milpirri is only at a developing stage or more internally oriented so that the purpose of the bicultural celebration has not been achieved. Thus, a hypothesis can be formulated that the real worth of Milpirri would not be shown by its interpretation as a ‘festival’ but by something else.

### **5.1.2. *Yapa* and *yellafella*: The story in Jardiwarnpa**

As was demonstrated in the former section, the comparison with Garma was not seemingly able to give satisfactory answers to the song ‘Give Me the Crown’ in Milpirri nor to recognize the value of the new movement, even though they both had the aim of bicultural harmony between

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Before entering into the theory of this thesis that the question would be largely solved through the comparison with *Yellafella* Business, we will see the reasons why the appearance of the third party can be approved in the society of Aboriginal Australia.

It has been difficult to find a justification of an anthropological comparison between one tradition and another in the scholarly tradition of ethnomusicology, which historically replaced comparative musicology. The objection to comparative musicology by pioneer ethnomusicologists including Alan Merriam and Bruno Nettl was its connection with social evolutionism and ‘Western music scholarship didn’t feel the need for comparative musicology’ (Clayton 2003:94). However, this thesis makes comparison between Yapa and Yolngu, and Aboriginal and Japanese musical cultures as a literal term ‘comparative musicology’. While there was a negative connotation in the old-fashioned term, Martin Clayton (ibid.) still considered that ‘the comparison is inevitable’ and ‘a new paradigm is needed’. Patrick Savage and Steven Brown (2013) have clearly attempted to return to the ‘forgotten agenda of comparative musicology’; their approach can be referred to as ‘neocomparatism’ (Tomlinson 2003:70):

While most definitions of comparative musicology put forward over the years have been limited to the study of folk and/or non-Western musics (Merriam 1977), we envision this field as an inclusive discipline devoted to the comparative study of all music, just as the name implies. (Savage & Brown 2013:148)

Except for the ethnomusicological field, the Aboriginal explanation of neocomparatism can be justified by the ‘Southern Theory’ explaining the analysis from another viewpoint: research in the non-mainstream comparative and anthropological studies is approved by the Theory, which criticises the Eurocentrism of academia. Such a natural tendency can be seen in the phenomenon of, for example, Aboriginal research by *yapa* themselves supported in contemporary educational institutions including ANU.

In this context, Steve Jampijinpa, who was the recipient of an Australian Research Council ‘Discovery Indigenous Award’, has strongly supported my comparison with the culture of *yapa* and Japanese *matsuri* (and *matsuri-goto*) since he had dreamed of *yellafella* in the past. His Dreaming and the political interpretation of the Australian continent through the cosmology of Jardiwarnpa have been partly published by Jampijinpa (Patrick 2008b; Patrick et al. 2008), but was explained in detail orally to me during my fieldwork.

According to Jampijinpa the Southern Cross Emu can be considered to fly from south to north as well as from east to west in the southern hemisphere. The east-west movement was already explained in the earlier chapter for the single emu sung in Jardiwarnpa ceremony. The mothers’ guidance to the novices preached during Kurdiji initiation ceremony inspired him to expand his idea, which was published on the Milpirri website of Tracks:

*The path Yapa initiates should walk on is toward the north. They should not be distracted by the dangerous Goanna Holes.*

On 23 March 2011, nearly the end of my fieldwork in Lajamanu, Jampijinpa (pers. comm.) began telling me about an interesting idea. We were making the Powerpoint slide, which showed the east-west movement of Flying Emu and the pictures of flightless birds, or the Single Emu's partner, to explain Jardiwarnpa ceremony to the participants in the 2011 ICTM World Conference (see figures 3.23, 3.24 in Chapter 3). The miraculous interpretation, but based on ancestral Dreaming, was that the Warlpiri ancestors recognised that the globe has Mangkurrurla (ocean) outside the continent and only lands in the southern hemisphere have flightless birds which could be the Single Emu's counterparts. This interpretation was later supported even by his father, Jerry Jangala. However, there was another hidden slide which was not used in Canada but in Japanese contexts. According to Jampijinpa, 'North' can imply 'Asian' countries such as Japan and China where they have 'good cooking, good food; go back to Karnanganja, calculator', and 'Goanna Holes' can be 'North America.' Thus he guided me to make animation of Emu to fly from south to north (see figure 5.4).

Jampijinpa: Yankirri (explained by moving clockwise from bottom Southern Cross), Karnanganja (Anticlockwise from there). Southern Cross is like, like this one (tangling a string to make a circle), joining the two Milky Way. That's why we put head band and feather there (on forehead). Stars here Southern Cross. Bring us being existence.

Palkamani.

Doi: Can you tell me when these are Southern Cross and the pointers, which one do you think that the two dangerous Goanna Holes?

Jampijinpa: Yeah, it's somewhere here (pointing *yankirri* way). Yeah, somewhere around here. That's it. That big cloud of dust. We'll see it tonight. (2011 pers. comm., 26 March)



**Figure 5.4: The movement of Flying Emu 2**

Made with Steve Jampijinpa using PowerPoint. The yellow Flying Emu moves from bottom to top with an animation function.

What to learn from *yellafella* culture can be here considered as mathematics, diet and health issues. After these conversations and making the Powerpoint for presentations, we also made the tentative Maths Purlapa (see table 3.2 in Chapter 3) in order to match the thought on learning ‘Calculator’ from Asia. Regarding the food and hygiene in Lajamanu, I had chances to hear from the medical staff member who invited me several times to her house for dinner since she saw me voluntarily cleaning a park and street before the coming Milpirri 2009. According to the staff member (Anonymous VI 2009, pers. comm., 29 October), around 60 per cent of the population had diabetes and kidney disease and most of the children had some ear disease.

When I saw children for the first time having a mobile phone but walking without shoes, I tried one day myself walking with bare feet, to suffer not only burns but also being bitten by green ants and needing to see the doctor again at the medical centre. Other than that I have been to the

medical centre several times after suffering from an itch after being in a dusty place and suffering from being bitten by a dog. Thus, it is hoped to research Milpirri from the field of arts but also of physiotherapy.

As is demonstrated by the Project Evaluation Report (Holmes, 2007) of the Milpirri Festival at Lajamanu in the Northern Territory there are high levels of accountability where arts companies such as Tracks Inc work with communities on arts projects supported by various industries. Milpirri for example, was supported by Rio Tinto Services Limited, Newmont Asia Pacific and, indirectly, the Australia Council, necessitating comprehensive reports of the outcomes. Beyond these kinds of evaluations however, there appears to be little in-depth academic research into the relationship between art and health. (Miller 2008)

It should be noted that I did not start by exposing my ideology on Asia or Japan. During the fieldwork I was trying not to talk about my culture assertively to influential Elders, and I had not shown any Asian performance such as those of Yanhui Zhao who performed on Chinese flute in Milpirri 2011 and Sidha Pandian, an ANU colleague, who performed Indian dance in Lajamanu in 2012; my interest was not in easy cross-cultural communication with rare Aboriginal informants. Although I did not refer to my Asian background in front of Jampijinpa, in March 2011 he unexpectedly began talking about his exposition of the way for Australian novices to look ‘North’ (Asia). After hearing his story, I briefly shared with him my knowledge of Japanese *matsuri* and the possibility to correlate it with Milpirri in my thesis; the following day, he reported to me that he already taught his school students in his class about the

ceremonial role of the Emperor in *matsuri* because he was impressed with the history that previously he did not know.

The cosmology of Emu Dreaming was also explained by his father, not merely by Jampijinpa. As I quoted in Chapter 4, Jerry Jangala explained the importance of the relationship between *Mangkurrurla* (ocean) and Emu saying that ‘you can’t sing Yankirri [Emu] song without Ngapa [water] song. You can see? Always with Ngapa’ (2011, pers. comm., 5 March) and supporting the idea that the Goanna Holes of America were a dangerous direction. It is characteristic of his story that he did not generalise to include all the *kardiya*. On the night of 29 October 2011, Jampijinpa talked about a story he inspired and foresaw in the past at Lulju Outstation. Here is the dialog, which I mentioned in part in the first chapter, on how Jampijinpa heard an old man, now deceased saying in the early 1970s that someone would come to Lajamanu from the East, or Asia as he interpreted. The following is the whole interview recorded by Stewart Carter of PAW Radio where Jampijinpa is talking about his impression of the first meeting with me and also the dream that Purlapa has to be developed in relation with Asia.

Carter: Jampijinpa, who is this person? Tell us about Doi.

Jampijinpa: Jungarrayi [Doi]. Yep. We’ve ... I really happy that Jungarrayi to come all that, what year was that, 2008?

Doi: Yes.

Jampijinpa: And, he came here with Japangardi [Stephen Wild]. Yeah, that is first little thing for me, you know what I mean? I want the first so much of Ha! So it begins, you know. That's what I thought myself, *Yuwayi*. But put that as long story.

Carter: Yes.

Jampijinpa: But he came here. And we would have given him *Japanangka* or *Japangardi* with the first five letters is *Japan*.

Carter: You are right.

Jampijinpa: *Yuwayi*. But now we've given him *Jungarrayi* so he can say at other five letters *Junga*, so you can say the "truth" about us and himself too, in tend to evaluate himself, not to give him, keep him, what you call, honest? No just to be truth to all of us. Not it not just his part lock. He really like a gift to us. *Yuwayi*. That's what you call that thing, someone see that *yapa* way of prophecy or something like that? Here men from the East sort of coming. *Yuwayi*. More like *kakarra* [East].

Carter: Tell us that thing?

Jampijinpa: Yeah, that's what the *kardiya* way call prophecy. I guess say another word is being "foretold" or something like that, y'know? Yeah, we were sort of expecting something that happen.

Doi: Prophet?

Jampijinpa: Yeah, this is the early 70s.

Carter: Who said that?

Jampijinpa: One Japangardi. He's gone now.

Carter: *Yapa*?

Jampijinpa: Yeah, he was there. But also I was care about that one as well there. But that's my personal thing. But one Japangardi there. He's passed away now.

Carter: *Yuwayi*. Then what was the prophecy?

Jampijinpa: Yeah, just talking about someone from the east coming. And he lighting of fire.

Doi: With bamboo instrument or something like that? (with smile)

Jampijinpa: No, no. Just lighting on fire. *Yuwayi*. There going one Nakamarra telling us story about Purlapa have to be developed. And then normally sudden they start making

Purlapas. Jukurrpa give all of us, you know? All of something else. *Yuwayi*. That was it. That was the story. I remember that one. So some wait Jungarrayi come to here that I'm always thinking about what is thing about. Can I say?

Doi: Yeah?

Jampijinpa: Asian. Someone from Asia will come. That's just rough get that you know why? *Yuwayi*.

