NOTICE OF ORDINARY MEETING

The next meeting of the Society will be held in the Museum Education Building, North Terrace, Adelaide at -

8.00 p.m. on Monday 25 August, 1975

AGENDA

1. Apologies

2. Confirmation of minutes of meeting held Monday 28 July, 1975. (Copies of these minutes are attached)

3. Papers and Journals

The following papers and journals will be tabled at the meeting.

Anthropological News - W.A. Vol. 12 No. 6
Royal Society of S.A. Inc.
Invitation re Science and Prehistory - Paris September, 1976
1973 Report - Wenner-Gren Foundation

4. New Members

Mr. Peter John Reeds, 41 Fletcher Road, Elizabeth East

5. Business

6. Speaker for August Meeting.

DR. M. NAKAMURA, Adelaide University, will give an address to the Society, entitled

'THE DEVELOPMENT OF REFORMIST MUSLIM MOVEMENT IN CENTRAL JAVA'

7. September Meeting.

The September meeting will be held Monday 22 September, 1975

VERN TOLCHER
Honorary Secretary,
213 Greenhill Road,
EASTWOOD S.A. 5063
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING
MONDAY 28 JULY, 1975

Held in the Museum Education Building, North Terrace, Adelaide at 8.00 p.m.

The President, Mr. G.L. Pretty, was in the chair, with 34 members and visitors present.

1. Apologies.
Apologies were received from Mr. & Mrs. R.D.J. Weathersbee.

2. Minutes
Minutes of the meeting held Monday 23 June, 1975 having been circulated with the Journal were taken as read and confirmed.

3. New Members.
No new members were announced.

4. Papers and Journals.
Papers and Journals from other Societies were tabled.

5. Speaker.
MR. R. ELLIS, Curator of Relics, S.A. Museum, gave an address to the Society entitled.

'FUNERAL PRACTICES AND BELIEFS AMONG THE ADNJAMATHANHA, FLINDERS RANGES, S.A.'

A precis of this address is attached.

DATE..................................................CHAIRMAN........................................
THE FUNERAL PRACTICES AND BELIEFS OF THE ADNJAMATHANHA

R. ELLIS

The present day Aboriginal inhabitants of the Flinders Ranges call themselves ADNJAMATHANHA; literally, the "hills people" (Adnja - "stone, hill"; matha - "mob"; and nha - suffix).

They are in fact the descendants of a number of formerly distinct groups - WAILPI, YADLIAURA, KUARNI, and to a lesser extent PIIADAPPA and BANGKALA.

All these groups shared a common social organisation and, with slight variation, mythology and belief system.

The claims to the independent existence of a group around which the others coalesced is open to question - Tindale considers them to be synonymous with WAILPI. The Adnjamathanka language does, however, differ to a considerable degree from all the others and a DIERI term "Mrdula" or "Mrddla", (meaning 'hills people') is met with quite early in the literature. (Howitt A., "Native Tribes of S. E. Australia") with particular reference to the group near Mount Searle.

The evidence however, suggests very close similarities in their mode of disposing of the dead and their beliefs with regard to death.

The group was divided into two names, exogamous, matrilinial moieties - ARARU and MATHARI. Preferred marriage was with actual cross cousins although several unusual alternative marriages were permitted.

While both moieties were naturally concerned with the death of any member of their society, where everybody was known and related in some way, responsibility for the proper care and disposal of the body fell upon members of the dead person's moiety.

When a death occurred, the camp was abandoned and the person's name no longer spoken. As we will see later, this prohibition is more important to opposite moiety members than own moiety members.

At the place where the death had occurred, wingwata, a small elongated mound of earth was raised, upon which was laid a stick with a stone placed at either end, a reproduction in miniature of the appearance of an actual grave. The place was thenceforth avoided by all. The old camp, now called ungual was similarly avoided after the body had been prepared and removed for burial.

Older women moiety members mourned a death with a constant wailing known as wunungowa, a formal mixture of singing and crying now no longer known to the group, the last woman knowing how "to sing wunungowa" having died some years ago. According to informants, "sorry cuts" or mutilation was not practised.

Preparation of the body for burial was undertaken by members of the dead person's own moiety who had been sent for by those present in the camp, to supervise burial and attendant rites. The body was prepared in the dead man's wildja. The legs were tied together at the toes with the body full extended. The arms, stretched out on top of the body - (occasionally beneath) - were also tied together, usually at the thumbs. Finally the body, after being given a "drink"
of water - "to stop the country drying" - was wrapped in a blanket, (in former years, probably a wallaby skin rug,) which was finally bound around once again with fur or hair string.