Carter: And?

Jampijinpa: That's why I was happy seeing him Jungarrayi over there. And what was really good about it was I later found he's from Japan, which I told you was from Taiwan or China or something. Sorry to say.

Doi: Yeah, look same.

Jampijinpa: Same, but now I understand more Asian people. Even right down to Olly's country, Taiwan.

Doi: Taiwan, yeah. (2011, pers. comm., 29 October)

Since the first time we travelled together to Canberra after my six months fieldwork, Jampijinpa had told this story several times and I found that the message that I was supposed to come to Lajamanu, is no less spiritual than the one that Old Jimmy in Daguragu gave to Hokari: 'Country called you' (M. Hokari 2004a, 2004b, 2011; Y. Hokari n.d.; Lal 2006). However, it is directly contradictory to the story that, according to Hokari, Old Jimmy told about American President John F. Kennedy, coming to Gurindji Country to save Aboriginal people from *kardiya*. While Hokari's pet theory was that Gurindji people were angry about 'Kartiya' (*kardiya*), or European Australians in general and even asserted to swallow a metaphor that

John F. Kennedy saved Gurindji people,<sup>68</sup> Jampijinpa and Jangala in Lajamanu told me that Aboriginal initiants be careful of Goanna Holes – America – with the modern interpretation based on the cosmology of ancestral ceremony.

To sum up, comparative studies tend to be taken negatively in the history of ethnomusicology. However, there were several reasons to justify the decision to compare the two dissimilar cultures. Ethnomusicologists had a limitation to objectively describe and analyse only one music tradition without reference to any other culture whether it was Oriental or Occidental. Also as the Southern Theory suggests, they should cast off restraint of Eurocentrism and focus more on Aboriginal mythology. To compare the ritual and traditional environment of Warlpiri and Gurindji life, I heard from a Kalkarindji School staff member (Anonymous IX 2011, per. comm., 27 October) who worked in both Lajamanu and Kalkarindji, that the township of Lajamanu put a stronger emphasis on traditional rituals including circumcision the Warlpiri people showed their traditional knowledge on Winnecke Creek in front of Gurindji *kirda* (owner) and *kurdungurlu* (manager) when they cooperatively claimed their land right to *kardiya* people in 1972 (Wild 1987). If only the Gurinji story of the hostility toward European Australians as emphasised by Hokari was accepted, one would expect that they would not wish

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<sup>68</sup> Asking to the readers “can we be absolutely certain that President Kennedy never met the Indigenous Australians?” Hokari (ibid.:39) insists that his information be regarded as a fact and not a metaphor if it was convenient for his theory by concluding that ‘Gurinji elders don’t think of JFK as a metaphor at all’. In order to uphold his theory of ‘radical oral history’, Hokari was pursuing ‘historical truthfulness’ a concept proposed by Tessa Morris-Suzuki, rather than just ‘historical truth’. However, she revealed her concerns about through the usage of her idea by her student “If I accept ‘irrational’ Aboriginal accounts of the powers of the rainbow snake as literally true, how can I argue with Christian fundamentalists who tell me that God really made the world in seven days (Hokari 2011:15-16)?”

the success of two-way culture. While he reported the mysterious story of support by JFK from America, Milpirri, on the contrary, born in Lajamanu, does not blindly focus on anti-*kardiya* thought but holds the hope of a harmonious relationship between *yapa* and *kardiya*. Rather, they might warn the North American dangerous Goanna Holes, and even give an international scope to preach the novices to learn something from *yellafella*.

### **5.1.3. *Kardiya* and *yellafella*: Comparative Indigenous studies**

With the justification of the comparative analysis with *Yellafella* Business, further details of the category will be discussed in this section by focusing on the term ‘Crown’ from the viewpoint of racial issues among the two countries: Australia and Japan. First, the concepts of ‘Crown’ and *terra nullius* used in the Commonwealth of Australia are argued in the historical sense. Subsequently, the compatible Japanese history will be the theme in this part of the discussion so that the meaning of ‘Crown’ in the Milpirri song can be objectively analysed later.

Although the individual houses on the map of Lajamanu (see figure 3.4 in Chapter 3) cannot be seen in detail, there are houses of *kardiya* officials, the doctor, the school principal and the Former Superintendent’s House east of the shop. Most of the other people have houses around Top Camp in the west (*karlarra*) and are not allowed by the night patrol to wander in the east (*kakarra*) whether for work reasons or for locally recognised racist or cultural reasons. In this environment, I experienced the hangover of old-fashioned racial discrimination, including

an example while travelling in the Bush Bus, which is owned by the community and thus has chiefly Aboriginal passengers. I noticed in the 2011 trip with Yanhui Zhao, a Chinese professor, that the company purchased a brand-new vehicle which separates the cab and body for passengers with a solid wall even without a window in it. En route back from Lajamanu, the driver approached me and Zhao as we waited for the departure and asked, ‘You guys don’t mind sitting with Blackfellas? You can sit in front if you want’. I was confused with the sudden question but soon realised that he did not know what we were doing in Lajamanu. After we refused his offer, the bus stopped at Kalkaringi and an old Caucasian couple from there took a seat in the cab with the driver.

To think about my situation as an outsider in Lajamanu, one of the reasons why I was accepted as a rare non-Warlpiri dancer in several events of Milpirri, unique in the male group and as a Japanese, can be assumed to be their sympathy for the situation that I also speak English as a second language. When I (Doi commented in NT Mojos 2011) spoke in Japanese in a public interview on the restoration of *kurlumpurrngu* and later I gave them the translation for subtitles, Jampijinpa came to tell me with a smile that he also felt uncertain whenever he spoke English. During the ceremonies I did not hesitate to sit down on the sand with and to drink and smoke with Aboriginal performers while some *kardiya* visitor nervously advised me during their absence against my sharing even a washed cup with local people to avoid contagious diseases. When I was a little sad and probably did not look good during my visit in 2012 after some friction with such travellers, my younger Skin ‘brother-in-law’, to whom I did not talk

very often before, came near to me in the Art Centre and suddenly said, ‘Everyone here say Jungarrayi is a good man’ to cheer me up.

Racial issues can be seen in the creation history of the Commonwealth of Australia. ‘The Crown’, the term used in the Milpirri song, in general may be related to the Latin term *terra nullius* which influenced the social relationship between the First Australians and British people. The 2011 Census marked only the 40th anniversary of the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the national census while non-Indigenous people had been included for one century (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011b). In the eighteenth century, based on the requirement of international law, the British Government acquired foreign land and its sovereignty by conquest, cession or occupation. The Roman law of *terra nullius* was suggested by legal scholars such as Emer de Vattel and William Blackstone to encompass territories inhabited by ‘backward’ peoples hunting and gathering but not fulfilling the requisite cultivation to claim land title (Sanson et al. 2010). The concept of *terra nullius* was profoundly inspired by English philosopher John Locke in the 17<sup>th</sup> century who assumed that the state of nature would cause chaos so that people established a civil society resolving conflicts in a civil way with help from government.

Indigenous people had challenged Crown title before the courts, including the *Gove Land Rights Case* (1971) in which the NT Supreme Court held that native title was not part of Australian Law. As pressure for a political rather than a legal solution increased since Justice Blackburn found the ‘subtle and elaborate system’ of customary law of Yolngu people in the

Gove case, a Land Rights Commission was established in 1973 and its leader Justice Woodward influenced the passage of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976 (Cth)*. The High Court of Australia reconsidered the issue of Crown title in 1992, and its Mabo judgment overturned the *terra nullius* fiction. In *Mabo v Queensland (No. 2)*, the High Court held that the British Empire in 1788 did not acquire ‘beneficial title’ or exclusive possession of all Australian land, and recognised that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders have had ‘native title’ or possessory rights to land due to their land occupation prior to British colonisation. Although the Mabo case was an historic milestone in its finding that the right of land use belongs to Indigenous people and that this right has played an important role in legal history in Australia, breaking with precedent common law, it did not deny British ultimate land ownership or assertion of sovereignty. It held that from 1788 there was only one sovereign power and one system of law in Australia. Furthermore, Australia’s government opposed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the General Assembly vote of 2007 and Indigenous Affairs Minister Mal Brough said ‘[t]here should only be one law for all Australians and we should not enshrine in law practices that are not acceptable in the modern world’ (BBC News 2007).

To compare the history of human rights in the Crown Australia, there seem significant differences from those in the Empire of Japan. Racial Equality Proposal, 1919 was a Japanese proposal for racial equality at the Paris Peace Conference. There was strong opposition from the British delegation including the then Australian Prime Minister, Billy Hughes, clarifying his

opposition saying that ‘ninety-five out of one hundred Australians rejected the very idea of equality’ (Kajima cited in Lauren 1988). The proposal was rejected by the chairman, President Wilson saying that although the proposal had been approved by a clear majority, that in this particular matter, strong opposition had manifested itself, and that on this issue a unanimous vote would be required.<sup>69</sup> However, it should be noticed that Japan was the country nearly a century ago that clearly proposed racial equality in an international conference.

Although I raise the rationale for the comparison of Milpirri with *matsuri* in Japan with the support of Jampijinpa, this might still be regarded as eccentric that, in the broad context of Indigenous studies, I would attempt to compare Australian Aboriginal people with Japanese mainstream, but not with Japanese minority people, such as ‘Ainu’. Indeed, Jampijinpa one day visited my ANU office to show me an online video-clip called ‘Ainu’s new identity’ (TITV 2008) which shows some young male and female Ainu Japanese in traditional costume dancing with hip hop music. He knew this through an email from his friend Alan Box calling this ‘Ainu Milpirri’. Such an analysis with a comparison of Aboriginal Australia and Ainu Japan tends to have problems as follows.

The simple comparison between Australian Milpirri and ‘Ainu Milpirri’ or more generally between Australian Aboriginal and Ainu societies must be avoided. This opinion does not originate in my indifference toward Ainu people, because in reality I have been highly

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<sup>69</sup> French Delegate Ferdinand Larnaude immediately stated ‘[a] majority had voted for the amendment’ (Conférence de paix de Paris 1919-1920 cited in Lauren 1988).

interested in the Ainu issue since I was born in Hidaka sub-prefecture in Hokkaido or *Ainu Mosir* ('the land of human beings' in Ainu language). It has the town Shizunai famous for the history of *Shakushain's Revolt* against Japanese authority on Hokkaido in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and Nibutani Village, the home of a large community of Ainu people and an important centre of their culture and history. Spending my childhood in such an environment formed my interest in Indigenous peoples in the realm of the subconscious. However, there are several objections to the idea of considering Ainu people as 'Indigenous people' comparable to Aboriginal people in Australia.

It might be worth taking up the music and culture of Ainu people if they were fully considered as an 'Indigenous people' in Japan without protest. The study might be successful if it focused on the fact that the Japanese government in 2008 attempted to recognise the Ainu people as an Indigenous people, and several conferences have been held and anthropological comparative studies made on Aboriginal and Ainu issues in Japan or by Japanese people. The National Museum of Ethnology, Japan, held a symposium, *The Ainu and the Australian Aboriginals Today*, in 2009 with lecturers including Nicholas Peterson. Hokari did not mention the Ainu in his writings but after his death a photographic exhibition *The Call of the Living Earth: Photographs of Indigenous Australians by Minoru Hokari* was held in Hokkaido in 2011 sponsored by Hokkaido University Centre for Ainu and Indigenous Studies. To take an example from the thesis, *A Comparative Study of Indigenous Education*, a Japanese PhD student Takuya

Shimomura (2008:110) struggled to justify the idea of equating Ainu people with Indigenous Australians.

Historically, Indigenous Australians and Ainu people have various experiences in common; e.g. the notion of *Terra Nullius*, being called barbarians by government propaganda, a loss of population caused by introduced diseases and conflicts, government protection (control) policies and assimilation policies. Both of them have experienced some similar historical processes in the education made available to indigenous groups.

However, such an assumption can straightforwardly invite criticisms on its oversight.

What Yamato people, or the dominant native ethnic group of Japan, did to the Ainu is said to be far from European settlers' discrimination and expropriation toward Indigenous peoples in the continents. There is no evidence that they had had the notion of *terra nullius* in Hokkaido since 12<sup>th</sup> century when Yamato people and Ainu people already cohabited in the land.<sup>70</sup> In striking contrast to the Australian Government, they had *Hokkaido Former Natives Protection Act 1899* which proves that the then Japanese Government did not have the concept of *terra nullius* but granted the land to Ainu people who engaged or intended to engage in farming as follows.

A person who is a Hokkaido Aborigine and engages in farming or hopes to engage shall be granted for nothing up to 16528 m<sup>2</sup> per family. (unofficial trans. by author)

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<sup>70</sup> They claim that Funadama Jinja Shrine in Hakodate is said to have been established in 1135 originally as a temple dedicated to Kannon by a monk Ryonin of Yuzu Nembutsu school of Pure Land Buddhism (Funadama Jinja Shrine n.d.). That is why there is an ancient relationship of the two languages especially in Shinto religious terms.

Such an estimation of the Japanese treatment of Ainu people is not only by Japanese people. Isabella Lucy Bird who was a British travel writer and stayed in an Ainu community in 1878 mentioned the Japanese Government administration of Ainu people in those days differed from that of other governments.

I really think that the Kaitaikushi Department means well by them, and, besides removing the oppressive restrictions by which, as a conquered race, they were fettered, treats them far more humanely and equitably than the U.S. Government, for instance, treats the North American Indians. (Bird 1911:269)

The hot debate could not remain in the interpretation of the historical issues but could even go further to the political movements by extremists including recent Ainu movements to require consultation of Asahikawa Ainu Council and Ainu Ramat Organization. According to *The Hokkaido Shimbun* they made proposals to the Council on Ainu Policy in the Cabinet Secretariat for an apology by the Japanese Government and the Emperor and of five trillion yen as compensation for depriving them of the land and resources, for ‘the responsibility of the emperor and Japanese government as perpetrators’ (*The Hokkaido Shimbun* 2009). Shingo Nishimura (2008), a member of the Diet of Japan, criticised this recognition as ‘perpetrators’ or provocation created by anti-Japanese people and submitted an article ‘A lie of Japan-must-be-wrong historical viewers who are pulling the wire of the national assembly resolution for Ainu as Indigenous people’.

One of the differences from the History War in Australia is that in Japan there is even a question regarding the anthropological divisions of the two groups: Ainu people and Japanese people. The criticisms are against the Japanese government's recognition of the Ainu people as an 'Indigenous people' in 2008 prior to the International Day of the World's Indigenous People. On that occasion it was viewed as a problem that around 20,000 'Ainu people' should be defined as 'Indigenous people' on the criteria of the United Nations, on the grounds that most of them speak only Japanese but not Ainu language, which was recognised as an endangered language by UNESCO in 2009. Anthropologist Motomichi Kono explained the difficulty to divide Ainu and Yamato in physical DNA, social and cultural senses.

Ainu and Yamato cannot actually be divided by DNA and their societies and cultures have always been connected with each other. This connection is like a chain ring; this point makes the total difference from Europeans entering into American and Australian continents. The Tsugaru Strait cannot have fulfilled the requirement to divide two peoples since 10,000 years ago. ...

In Japan we do not have Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship. Although many people moved from Honshu Island in Meiji era, Hokkaido had already had descendants from Honshu before that. (unofficial trans. by author, SakuraSoTV 2012)

Mitsuaki Matoba (2009:29) agrees with his theory and mentions that the aggregation of Yamato and Ainu peoples can satisfy the requirement of a 'people' by citing the definition of the Japanese dictionary *Kōjien* as 'having identical race and geographical origin'. In contradiction to the situation of Ainu people, there is no current opinion that denies the nativity of Aboriginal

people to the continent and Warlpiri people have not ever been identified with British people in terms of the DNA types. The parallel of Australian and Ainu Milpirris with mountains of convoluted issues runs the risk of inviting unnecessary criticisms and of failure.

In order to determine with which part of *yellafella* culture to analyse *yapa* business, I examined in this section the differences between the two governmental attitudes toward racial matters. While some literature focused on comparing Australian Aboriginal people with Ainu societies in Japan and even attempted to identify Australian Government treatment of *yapa* people with Japanese Government treatment of Ainu, little attention has been given to comparative research of Aboriginal events and performing arts with *matsuri* culture which the mainstream Japanese are proud of. Accordingly, this thesis can be independent as a unique comparison of Aboriginal Milpirri with Japanese *matsuri* giving special attention to the concept of ‘Crown’ which is again different from ‘British Crown’ and is not imparted in the concept of English ‘festival’.

## 5.2. Milpirri and *matsuri*

The justification for the parallel between these two terms has been made in earlier parts of this chapter. From here, the discussion goes further in the comparison by dividing several parts of the definitions of *matsuri*. The hypothesis of the ‘Milpirri-*matsuri* Theory’ claims that the juxtaposition of the concepts of the two traditions would clarify the meaning of ‘Crown’ in the

Milpirri song ‘Give Me the Crown’ which could give a hint of the future of biculturalism and multiculturalism in Australia as a political body. ‘*Matsuri*’ is different from the concept of English ‘festival’ in several senses, and once the comparison with Milpirri began, it will be found that Milpirri and *matsuri* have considerably more points in common than either has with the Garma Festival or other Revitalisation Movements.

To take an example of its usage in the Australian context, the term ‘*matsuri*’ could only be identified with ‘festival’ because of the small Japanese population. Shinju Matsuri is often translated as Broome’s Festival of the Pearl, based on the historical Japanese immigration to Broome.<sup>71</sup> It was the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Japanese pearl divers set foot on the Australian continent and it is said that the *matsuri* originated in those days (Commonwealth of Australia n.d.). Ottoson (2009) reported the stages of local Indigenous rock and reggae musicians in the event as well as those from the Central Australian deserts. Saburo Morita (1990), who also participated in Shinju Matsuri and examined the reaction of the non-Indigenous audience watching the dances by Wangkajunga and Nyigina people, mentioned that although many researchers from religious studies, folklore, historical science, social science, anthropology and so forth handled ‘*matsuri*’ or ‘festival’ as a research subject, there had not been a commonly accepted definition. He evaluated Edmund Leach’s (cited in *ibid.*) theory of ‘festival’ as a fundamental point and attempted to classify the rite and ceremony, and

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<sup>71</sup> There is also a Japanese immigrant population in the Torres Strait islands. Philip Hayward and Junko Konishi (2001) provided an account of the music culture of the Japanese community residing on Thursday Island, Torres Strait from 1890s-1941.

celebration and revelry. However, as Morita did not discuss the difference between ‘festival’ in English and ‘*matsuri*’ in Japanese there is insufficient research on the terminology to draw any firm conclusions regarding it.

One of the purposes of this section is to clarify what kind of differences from ‘festival’ can be seen in ‘*matsuri*’. As is defined in the Encyclopaedia Britannica Online (2010), it is nearly impossible to define ‘*matsuri*’ without mentioning the derivative term ‘*matsuri-goto*’ relating to political issues:

*matsuri*, (Japanese: “festival”), in general, any of a wide variety of civil and religious ceremonies in Japan; more particularly, the shrine festivals of Shintō. *Matsuri* vary according to the shrine, the deity or sacred power (*kami*) worshipped, and the purpose and occasion of the ceremony and often are performed in accordance with traditions of great antiquity. The term *matsuri-goto*, which literally means “affairs of religious festivals,” in common usage also means “government.” This is in accordance with the tradition that the ceremonies of Shintō were the proper business of the state, and that all important aspects of public just as of private life were the occasions for prayers and reports to the *kami*. A *matsuri* generally falls into two parts: the solemn ritual of worship, followed by a joyous celebration.

On the other hand, when a term is defined in its same-language dictionary, they tend to detail the derivation of the term. *Dejitaru Daijisen* (2007), a Japanese encyclopaedia, gives the following five definitions of ‘*matsuri*’:

1. To enshrine deities, Buddhas, and ancestors; its ritual. On a specific day, prayer, thanksgiving, memorial service, etc. is held. A festival rite. In an epigrammatic verse, it often signifies summer festival.
2. Abbreviation of Aoi Matsuri (or Hollyhock Festival) in Kamo Shrines in Kyoto.
3. An event for commemoration, celebration, commerce, publicity, etc.
4. Abbreviation of two major matsuri in Hie Shrine and Kanda Shrine.
5. Sexual intercourse between a male and female. (unofficial trans. by author)

In order to accurately measure the concept with the Australian phenomenon, it is required to reconstruct the points to be featured in *matsuri* classifications. Among the Japanese definitions, 2 and 4 can be omitted because they are only abbreviative usages. The remaining three points 1, 3 and 5 of the *Dejitaru Daijisen* can be used and mixed with the derivative term *matsuri-goto*, which was touched on in the Encyclopaedia Britannica Online (2010), as follows.