The grave, walkiri, was dug some distance from the new camp, out of sight of opposite moiety members, again by members of the dead person's moiety. If however, sufficient of the dead person's moiety were not available, they could call upon members of the opposite moiety to assist. In such a situation they were expected to repay the assistance, usually with food, although in one case recorded, this debt was paid with a wife for the man concerned.

The grave was normally dug only three or four feet deep, although Helms (1895, pp 279 - 280), records that in soft soil it may be deeper than six feet. A crescent shaped structure called ngalda wala, a mound of earth, stones and sticks, was constructed at the head of the grave.

With some exceptions, only members of the same moiety might visit the grave. Opposite moiety were not permitted to watch where the body was taken, nor the return of the mourners, nor were they permitted to discuss or mention the death or funeral rites.

In recent years, after the establishment of a ration station at Mount Serle Station, the Adnjamathanha lived a fairly settled existence in the vicinity of the station. As a result, a number of burials were conducted in the surrounding area. In this situation, graves of the two moieties were carefully separated so that surrounding Mt. Serle are a number of burial sites, each carefully situated so that Araru graves are together and separate from Matheri.

If a Mathari man had died, his moiety members would cover the face and hair of Araru moiety members with white lime.

The widow, or widows, wadinja, would have lime applied to the whole body. Similarly if it were a Matheri woman who had died, all the Araru moiety would have lime pastered over their faces and hair except the widower, ngambina, who was completely covered with the lime. Mourners of own moiety covered their faces with black - probably carbon or manganese.

According to informants, Araru moiety members "carry lime for Matheri's" for about a fortnight. At the end of this time the widows (or widower) would be conducted to the grave by Mathari moiety members who removed the lime worn by them, (or him). The other Araru moiety members were taken to the previous camp (where the death had occurred) and their lime forcibly removed, despite their protestations, by Mathari moiety members. Before this time mourners were not permitted to speak above a whisper.

If a Mathari man dies, all the members of his moiety may attend the grave, together with his napala, yapapa, (male and female) and male ubmaili's of opposite moiety. It also appears that actual vapi, "father", may attend; the effect of this rite is to exclude "wives", children, in the case of a man, father's sister and mother-in-law.

The widow (s) is, however, taken to the grave on the first day. She attempts to jump into the grave with her husband's body but is gently removed and taken to members of her own moiety who are charged with her welfare.
If it were a Mathari woman who had died, all own moiety members and napalas, male and female, from opposite moiety could attend. In this case, unlike that of a man, yackala, "own children" may attend, but vaninji, "brother's children" male or female, may not.

It is difficult to obtain agreement from informants regarding the alignment of the actual grave. According to May Wilton, the body is buried with its head toward the (red) sunset. A male informant, however, has suggested that the head should point towards Gill's Bluff (the metamorphosed dead body of vida miirma, a mythological hero who introduced the secret wiljaru ceremony), approximately due north of Mount Serle.

Others have suggested it should be orientated to the south, equating the "red water" of the spirit world with the sea in Spencer Gulf.

The two graves recorded by Basedow (1913) were dug so that the long axis of the grave ran north-south, with the head at the southern end and the face turned towards the west.

Cleland (unpublished MS note) records an exhumed burial at Blinman of "Warioota Bob", where the head was to the south with the face towards the east. The affiliation of members to "south (west) wind" (vupa), and "north (east) wind" (vukara) within the totemic system may account for this, but the variation in explanations given by informants suggests there is no systematic pattern for grave alignment.

The body, fully extended and wrapped in a blanket, is placed on its back or side, upon three parallel branches about 3" thick, laid on the bottom of the grave. The grave is kept open for approximately one week, the body covered only with boughs of verti walka (EREMOPHILLA sp.) during which time the area around it is carefully examined and swept, and the grave visited every morning and afternoon. Finally the body is covered with a network of sticks and boughs with stones placed on top. After about two or three months the whole structure is eventually covered with soil.

When visiting the grave, moiety members must walk quietly until almost upon it, at which point a shout is raised and two "old ladies" sing wunungowa in order to frighten away the new spirit which may be lurking near the grave. Similarly, when returning the mourners are preceded by the two old women singing wunungowa.

According to M. Waterhouse (unpublished MS notes), the path from the grave to the camp followed a zig-zag pattern in order to stop the spirit following. According to my informant, May Wilton, however, the spirit was discouraged from following by lighting "smokes" (i.e. firing bushes), along the track and maintaining fires in the camp. It was generally believed that iri juras, "spirits of the dead", disliked smoke.

INQUEST

As in most Australian societies, death was often considered the direct result of ill-disposed human agents - particularly by "boning".