External similarity: Traditional and contemporary events

Interior similarity: Connection to Religion and marriage

Political similarity: Connection to *matsuri-goto* ('government')

### 5.2.1. External similarities

Points in common between the two traditions are here considered on the basis of sacred and contemporary appearances, as *matsuri* according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica Online (2010) 'generally falls into two parts: the solemn ritual of worship, followed by a joyous celebration' and can be paralleled with Milpirri programs having traditional Warlpiri dance and children's

hip hop dance. To begin with the similarity in the traditional part, the usage of fire can effortlessly be seen in both events in relation to the ritual of worship. Ancestral *matsuri* is held seasonally as well as ancient rituals in Aboriginal contexts. *Hi Matsuri* (or Fire Matsuri) is a form of the attractive traditional *matsuri* and can be compared with ceremonial parts of Milpirri, such as burning *witi* ritually in Jardiwarnpa (aka Fire Ceremony) and *ngurra-kurlu* lighting as seen in Chapter 4. A nationwide *Hi Matsuri* in Japan is held on the night of the full moon in January as well as during the Lantern Festival in other areas influenced by China. Flying Lantern at the finale in Milpirri 2009 and 2012 was the representation of the two-way culture. Firewalking is often performed by Buddhist and Shugendo ascetics (see figure 5.5). Similarly, jumping on fire by initiands is part of Waruwarta which was not performed at Milpirri but the alternative of the most important Warlpiri initiation ceremony (see figure 5.6). Milpirri and *Hi Matsuri* are commonly held at night because of its enhancement of the beauty of fire (see table 5.3.).



**Figure 5.5: Firewalking in Japanese Matsuri**  
Excerpt from Saitama City (2013).



**Figure 5.6: Young boys jumping over a small fire in Waruwarta Ceremony**

**Table 5.3: External similarities**

|                   | <i>Matsuri</i>                                                                   | Milpirri                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Traditional part  | Ex) <i>Hi</i> Matsuri (Fire Festival),<br><i>Hadaka</i> Matsuri (Naked Festival) | Burning <i>Witi</i> in Jardiwarnpa. Jumping on fire at <i>Waruwarta</i> . Burning <i>Ngurra-kurlu</i> Frame. Body painting |
| Contemporary part | Ex) Yosokoi-Sōran Matsuri features any contemporary dance with ritual utensil    | Features two way cultural sharing with children's hip hop dance and ritual objects                                         |
|                   | Secondary festival after Yosakoi Matsuri                                         | Secondary festival after Garma.                                                                                            |
|                   | Launched by Gaku Hasegawa                                                        | Launched by Steve Jampijinpa                                                                                               |
|                   | Educational purpose                                                              | Educational purpose                                                                                                        |
|                   | Popularization of the event in the world                                         | Dream of cultural hegemony                                                                                                 |

Take an example of the most similar type of *matsuri*, which has less traditional factors than those above. Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri (often translated as Yosakoi Soran Festival) is a well-known modern *matsuri* involved in various fields of research. Masahiro Iwai (1998, 2001) wrote on the event from the point of view of musical behaviour and advocated the evolution of traditional Yosakoi dance performed in Yosakoi Matsuri (original) and Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri. Tadayoshi Uchida (2004) suggested in his presentation that Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri has the power to create/recreate local culture all over Japan. Moreover, Yasushi Takumi and Kiyoshi Moriya (2005, 2006) investigated the increase of physical fitness and improvement of mental health of the participants of Yosakoi-Sōran Dance. This festival has also interested researchers of tourism study, folklore, anthropology and social psychology (Yoshizawa cited in Takumi & Moriya 2008).

The particular resemblance lies in the fact that both Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri and Milpirri have relatively short histories. In 1992, Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri was inaugurated by a group directed by Gaku Hasegawa, then a student in Hokkaido University, with an idea to fuse

original Yosakoi Matsuri in Kochi prefecture and traditionally famous song ‘Sōran-bushi’ in Hokkaido. Yosakoi in Kochi started in 1954, as a modern rendition of Awa Odori, a traditional summer dance. That is to say, Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri was launched, with the hint of another former successful *matsuri*, to revive his hometown in Hokkaido where there had not been such an entertainment. This process can match the fact in Australia that Milpirri had a next generation Elder creator who was inspired by Garma to arouse the community.

The feature of Yosakoi-Sōran Dance is a dance competition by amateur people from various regions in Hokkaido, just like Milpirri Children with hip hop dance rather than Garma Children with Yolŋu Rock. As a rule, Yosakoi-Sōran participants must use the Naruko clappers to create rhythm for dancing. Any musical arrangement is acceptable and usually hip hop is used, but the music must contain at least some part of ‘Sōran-bushi’ song. They do not strain at traditional ceremony but rather take part in a tournament. My home town, Mitsuishi, came to notice thanks to the event. Having gathered momentum since the launch in Sapporo, Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri began to establish branch offices. The first branch was established in rustic Hidaka sub-prefecture. A female dance team was born in Mitsuishi and named Mitsuishi Naruko-Kai (Naruko Clappers Association). Broadcast with live programs in festival seasons every summer, the name of the team and town became known gradually by keeping on winning a prize since their instigation, and winning the grand prix in 2002. The Kombu fisherwomen and girls in the team are actively dancing throughout Japan including Tokyo and Wakayama with

the brand of Mitsuishi. Obviously, the dance competition of the Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri functioned as a re-energizer of my hometown just as Milpirri did in Lajamanu.

Another important similarity in the purposes of Milpirri and Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri is education. The song ‘Nanchū Sōran’ (or Rock Sōran-bushi) was first performed in Wakkanai Minami Junior High school (abbreviated as Nanchū), which was reported by the media as ‘the most troubled school in Japan’ at the time (Gunji 1999). This is a successful case which stimulated not only a community in general but also a school, as Milpirri has aimed for.

One of the biggest differences from the present state of Milpirri, even though it also has the same intention, is that Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri is not only held in one place. With the economic success of Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri in Sapporo City, the format of the dance *matsuri* (often with the name of Yosakoi) spread much in the 2000s in Japan and other countries, such as, the Harajuku Omotesando Genki Matsuri Super Yosakoi in Tokyo; Yosakoi Sasebo Matsuri in Nagasaki; annual Yosakoi Competition in Surabaya, Indonesia; Yosakoi known as the Pink Hibiscus Yosakoi Dancers in Penang, Malaysia; and the same in Accra, Ghana. Nara Candle Festival in Canberra also staged Yosakoi-Sōran Dancing Troup from Sydney. When I took part in the festival after I came to Canberra, I was surprised to meet them and to hear from some of them that they admired the dance group of my hometown in Hokkaido (see figure 5.7). However, Milpirri at the moment is only held at Lajamanu, not spreading into other parts of Australia including even other Warlpiri Communities.



**Figure 5.7: Yosakoi-Sōran Dance in Canberra Nara Candle Festival**

Although a clear difference can be seen in the size of the two phenomena, Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri can be regarded as a good example for the future development of Milpirri with its dream of hegemony. The ‘Milpirri dancers’ or hip hop kids dancers from Lajamanu have this capacity as seen in the Australian Dance Award which they won in 2010. Furthermore, Milpirri might be able to learn a lesson in the future when it succeeds in business, from Yosakoi-Sōran Dance at the turning point: Brain News Network (2010) has criticised disharmony among the community, dancers, gigantic administration and the creator. According to a questionnaire survey of *The Hokkaido Shimbun* (2007), 45.3% of local people ‘like’ Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri but 50.7% ‘don’t like’ with the reasons including the tendencies of competitionisation and commercialisation of the *matsuri*, the professionalisation of dancers, noise and the hatred of their dress. In 2010, two local TV broadcasts quit sponsorships due to the low audience share (Brain News Network 2010). Some of these criticisms can enlighten Milpirri to contemplate future success.

To complete the exterior comparison with Milpirri, there are certain similarities with *matsuri* including the function of a revitaliser, if not a revitalisation ‘movement’. In the sense that Milpirri concentrates on hip hop dance with an attempt to mix it with traditional songs, but not on Live Rock music, it has stronger connection with the secondary Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri dance competition.

### 5.2.2. Interior similarities

In this section, based on the table 5.4 the comparison will be discussed in two conceptual aspects: Animism and Copulation. First, both traditional *matsuri* and Warlpiri ceremony in Milpirri are considered to have relations to Animism. I am not alone in my view but a comment on a very similar comparison exists in the literature. *Sakaki* wood used in Shinto and *witi* in Warlpiri ritual (see figures 5.8, 9) are paralleled in the same paragraph in the writing of Mandy Hawkhead, the Festival Education Officer of Perth International Arts Festival, with the idea of John Adams who composed an opera in 2009 Perth Festival Education Program as follows:

What does it mean for a girl to turn into a tree? For AK Ramanujan (who analysed the tale A Flowering Tree as well as translating it), it’s about ecology and also about the vulnerability of a girl’s emerging sexuality and about her objectification. Globally, trees have always represented a link between the divine, the natural and the human. In the Shinto religion of Japan, the sakaki tree is sacred and lures spirits to its scent with its fragrant, creamy-white flowers; the divine spirit can adeptly transfer itself to twigs of the tree.

... In Australia, western Warlpiri Aborigines believe that souls accumulate in trees and wait for unsuspecting women to pass by so that they can jump out and inhabit them.  
(Hawkhead 2009)

**Table 5.4: Interior similarities**

|                                | <i>Matsuri</i>                                                                                       | Milpirri                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Connection to Animism/totemism | Sakaki tree                                                                                          | Kurdiji and Witi                                                                                       |
|                                | Profoundly related to the Japanese spirituality such as Shinto and a traditional esoteric cosmology. | Jardiwarnpa ceremony related to yankirri jukurpa, an important ritual part of Milpirri.                |
| Connection to Copulation       | Utagaki song tradition                                                                               | Yilpinji                                                                                               |
|                                | Changes of marriage and sexual mores via matsuri since modernisation.                                | Yinapaka or to teach young people subsection kinship system which clings to historical marriage rules. |



**Figure 5.8: Sakaki branch used by Gagaku Dancer**  
Excerpt from Japan Arts Council (2012)



**Figure 5.9: Witi poles prepared for Milpirri**  
Image of the sacred-secret building in Kajirri Place is hidden.

It is natural to regard both basic religions behind each event as having religious factors.

*Matsuri* used to be also called *kami-asobi* or ‘deity entertainment’ or ‘placating deity’

(Plutschow 1996:42). *Matsuri* is considered as the noun form of the verb *matsuru*, which means

to enshrine or celebrate a deity. This is done with rituals, which often entail singing (Gerbert

2011). On the other hand, Aboriginal people in Australia are normally believed to have had a

hunting-gathering lifestyle and performed Increase Ceremonies in their tradition. Some recent

research even points to evidence that they had some agricultural and irrigation techniques.<sup>72</sup>

However, there are various questions in current Warlpiri studies about whether their religious life can be called ‘Animism’ by researchers whom Peterson (2011) calls ‘New Animists.’ As Tony Swain argues, the beliefs of Warlpiri people can also be encompassed by the theory of Mircea Eliade.

Traditional Warlpiri cosmology denies any hierarchical distinction between this world and an *otiose* heaven. (Swain 1988: 453)

The reality and enduringness of a construction are assured ... by the transformation of profane space into a transcendent space ... [and] also by the transformation of concrete time into mythic time. (Eliade cited in *ibid.*)

To speak of ‘sacred and profane’, both *matsuri* and Milpirri can be drawn together in the common mental aspect of coitus. *Matsuri* has a definition of ‘copulation’ in an archaic sense relying on the history of Japanese life as mentioned above. It is an evidence of the existence of the meaning that the word is still used in fishing when two fishing lines are tangled, they are called *matsuri* or *o-matsuri* in modern Japanese (*Dejitaru Daijisen* 2007). Also, modern *matsuri* might be generally taken as nothing to do with copulation, but I used to dance Bon Dance in

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<sup>72</sup> Rupert Gerritsen can even explain the possibility of planting in the desert area: “One other form of behaviour resulting in the propagation of plants is what is known as ‘incidental dispersal’, ‘incidental planting’ or ‘incidental domestication’ ... A number of other occurrences have been noticed in Australia, typified by the proliferation of ‘wild tomatoes’ and *yukidjirri* berries over a wide area as a result of the *Walbiri* of the Western Desert transporting ‘dampers’ made with these” (2008:24); “Desert fruits, like “bush tomatoes” (*Solanum* spp.) and quandongs (*Santalum acuminatum*) were sun- or fire-dried in small quantities and either carried about or left in a protected spot by Western Desert and Central Australian groups such as the *Iliaura*, *Luritja*, *Mardu*, *Pintubi* and *Walbiri*” (*ibid.*:56).

*matsuri* every year in my childhood with the song ‘*Kodomo Bon Odori Uta*’ (Children’s Bon Dance Song), which was composed in 1952 at the request of Hokkaido Government Board of Education, because the original folk song ‘*Hokkai Bon-Uta*’ (Hokkaido Bon Dance Song) had vulgar lyrics (Hokkai Kankō Bushi n.d.). Bon Dance<sup>73</sup> is performed in Bon Buddhist-Confucian custom to honour the spirits of one’s ancestors, and particularly, the one in Hokkaido has two scenes: children’s part in early evening and adults’ part followed, just like the separation by age existing in Milpirri dance. With passably traditional factors, dances in *matsuri* in those days seemed to have already been modernised: For instance, *mikoshi* from the shrine was rarely shouldered by attendants but instead carried by a truck; and some schoolchildren’s Bon dancers performed on a Stage Car with speakers and a public address system. The similar usage of modern and better sound and lighting technology can be seen in Milpirri to provide hip hop music to dancers and to show acrylic-painted bodies of ritual dancers and magnificent banners.

There is at least a comparative analysis of Japanese tradition and Warlpiri ritual in love songs. Utagaki is a courtship song festival or an ancient ritual of peasant gathering, and the previously mentioned Bon dance is considered a development of group dances common to the Utagaki.<sup>74</sup> This custom which can frequently be seen in the Japanese ancient literature *The Tale*

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<sup>73</sup> According to folkways historian, Koshi Shimokawa (2011: com.), ‘Bon Odori used to be “promiscuity” with wild dance of virgins and wives. Japanese has been singing the praise of sexual liberty since ancient times. Utagaki, zakone, yobai, bon-odori. ... Japanese have the history of “promiscuity” as folk culture from Nara period to modern times. The oldest record of “promiscuity” was utagaki written in Kojiki, Nihonshoki, and Fudoki. ... Mori Ogai in his book *Vita Sexualis* wrote his ‘sexual experience’ in Bon Odori happened in his hometown’ (unofficial trans. by author).

<sup>74</sup> ‘Originally the youth of neighbouring villages would assemble on beautiful hillsides (such as the famous Mount Tsukuba in Ibaraki prefecture, and Kishimagatake in Hizen) and spend days and nights in singing, dancing, and sexual promiscuity, which would often end in the choice of a spouse from a different community. ... Several scholars

of *Genji* in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and as described in *Yilpinji: love art and ceremony* by Christine

Nicholls who concluded the Bon dance can be correlated with Yilpinji in Japan as follows:

Nevertheless numerous examples can be provided, including the celebrated Japanese epic *The Tale of Genji*, which is essentially a love story. The tradition of Indigenous Australian love poetry, song and other narratives, as well as the visual art tradition pertaining to love, is even longer. For the Warlpiri and the Kukatja peoples of Australia's Tanami and Western Desert regions, the primary seat of the emotions is not the heart, but the *stomach*. (Nicholls 2006:74)

Do other cultures have practices similar to Yilpinji?

The Japanese custom of Yobai ('night crawling' for the purpose of having sex with young women has some manifestations in visual art form. Yobai continued well into the twentieth century in Japan, and children from Yobai would be raised by the entire village. In Japanese visual art, the man practising enacting the Yobai is often depicted as a falling star – deftly falling out of the night sky into the futon of precisely the young woman he sexually desires! (ibid.:77)

Even though Milpirri has the concept of teaching right marriage to children by

Yinapaka and Yilpinji, the ideal is contradicted in *kardiya* education in Lajamanu School. One

day, when I clarified the archaic idea of Japanese *matsuri* to Jampijinpa, he mentioned its

relationship to the idea of Yinapaka adopted in Milpirri 2011, and also his hope to restore

Yilpinji ritual in future Milpirri. One of the features of Milpirri is simplified Skin Names

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consider the present bon-odori (a very popular, simple dance performed by most of the people participating in the festival of the dead during the summer nights of the bon-matsuri) as a development of group dances common to the utagaki' (Ortolani 1995:9).

represented by a colouring system to teach children their 'Right Skin' so that they can choose future spouses appropriately; this can be exactly compared with the process of ancestral *Matsuri*, explained as '[e]ven in the sexual orgies, partners were not selected at random, but in song changes and games, the rules of which were set by tradition' (Plutschow 1996:47). However, Australian education has taken traditional Aboriginal marriage as the past as can be seen in the fact that the library of Lajamanu School stocks a book *My Mob: the Story of Aboriginal Family Life (Aboriginal People, Then and Now)*.

Under Australian law, before you can marry anyone you have to prove that you are free to marry, either because you have never been married, or are divorced or widowed. In addition, you cannot marry anyone closely related to you. In the past, Aboriginal people had more rules about marriage, and many are still kept insofar as Australian law allows them to be. ...

Promised marriage was one rule ... today few Aboriginal marriages are arranged through the promise system. ...

Australian law does not allow a person to have more than one marriage partner at a time. Aboriginal law did and still does, although few Aboriginal people now have more than one marriage partner. (Barlow & Hill 2006:14)

The marriage style in Lajamanu has been changed. According to Jampijinpa, there are at least two old male Elders in addition to himself practising traditional polygyny. In my fieldwork in 2011, another male Elder, commented in my interview giving his strong opinion on the marriage system.

Marriage with different skin, makes well changing and y'know, tribes getting bit different. Even though they getting married with wrong skin now, it's gonna be hard, but we still accept them, y'know? ... But we still respect them. We're studying that nothing we can do about it. That should be accepted. They should teach them when they were younger, growing up, they should teach them about law long before our time our people were stronger that time, making sure the law stay strong within the Skin Group and everyone should respect that. (Anonymous III 2011, pers. comm., 9 March)

For another instance, I have at least two Skin brothers who are married with their Poison Cousin (a person in the class of mother-in-law to the subject), a relationship that must be traditionally most avoided. Such a marriage was not accepted in traditional life, but cannot be categorically denied in Lajamanu pro tempore as they have informal 'Bush Marriage'. It is reported that some Elders in Yuendumu warn about this subcultural marriage system which has produced parents who are too young (Kearney 2007b). Such an invented tradition of a marriage ignoring Skin system must be strongly criticised from the viewpoint of Milpirri ideology.

To summarise, Aboriginal marriage practices including promised wife and polygyny, which tend to be contradicted by modern lifestyle, have the possibility of being justified by comparison with the archaic meaning of *matsuri*. Let me close this section with the considered opinion of New Age philosopher Robert Lawlor (1991:221) on the balance of the two ethics formulas.

Our society is still attempting to redress the inherent imbalances and distortions in the Western monogamous marital system. Feminists and other advocates for women's rights are bringing about change, but progress is slow. For many women and men, modern

marriage remains a frustrating and unsatisfactory social institution, marred by high divorces rates, bitter child custody battles, infidelity, domestic violence, child abuse, and high rates of impotency and sexual dysfunction—to say nothing of boredom, isolation, and social sterility. Certainly some of the basic concepts underlying Aboriginal marriage, which was able to combine social stability with wide individual flexibility, are worthy of examination as models for transforming our structuring of male-female relationships.

### 5.2.3. Political similarities

The comparison in table 5.5 between Milpirri and *matsuri* is expanded into the resemblance of the two cultures behind the events in political and ritual senses: gerontocracy in Aboriginal Australia and *matsuri-goto*, a term derived from *matsuri* since ancient Japanese government adopted the polity of theocracy by a *matsuri* leader. The meaning of the ‘Crown’ in the Milpirri song will be explained on the basis of these discussions.

**Table 5.5: Political similarities**

|                                            | <i>Matsuri</i>                                                                                                        | Milpirri                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Polity and traditional status of leader(s) | <i>Matsuri-goto</i> , the unity of ritual and state. Emperor: ‘Priest king’ in Theocracy.                             | Elders: running Aboriginal community and rites including Milpirri in Gerontocracy.                                            |
| Current status in constitution             | Emperor: ‘the symbol of the State and of the unity of the People’. Authority but no power in national administration. | n/a                                                                                                                           |
| Eligibility and marriage                   | The Imperial Throne shall be dynastic and succeeded; Polygamy in the past.                                            | Special kinship and marriage system.                                                                                          |
| Education                                  | Royal family members principally at the Peers School in the past.                                                     | Aboriginal children obliged to undergo public schooling (bilingual). Traditional education in Kurdiji and Kajirri University. |
| Financial matters                          | The treasury covers the Imperial Household expenses. Limited in choosing a job.                                       | Unemployment, ‘Sit-Down Money’ and Royalty Money.                                                                             |

For the sake of discussion, I would like to argue that Aboriginal Elders with their role in gerontocracy can be favourably contrasted with the Japanese Emperors, who are said to have continuously been functioning as a ‘Ritual King’ with a special concern for the fertility of five cereals in the land (Mori 2003; Imperial Household Agency n.d.).<sup>75</sup> Historically, the ritual role of an Emperor has been regarded as the most significant one as in the early 13th century Emperor Juntoku wrote in *Kinpishō* that a ritual (to *Kami*) must be regarded as the most important matter and etiquette. The idea is enshrined in the current constitution prescribing the role of the chair performer of *matsuri* inevitable for the Emperor.