Amongst the Adnjamathana, the person responsible for the death is discovered by placing a small twig of verti walka (EREMOPHILLA sp) upon the body. The mourners
then sing the body, asking it who was responsible for its death. (None of my informants could remember the song used.)

When the right name is spoken, the twig vibrates, indicating the identity of the murderer. If the murderer is a member of the opposite moiety, the members of the dead person's moiety are obliged to "chase kapara" or "pay-back". In earlier days, a pinja (revenge party) would be assembled to murder the identified killer or a near relative.

Should this method of inquest prove unsatisfactory, further investigation of the blanket in which the body is wrapped may apparently indicate the source of the boning. A search is made for a hole in the blanket near the head or side which would indicate the direction from which the dead man was "shot" by the bone.

This method of inquiry, which appears to be post-European, is predicated upon the general belief that the "bone" actually physically enters the body, and consequentley may be "removed" by a wungu or "doctor" with sufficient powers. An alternative method of enquiry known to the Adnjamathanha and also described by Gason (1874) for the Dieri was practised. This involved three men kneeling with the body placed on their shoulders. Another man stood near the corpse striking two sticks together (unjja-unjja) calling the names of the suspected killers in a stylised formula of chanting. When a close relative of the murderer is mentioned the body becomes light. When the murderer's name is called the body springs from the backs of the kneeling men.

If members of the dead person's moiety were absent from the camp at the time of the death they are challenged by members of their own moiety upon their return. They must stand a short distance from the challengers and fend off yam sticks, mungu weri, thrown at them by their own moiety members.

A form of formal "blood letting" was also practised. Two men or women faced each other and alternately delivered blows to each other's head with boomerang or yam sticks.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE SPIRIT

According to traditional belief, all living creatures have a wangapi, or spirit essence. This wangapi may leave a person's body on occasions, usually during sickness, particularly in children, in which case the wangapi may have been stolen by a wungu, a "doctor" or 'wildu-wungi' assuming for form of an eagle. In the case of a wungu, his wangapi may leave his body during a trance, at which time it is deliberately released in order to capture or recover a stolen wangapi to cure illness, or to travel in other than human form. After death this wangapi departs from the body which it no longer inhabits.

The grave is regularly visited every morning and afternoon by members of the dead person's moiety who, for several days after the body is placed in the ground, search for a small hole in the cleared area at the top of the grave. This small depression, often with a small twig of vertiwalka extending from it, is supposedly left when the spirit leaves the body and travels to a place called vukarutina "narrow gap".

About three days after the spirit has left the body the mourners expect to see a light fog or cloud travelling from the south-west. This fog or cloud is said to
be the spirit, in the company of others, returning to his country after cleansing.

According to informants, when the spirit leaves the body, it rolls along like a bush, ilka. When the spirit comes to yukarutina, the "narrow gap", two of its namis, "mothers", are waiting at the narrow gap for it. They catch the spirit as it rolls through the gap and "give him a good hiding", slapping it with their hands, and covering it with fat and red ochre. It then travels under a "red sea" until it is washed clean.

After the cleansing, it returns to its country as an iri-jura continuing to wander through it, using the same paths or "pads" as its human companions. As an iri-jura it is invisible to all but the wugis, to whom it appears as a shadow.

Iri-juras travel together in red dust storms but also travel alone, on pads in the early evening. Usually they are not actively malevolent, but if children play in the open during dust storms, or are carried high on the shoulder in the late evening when travelling along a path, they become ill, as a result of contact with iri-juras moving in the wind or on the path.

Since the iri-juras dislike smoke, fires are usually made at the entrance to the wildja, "Wurley", during a dust storm, and the children confined inside to prevent illness caused by iri-juras. Wugis or wiljaru, "fully initiated men", may be called upon to divert a dust-storm should one approach.

Mountford (1936 unpublished journal pp 49-55) records variations of the stories concerning the spirit leaving the body. According to his informants, when a person dies, a spirit, called Minda-a-padind (probably the Minda:parina-"spirit boss") who is also nunga "(older brother)", (the first man to die), takes the wangipi away to kinjira. Here it is "smoked over a big fire to remove all earthy smells" (in one version), given a drink of salt water, so that he will not desire to drink any more, dipped in "red water" which will transform him into a good, kindly man who has lost all memory of earthy enmities and bad thoughts and habits. From this point he is no longer a wangipi, but a "jiri jura."

The cause of human mortality, is the subject of one of the myths collected from informant May Wilton. The English version is transcribed from a tape collected November 7, 1971.