Article 7. The Emperor, with the advice and approval of the Cabinet, shall perform the following acts in matters of state on behalf of the people:

- Promulgation of amendments of the constitution, laws, cabinet orders and treaties.
- Convocation of the Diet.
- ...
- Performance of ceremonial functions. (*The Japanese Constitution*)

Although there is a difference between the two countries, Japan and Aboriginal Australia, in the sense of the number of their leaders – one has an emperor and the other plural Elders in rituals, the gerontocracy of Aboriginal Australia also signifies that Elders governed their conventional rituals. Imperial rituals in Japan have been maintained by specific groups of people including

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<sup>75</sup> In the Daijosai (Rite of Offering of New Rice after the Enthronement Ceremony) Rite, ‘His Majesty offers new rice to the ancestors and to the gods of heaven and earth. His Majesty eats to appreciate and pray for public peace and productiveness of grain for the state and the people’ (Imperial Household Agency n.d.).

royal families and musical professionals as well as the Emperor. Though Japanese aristocracy other than royal families was abolished in 1947, court musicians of the Imperial Household Agency since 1955 have been a designated group of Preservers of Important Intangible Cultural Properties, or in short ‘Living National Treasures’, and some of them are members of 1300-year-old Gagaku families. While little attention has been given to whether Aboriginal Elders have unanimously prayed for the continent from ancient times, Jampijinpa, at least, demonstrated the existence of the consensus of the whole Aboriginality by saying: ‘Everyone in their own way in Australia, in this land, has this’ (*Ngurra-kurlu* 2008). This will be further discussed in the final section.

The incongruity here is that while the status of the Emperor has been explained in the current constitution, that of Aboriginal Elders has not in the current political sense. The position of Emperor is defined as the symbol of Japan and of the unity of Japanese people in the Japanese Constitution, and usually Japan is considered as a constitutional monarchy which operates under a constitution first adopted on 1947.

Article 1. The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the People, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power.  
(*The Japanese Constitution*)

On the other hand, in the Commonwealth of Australia, Aboriginal Elders were not even regarded as citizens until after the 1967 referendum, and today they are not regarded as symbols or people with a special status in the state.

Eligibility is another topic which can demonstrate the similar tendencies among the national leaders. In Japan, the rule on the succession to the Imperial Throne is provided as follows:

Article 2. The Imperial Throne shall be dynastic and succeeded to in accordance with the Imperial House Law passed by the Diet. (*The Japanese Constitution*)

In other words, royal families cannot adopt a child from non-royal families. They instead ensured male children by practising concubinage since ancient times. On the point that it was extinct with current – changeable – social mores in Japan, it can be systematically compared with Aboriginal marriage issues as mentioned in the conceptual similarity to *matsuri*.

Indigenous people may not be able to stick to their traditional law for marriage in the *kardiya*'s Law. The preferable couples in authentic Warlpiri tradition has been taught to students through Milpirri with the simplified four colouring system which was been ingrained most successfully in the community since the first stage. It is worth noting that strong disputes over their ideal marriages have occurred not only in relation to Aboriginal people, but also recently in relation to the Imperial Household in Japan due to the succession issue.

Regarding educational factors, both countries again have something in common. Japan has prepared special schooling for royal families, whose members aged from 6 to 20 years were supposed to take common education, principally at the Peers School. Nowadays there are still particular schools to go to under Gakushuin University, and also incipient court musicians in junior-high school start their life dually with general education and professional training for ancestral Gagaku music. Also, the largest interest in Milpirri is special education for their language, arts and the whole culture: bilingual education began in the 1970s throughout the Central and Western Desert around the time when the canvas painting movement began. Milpirri has been concerned with the ideal Warlpiri education besides school attendance. The available evidence seems to suggest that Aboriginal society used to have a higher level of education than the current Lajamanu School offers, if Kajirri ritual is taken as ‘high school’ or ‘university’ often so-called in Aboriginal English (Patrick et al. 2008).

In financial matters, there seem to be almost opposite attitudes toward the leaders. For the privilege, the treasury in Japan covers the Imperial Household expenses, such as the costs of living, necessary and grace maintenance; however, the law strictly controls the donation and assignment of royal assets. Royal family and aristocrat members are requested to behave elegantly. Also, it is prohibited for the family members to get a position in a commercial company. An antithesis between the two countries on this issue is that although First Australians can be regarded as privileged to some extent because they receive Royalty Money from mining, Aboriginal societies are overrun with ‘humbugging’ which is far from graceful. I reported the

experience during fieldwork in Chapter 4, that Milpirri 2009 had rather less participants from the other Warlpiri communities than the Royalty Money meeting did. According to a *kardiya* teacher (Anonymous V 2009, pers. comm., 23 October), camping areas in the Lajamanu Road were full of people and they were abusing each other verbally in the meeting near the school. Furthermore, Aboriginal young people, who are to be Elders in future, are often noted for their high unemployment. The case in Lajamanu is not an exception.

The overwhelming majority (around 95 per cent) of the local Indigenous Warlpiri people were unemployed. In 1982, the school was the largest employer of Warlpiri people, with about ten Indigenous teaching assistants, a home-school liaison officer and several cleaners. In 2005, the rate of Indigenous employment in the school has significantly declined as a result of government cutbacks.

High unemployment in Lajamanu remained relatively unchanged in 2005.

(Collingwood-Whittick ed. 2007:77)

Related to this, we can argue that there is a radical difference in the attitude to work among traditional Japanese and current Aboriginal people in general. A surprising Warlpiri textbook was published in the Yuendumu School: The book called *Kirdana-kurlu* or 'Father' is written in Warlpiri language and used in Warlpiri class in Lajamanu School. Each page has an easy sentence about the daily life of Father with illustrations, and the English translation is as followed.

- My father is staying at home.
- My father is going hunting for kangaroo.

- My father is making a boomerang under the shade.
- My father is sleeping under the shade from the hot heat.
- My father is cooking kangaroo on the fire.
- My father is going to the council office to get money.
- My father is coming from the shop with bread and cool drink. (Nungarrayi-Napanangka & Jampijinpa 2000:11)

It is probably almost impossible for Japanese people to interpret positively what this book would teach children besides Warlpiri grammar. Why is it taken for granted that an Aboriginal father 'is going to the council office to get money'? Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson took 'Sit-Down Money', passive welfare, as 'a poison that has weakened family life in marginalised communities and destroyed the social norms that used to protect the vulnerable' (Devine 2011). This is a tragedy and 'Sit-Down Money' was critiqued in a song by Warumpi Band (1986).

*There's no job for my brother  
 And there's no job for my sister  
 And there's no job for any of us  
 And there's no job for any others  
 I wanna get sitdown money, sitdown money  
 I'm gonna get sitdown money, sitdown money  
 You want sitdown money  
 Apply for sitdown money  
 Sign for sitdown money  
 Wait for sitdown money  
 It's not funny  
 Living on sitdown money*

For an opposite example, old Japanese had a word *yosashi* (or commission, trust), which can be related to the fact that in the past Japanese people used to take farming jobs as ‘commission’ from *kami* or sacred activity under them. This ideology does not match the attitude of either *yapa* or *kardiya* people, who had traditionally taken work as a punishment for sin with the teaching ‘the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it’ (Gen. 2:15). Today probably many Japanese people might not take their job as a ‘commission’ from *kami* or *kardiya* people not take theirs as a punishment from God. However, Douglas MacArthur (cited in Kobori ed. 1995), the effective ruler of occupied Japan after World War II, certainly described the Japanese unique attitude toward work as follows:

Potentially the labor pool in Japan, both in quantity and quality, is as good as anything that I have ever known. Some place down the line they have discovered what you might call the dignity of labor, that men are happier when they are working and constructing than when they are idling.<sup>76</sup>

Thus, it would be appropriate to conclude that the main similarities between Milpirri Elders and *matsuri* Emperor were found in the aspects of leading rituals and community, special marriage system both different from the current *kardiya* society, and the special education for conserving these cultures. The two differences are that Aboriginal Elders do not have a prescribed role like the Japanese Emperor in the constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia

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<sup>76</sup> This is followed by a notable phrase to deny the Japanese war of aggression, ‘They feared that if those supplies were cut off, there would be 10 to 12 million people unoccupied in Japan. Their purpose, therefore, in going to war was largely dictated by security’.

and that even if they received special remuneration from the government, the society is far from graceful, but tends to be plagued by ubiquitous humbugging. Now, in the final part, it will be considered from the viewpoint of the Milpirri concept whether the First Australians would be really content with a situation like Japanese royalty.

#### 5.2.4. Understanding the “Give Me the Crown”

In the comparative study above, the issue under scrutiny is whether Aboriginal people have had the attentiveness to the whole continent just like the Emperor to Japan. As an answer to it, the ambition to the whole state can be witnessed in the *ngurra-kurlu* teaching and the programs in Milpirri. However, this does not mean that *yapa* people would hope that the sovereign state excludes *kardiya* people. Rather, their purpose is to achieve a two-way culture. In order to understand these assertions at the same time, the meaning of ‘Give Me the Crown’ according to Milpirri-*matsuri* hypothesis is that Aboriginal Elders require their position, like the symbolic Emperor, to have authority in the nation but not political power.

The concept of *ngurra-kurlu* launched at the second Milpirri, as shown in Chapter 4, obviously crossed the border of Warlpiri Country (or Warlpiri Convergence), and related to the integration of the whole of Aboriginal Australia. Jampijinpa has attempted to connect the Skin Name system in Warlpiri and that in Yolŋu in table 5.1. In this case, the meaning of *yapa* is not ‘person, people, mankind’ (Reece 1975:140) but all native people with language, ritual and all

culture indigenous to the continent, except for *kardiya* people, as in the explanation ‘[e]veryone in their own way in Australia, in this land, has this’ (Ngurra-kurlu 2008). The same year’s Milpirri program directly dealt with the Coat of Arms to teach school students, and Jampijinpa double-checked with the other Elders that the ideas of Emu and Kangaroo of that and Warlpiri ritual would have many things in common. In national and international conferences he explained the entity of Emu as follows:

The emu represents teacher or teachings (knowledge) in Warlpiri culture. Notice the Southern Cross as the Emu’s star crown on its head, one can wonder if this country called “Australia” is already a crown land long before the England crown came. (Patrick, 2011, pers. comm., 26 March)

Furthermore, there has been research on another side of the connection between the nation of Australia and Indigenous legend. It is shown that they have paid attention to the meaning of Southern Cross for Warlpiri people and other Australian Indigenous peoples as well since the national flag was declared in Australia. In his book *The Australian Flag: Colonial Relic Or Contemporary Icon?* Caro Foley (1996) compared the European and Aboriginal perspectives on the flag as follows:

*The European Perspective*

The Southern Cross was first officially “discovered” and named “Crux Australis” by the French astronomer Augustin Royer in 1679. (Foley 1996:83)

### *The Aboriginal Perspective*

The Southern Cross seems to be the only symbol on the present Australian Flag that has an uncontroversial relevance to the indigenous Aboriginal population of Australia. It has never actually been regarded as a symbol of the Aboriginal people, and it is not the most significant of celestial bodies in Aboriginal legend, but nevertheless, it does form an important part of the rich panoply of legends of many Aboriginal groups. Often, even though the Southern Cross itself only comprises the five stars mentioned above, the “Pointers” are also included together with the Southern Cross in Aboriginal legend. ... For example, the words “Waniki” and “Warlawurru” mean Southern Cross in the Warlpiri language, which is spoken south of Tennant Creek in a band that runs across the centre of the Northern Territory. (ibid.:84)

If we took the meaning of the crown in ‘Give Me the Crown’ as political power, it would mean only a claim for exclusive Aboriginal sovereignty; this is not their hope. Nor did Milpirri expect to persecute *kardiya* including British Australians like the story heard in Gurindji, but they have only warned novices not to be distracted by dangerous Goanna Holes, which some Elders interpret as ‘America’. Rather, Milpirri has aimed two-way education ab initio.

As mentioned in the former section, the Emperor has symbolic position, or authority in the nation but not power. This part was a lack in the status of Aboriginal Elders. Not to mention the authority inside Japan, the English style of address of foreign dignitaries is explained in a Commonwealth realm in the list from the Emperor on the top to the ambassadors on the bottom (Canadian Heritage 2009). However, the governmental power of the Emperor is not admitted in the Japanese constitution.

Article 3. The advice and approval of the Cabinet shall be required for all acts of the Emperor in matters of state, and the Cabinet shall be responsible therefor.

Article 4. The Emperor shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided for in this Constitution and he shall not have powers related to government. (*The Japanese Constitution*)

Accordingly the compatibility between the hope for a united Aboriginality in the continent and biculturalism can be achieved with the interpretation of ‘the Crown’ as symbolic authority. Indeed, some of the Aboriginal performing arts including the playing of didjeridus can be already called ‘symbols’ of Australia as in Chapter 2 I took up those who refer to the didjeridu ‘as a national symbol of generalized Aboriginal culture’ (Dunbar-Hall 1998), ‘the major musical symbol of Aboriginality’ (Neuenfeldt 1997:108) and ‘pan-Aboriginal identity and as an Australian icon’ (Mackinlay 2003). Milpirri is well connected to the restoration of *kurlumpurrngu*, or Warlpiri didjeridu, correlating with Emu Dreaming. The significant difference from *matsuri* consists here in the point that the Australian Constitution has never recognised Aboriginal Elders themselves as the ‘symbolic group’ – or ‘Emu Teachers’ in their expression – of Australia; until then, the Warlpiri would be justified in continuing to sing ‘Give Me the Crown’.

Imagine if the Aboriginal Elders were recognised as the symbolic group in Australia through the hypothesis *Milpirri-matsuri* or ‘Aboriginal aristocracy’.<sup>77</sup> In such a world, both the *kardiya* and *yapa* people would experience several changes in their life style. The Australian government would change the structure of the state to maintain Aboriginal Elders as their national symbolic group, who would advise and approve the cabinet just like the Emperor does in Japan. The applicants to the symbolic group would be obliged to undergo bilingual schooling within higher education institutions *Kurdiji* and *Kajirri* (‘University’), just like the Japanese royal family and aristocrats in the past went to the Peers School. The government would have to admit the Aboriginal traditional marriage system for them which does not necessarily accord with the current Western monogamous system. The national treasury would cover the expenses of the symbolic Aboriginal Elders instead of ‘Sit-Down Money’ and Royalty Money, so they would be expected to behave elegantly by stopping humbugging each other. At the same time, the Elders and their applicants would have to be relieved of the rights of choosing a job and the right to vote in order to follow the ideal Aboriginal gerontocracy similar to the traditional Imperial system in which the symbolic individual(s) have had authority but not the power of administrating politics.

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<sup>77</sup> Related to the terminology, Claude Levi-Strauss called the Australian Aborigines ‘intellectual aristocrats’, based on outstanding features of traditional Aboriginal Society such as sophisticated religion, art, social organisation, an egalitarian system of justice and decision making, complex, far-reaching trade networks, and the demonstrated ability to adapt to, and survive in, some of the world’s harshest environments (Flood 2004).

In Australia, since First Australians were finally accorded citizenship, there has been no discussion whether to strip them of the franchise. Milpirri, from the beginning, has had no intention of claiming the Crown as governmental power. They do not mention anything about the right to vote; however, they have emphasised the importance of rituals and education, and have had the hope that Australian people – both *kardiya* and *yapa* – equally be students learning from the Emu in the Sky. Consequently, the song ‘Give Me the Crown’ used in Milpirri 2009 and 2012 can be interpreted as a claim not for governmental power, but for the authority which is essentially identical to that of the Imperial House in Japan.



## Chapter 6. Conclusion

What impressed me most in Lajamanu – where the Milpirri event was born – since I first visited there with Stephen Wild in October 2008 was the cluttered townscape. It consisted of undisciplined classes of schoolchildren who played important role at Milpirri; the rehearsals of traditional dances for Milpirri which lacked young people being absorbed in footy and some in alcohol; humbugging for money and cigarette by several Elders; actual rating by schoolteachers for the event lower than the reports of the other audience in the official website of the event manager Tracks Dance company; the venue for the event or the whole town with rubbish and half-ownerless dogs; and deep-rooted racism. The Milpirri event surprised me with its ambitious idea rather than practical small-scale success known through the ethnomusicological research. The surprising idea could not be revealed if Milpirri was interpreted only as a secondary Aboriginal reconciliation event after Garma Festival in Arnhem Land. Among the various possible interpretations of Milpirri, exploration with a comparison of it with *matsuri* in Japan, and furthermore the ideal society of Milpirri with modern Imperial Japan based on *matsuri-goto* theocracy enabled me to explain the claim against modern Australian society from Warnayaka Warlpiri Elders through a Warlpiri contemporary song ‘Give Me the Crown’ sung in Milpirri. The numerous issues not only in the community but also in the whole of Australia could be solved with the hidden hint implicated in Milpirri. A basic assumption of this dissertation was that Milpirri was sufficiently significant for musical-anthropological research. Now, it is no

exaggeration to say that the study of the theory of Milpirri is almost inevitable in order to untangle Aboriginal, multi-cultural and racial issues in Australia's future.

From the viewpoint of ethnomusicological research it is noted that Steve Jampijinpa attempted to maintain and restore endangered tradition in the Warlpiri community. What actual fieldwork in Lajamanu between Milpirri events indicate was the fact that several important ancestral rituals including Jardiwarnpa and Kurdiiji were only partly performed in Milpirri. The success of Milpirri especially was the method of using a four-coloured system to teach schoolchildren their own Skin kinship names and traditionally-right marital partners appropriate to those names: the Milpirri colour code was even used in the situation unrelated to Milpirri, such as in an ordinary conversation among children, and at a school assembly. The *kurlumpurrngu* was a restored instrument which had a strong connection to the idea of the event but was forgotten for 70 years in the community. Thus, Milpirri attracted attention to some extent in Australia as a whole.

However, success with the colouring code only is far from a triumph. The low school attendance remained unchanged and hip hop did not take root in the children as voluntarily performed musical culture, while only a Warlpiri man became a dancer in Tracks. The children's favourite rock music is performed at another event and their ancestral Purlapa Yawulyu dance is also performed at another event. This is a complete contrast to Garma Festival where Yolngu children entertained with their traditional dance and Aboriginal rock night

concerts. Further, this event over a period of days would amuse international participants with beautiful festival sites, camp facilities and catering, and multiple outback events besides music.

The intrinsic merit of Milpirri would not be appreciated by comparison only with Garma Festival. I tried the comparison with *matsuri*, and it did in fact bring several interesting results. In the first place, I was informed that the Warlpiri believed that the Kurdiji novices must watch out for Goana Holes in the Milky Way – which can be interpreted by some Elders as ‘America’ – and walk to the north – or ‘Asia’. This reversed the story which Minoru Hokari heard from a Gurindji Elder that JF Kennedy helped Gurindji Aboriginal people, which of course did not occur in true history. Such a desperate relationship between Aboriginal people and European Australian people even requiring American assistance contradicts the concept of Milpirri, the merger of ‘the hot and cold air’. Supported by Jampijinpa having heard a prophecy from a Nakamarra in the past that a Jungarrayi would come from Asia to recover a Purlapa, I made the comparative study of Milpirri and *matsuri* in Japan. It was easy to find the superficial similarities, such as the role of fire in Jardiwarnpa and *Hi Matsuri*, and the historical form as a secondary modern event of Milpirri and Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri. Indeed, someone in the past compared between *witi* poles used in a Warlpiri ritual and sakaki branch in a Shinto matsuri, and between Warlpiri Yilpinji love magic and Japanese ancient Yobai sexual custom related to *matsuri*.

Regarding the ideal of Milpirri teaching, not every Aboriginal person is eligible for being nominated as an Elder. Milpirri remonstrates against *yapa* people who do not take proper

education – bilingual schooling and Kurdiji initiation or ‘university’, and do not choose a ‘right’ Skin wife. Considering the meaning of the Milpirri song ‘Give Me the Crown’, clearly, the Crown doesnot refer to political power changing the country. The Crown signifies the Crown (the Southern Cross) of the flying Emu in the sky (the Milky Way), and according to Aboriginal belief Emu must play the role of a teacher to teach student Quolls (Jangala & Jampijinpa 2011, pers. comm., 22 October. See Chapter 3.). Having this symbolic authority, the ideal Aboriginal society where Elders govern rituals resembles the modern Imperial Japan where the Emperor is still a ‘ritual king’ of *matsuri-goto*, and the symbol of the nation. It is not until Milpirri and *matsuri* are paralleled that the *ngurra-kurlu* ideal of the Crown is realised.

I will not discuss here how symbolic Aboriginal gerontocracy compared with symbolic Imperial Japan would practically be implemented, as it would involve the fields of political science, history and philosophy. However, this thesis will at least mention a home truth: that mainstream Australia may not tolerate Aboriginal people claiming both payouts and sovereign power, be about to demolish the tradition maintained only by special events like Milpirri, or continue ignoring them with a word ‘sorry’. These sorts of Aboriginal events can often ask *kardiya* people or government to change. However, in the ideal society of Milpirri-*matsuri* theory, Aboriginal Elders can obtain national authority, but in return must forfeit political power. Those who receive special expenditure would have to stop begging money from others and prepare for *noblesse oblige*. Milpirri can be involved not only with traditional and contemporary music but also with such important messages to *kardiya* and *yapa* people.

I will briefly review each chapter in terms of its methodology and evaluate the musical, ritual and political event launched in Lajamanu in 2005. Chapter 1 was the introduction to and background of the thesis. The issues introduced were defined as the absence of in-depth ethnomusicological approach to the Milpirri event in the past and the possibility of a concealed unique interpretation of the Warlpiri Dreaming in relation to the Australian regime. The chapter established a basic framework of the chapters that followed.

The purpose of Chapter 2 is to examine research on the people, society, music and rituals involved in Milpirri. The first part on the variety of the terminology describing Indigenous people in Australia considered the words *yapa* and *kardiya* and outlined the position of the author among the community of Lajamanu – *yellafella* and *Jungarrayi* – in relation to the lofty ideals of the event. The literature on Warlpiri rituals categorised traditional Jardiwarnpa, Kurdiji, Purlapa and so on as composing the vital part of Milpirri. *Jukurrpa* was used as a filter to extract the authenticity from so-called ‘traditional music’ in Warlpiri culture and its translation was found to condition whether or not the Milpirri event can be called a ‘purlapa’. In other words, ‘traditional’ Aboriginal music cannot be measured only by the length of its history, but rather by whether it has a tradition of ‘recreating the *jukurrpa*’ (Wild 1987b). While Warlpiri Gospel and country music are no longer considered ‘contemporary’ by the people of the Tanami Desert, Aboriginal rock music is spread enough even in ‘foreign’ central Australia for several scholars to note that the *yidaki*-type didjeridu can be thought to function as a supreme symbol of Aboriginality throughout the continent. Research on didjeridus in central

Australia had not shed light on the rare instrument of Warnayaka Warlpiri, whose ceremonial song referenced Emu Dreaming and strengthened the fading light of culture, just like the role of Milpirri. By reviewing the literature of other scholars who wrote about the history of Lajamanu, including Kajirri, Jesus Purlapa, New Business and Lajamanu Sports Weekend, clear differences can be seen in Milpirri in terms of music and educational functions for children and Elders.

Chapter 3 reported the findings of my fieldwork on the continuation of ancestral and modernised rituals directly and indirectly influencing the contemporary event of Milpirri. The Jardiwarnpa ceremony, which was chosen as the main theme of Milpirri, was found not to be performed lately as an authentic rendition of the original ceremony while male Elders were apt to perform their songs without the use of a camp fire as in a solemn ceremony, but with the mixed motives of entertainment, desire for personal honour and tips, and the crisis management of the oral tradition. My appearance as a Jardiwarnpa singer with Elders on some occasions was tentatively approved by receiving a pair of boomerangs, interpreted as a ‘token of respect’, and influenced my presentations with Jampijinpa outside of the community. The Kurdiji initiation ceremony was also not performed for several years except within the Milpirri program, but I was able to participate in the shorter version, Waruwarta, with roots different from the original initiation ceremony. As the attitude of some *kardiya* researchers to the secret-sacred ceremonies in the past has been criticised as against Indigenous law, I have reported, out of respect for the beliefs of my subsection ‘families’ and ‘relatives’, only open information about the initiation

ceremony, including the significant message that ‘mothers’ would give to their ‘sons’. The friendship I established with local Elders might have substantially contributed to the restoration project of the *kurlumpurrngu*, a rare musical instrument, along with my knowledge of making traditional instruments in Japan. Thus the ceremonies including Jardiwarnpa or Fire Ceremony coupled with the universal Emu Dreaming, Waruwarta with initiated boys striding over the fire, and Jalurinjirri Purlapa with the *kurlumpurrngu* its Emu voice were later found to be compatible with Japanese *matsuri*. The trial creation of the Maths Purlapa was one of the reasons that Jampijinpa was interested in the *Yellafella* Business to contribute to the education program in Lajamanu School as well as Milpirri. The congenial atmosphere of children favouring contemporary music and disco and of adults acquainted with the other Indigenous rock and Reggae music and even some technique of Top End didjeridu/*yidaki* seemed to have accelerated the advent of Milpirri in 2005. Through the survey of the literature, it was discovered that the creation of Milpirri had an intimate connection with the Tracks Dance Company, which taught children hip hop. Prior to the initiation of Milpirri, Tracks had a history of involvement with the Lajamanu community, especially with female Yawulyu performers.

Chapter 4 predominantly concentrated on the scrutiny of Milpirri from the viewpoints of its music, dance, and rituals seen in the programs arranged by Jampijinpa and Tracks. As a bilingual teacher and one of the important traditional performers, Jampijinpa charged Milpirri with the hope of an increase in school attendance and the revival of ancestral rituals. A big achievement in the first Milpirri in 2005 was to reinstate the main part and concept of

Jardiwarnpa ceremony. The themes of ‘Atonement and Reconciliation’ of the event were not necessarily a Christian idea, but can be seen in past interpretations of the ancestral Jardiwarnpa. Existing research on *ngurra-kurlu* with its Sourthern Cross Dreaming led to a deeper consideration in Milpirri 2007 of a desire for the bond of the state and Aboriginality throughout the continent. Better known and with participants from other Warlpiri communities, the program of Milpirri 2007 incorporated a part of the ancestral Kurdiji ceremony which had not been held in recent years. It also featured a Coat of Arms display by children in order to demonstrate the coincidence of representative animals on both shields of the Commonwealth and those used in the Warlpiri Kurdiji ceremony. The method of participant-observation as a dancer with other Skin brothers and fathers in Milpirri 2009 might have made the report a unique, but at the same time, a one-sided report in comparison with the commercial Milpirri DVDs, which give a full picture of the stage. However, my fieldwork notes recorded that Milpirri Week, or the considerable duration of rehearsals especially for adults at sunset, entertained most of the visitors who aimed to stay longer or were forced to do so due to limited public transportation out of the township. The report of other trips to Lajamanu in 2011 and 2012 provided further development of the other performances, rehearsals and musical activities during the fieldwork.

Chapter 5 demonstrated the methodology of analysing Milpirri as a comparison with or categorisation as a *matsuri*. The attempt of the first part was to justify the parallel of the two distantly separated events from Australia and Japan. The fact that there were criticisms of the

festival from local teachers, which differs from the reaction in the official website, could result in confusion about whether to regard Milpirri as a ‘revitalization movement’ or a ‘festival’.

Although it has a clear function as a revitaliser in culture and education of the community, most of the aspects of Milpirri were less successful than those of the prior Garma Festival, including camping facilities, the Bush Walking program, environment of the festival site, and accessibility to the remote community.<sup>78</sup> Although there were many things in common between the two festivals, enough to assume the metaphor ‘hot air and cold air’ originated in ‘salt water and fresh water’, the parallel with the concept of an Aboriginal festival did not seem to clarify the profound understanding of the essence of Milpirri. One of the most noticeable differences seen in the comparison with Garma is that Milpirri children do not dance with adults, unlike Garma children. Although Jampijinpa was concerned about the impending extinction of their culture, it was characteristic of Milpirri that students were not made to dance historic Purlapa or Yawulyu but rather to entertain them with hip hop dance and to entrust the job to Tracks. This cannot totally be explained in the literature, where there is enough evidence to prove the participation of uninitiated boys in certain situations of Purlapa before Milpirri occurred. While various aspects of comparative studies are considered complex and difficult, one of the prominent supporters of the analysis of Aboriginal Milpirri as a comparison with the *Yellafella* Business

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<sup>78</sup> Although the accessibility to Garma Festival is even better than that to Milpirri, Yolŋu people are still considered to have far less choice in their bi-culturalism than their non-Indigenous counterparts. According to Corn (2005:23) ‘For Yolŋu, bi-culturalism provides necessary skills for accessing public services, for engaging in commercial transactions and for taking advantage of contemporary technologies’.

*matsuri* was given by the Milpirri creator Jampijinpa himself. While there is a great difference in the ideological existence of *terra nullius* between the governmental provisions for Australian Aboriginal people and Ainu people, little research has been done for the cultural and musical comparison of Indigenous Australian people and the Japanese mainstream.

The parallel of the two phenomena of Milpirri and *matsuri* was presented in the latter part of the chapter with three aspects: the ideal of the performance of Milpirri had certain similarities in surficial and mental aspects with the terminology of *matsuri*, and also with the connection to the polity with *matsuri-goto*. The appearances of Milpirri identical to traditional *matsuri* include the use of fire in the night environment, and even stronger similarities were seen with modern *matsuri* in the latter's commercially successful dance competition, Yosakoi-Sōran Matsuri, which can provide resemblances in the history of its creation and in the functions of a community revitaliser with the fusion of hip hop music and traditional instruments, education in the tricky high school environment and even in lessons for the future of Milpirri. In the mental and spiritual cases, several references pointed out the similarities between Warlpiri tradition and ancient Japan with the usage of sacred wood in animism, and love songs to accomplish marriage, which is different from customs in Western society. Thus, Milpirri focused on the education of the traditional marriage system through simplified patrilineal colour codes. In the third main section of the chapter, this thesis discovered a sense of the 'Crown' in the Milpirri original song 'Give Me the Crown' with the hypothesis of *matsuri-goto*, a political and ritual idea behind both events. Gerontocracy in Milpirri can

parallel the theocracy of the Emperor in *matsuri* in ancient Japan while critical distinctions exist between their current statuses prescribed or not prescribed in each constitution. Leaders of both Aboriginal Australia and Imperial Japan had special marriage, education and financial supports different from other people, even though what Aboriginal Elders allowed or received from the government might have been much more imperfect: Japanese historical Imperial marriage compared with Australian Aboriginal institution of marriage; Peers School compared with Aboriginal bilingual schooling and initiation ceremonies; and Imperial expenses compared with Royalty Money. The claim of the 'Crown' is not to be interpreted optimistically as the restoration of Aboriginal sovereignty over the continent: Milpirri seeks the two-way cultural sharing of *yapa* and *kardiya* people. If the Aboriginal Elders' roles in Milpirri were compared with the Imperial roles in *matsuri* Japan, the metaphor of Emu crest 'Crown' would be understood as a status similar to the symbolic authority without governmental power of the Japanese Imperial Household. The feasibility of the constitutional shift toward Milpirri cosmology might be considered in political science in conjunction with ethnomusicological analysis in terms of contributing to educate and mature the Commonwealth of Australia from Aboriginal discipline as seen in *ngurra-kurlu*. In such future research, this phenomenon might be unanimously called 'Milpirri Movement.'



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