That time, they had a little beetle, not a beetle, they was a bit bigger than a beetle, (a cricket?) and he was a man. One person died, the other people was talking about keeping him for three days. He would come alive again then. So, when they did have him three days they went and asked this thing then. What we call him Artu buruburu. He was the king, the boss over everybody. When they did ask him, "What we going to do with the body?" He said, "No, put him in the grave and let him lay in the grave until he come ashes." He wouldn't allow them to make him come alive again. They took his word. Arumbara, (spider) was alright He was right. He was fighting for this dead body. But this Artuburuburu wouldn't wanted him dead till he go to ashes. Artuburuburu means lives in the walkiri (grave). That's what they don't want to put him the grave. When we see him we knock them on the head.Don't like them. Kapara (pay-back). If he said "yes", we'll keep him for three days," he'd come alive then. Nobody would die.
"Artuburuburu means lives in the grave" probably refers to an association of the natural habitat of the insect, dead branches, with the branches placed upon the grave. Mountford has collected a slightly different variation of the same story.

"One day, when a blackfellow died, all the spiders and beetles were puzzled as to what they should do. The insects were for leaving him along with the exception of the spider who contended that the body should be buried for three days in fact, the spider decided on his own initiative that was the course of action.

The cricket, who had been absent, returned to camp after the discussion and decided that the body should lay in the ground until it had disintegrated (turned to ashes). The cricket said that the spirit (wangipi) leaves the body over the red water (to the south) but the other spirits bring him back to his own grave. The spirits later on left the grave for good and travelled east. The old people believed that the wungi could tend spirits who lived on the other side of the red water.

The spider, which was at Mt. Serle was called Arumbaribura and the cricket Ataburubura".

Another story collected by Mountford from a Vangala (Parnkalla) informant concerns the story of the first burial at Yadlamulka.

"In the beginning of the world, the first bird died, and all the rest were puzzled as what beast to do. It was decided to bury him, by some: others said "ask his uncle, the magpie".

The uncle agreed to the burial and carried the dead body so long that the fat from the decaying body ran all over the magpie - thus his present markings.

The magpie decided to bury his relative for two days so that he could come to life again, but the others disagreed and insisted that he should be buried deeply, so that he could not come to life and his body and bones turn to dust. The wife of the first man that died is a curiously shaped hill, ten miles from Yadlamulka Station, not far from the road."

**BONING**

According to Adnjamathana tradition, "boning" or "pointing the bone" was introduced by indi:indi:iri, the willy wag-tail. Willy wag-tail, according to the fragments collected, boned wild turkey, walha, in the penis, at a place called Tjinda tjindina, bank, near Tjinabutana on Yandama Creek, Moolawatana Station. Wild turkey travelled from this place to a spot north of the ranges, where he died and turned into the large tent hill now known as Smart's Bluff.

Knowledge of boning is restricted to wiljaru (fully initiated men) and no longer practised. In order to bone somebody it is necessary to sing the bone, muku, (which is always a human bone to ensure that it "behaves itself"), and the name of the person for whom it is intended. To ensure that the bone "works" one must "get Willy Wagtail behind (i.e. supporting) him", and blood from the scrotum must be sprinkled on it.

The association of Willy Wagtail with "boning" and death occasionally results in
him being called the "grave bird". A white line over his eye is said to represent the ngalda wala, of the grave. It is he, it is said, who "shows you where to dig the grave". If a young girl or boy killed one throwing stones, it was the practice that a "grave mark" be cut upon the boy's upper arm or the girl's breast. This cicatrice consists of a single or double vertical cut with a semi-circular scar above it, representing the grave and the ngalda wala "mound stones and branches", erected at its head.

Besides actually "pointing" a bone at an intended victim, it is also possible to kill somebody with powdered human bones, vnjurvu vulpa, literally "powdered ashes", placed "in a person's tea" (sic!).

The cylon is known to the group as andanka-wirri and is also associated with ritual killing. It is claimed that if it is placed in the corpse-usually the chest or stomach for about three weeks, at the end of this time it is removed, wrapped, and hung in the branches of a tree on the leeward side of the camp. When it has "got used to your smell" it is then hung near the camp of the intended victim who is eventually killed as a result of its exposure nearby.

The fact that human remains were occasionally disturbed and mutilated in order to obtain bone for ritual killing, appears to have led at least one commentator (Basedow H. 1913) to attributing this to ritual cannibalism after he had exhumed several graves in the northern Flinders Ranges.

According to informants, the bones most often removed for "boning" were the radius and ulna from the fore-arm, the femur from the upper leg and the tibia and fibula of the lower leg. The fibula, iniburra, was particularly desirable for this purpose. In this respect it is interesting to note that the mutilation described by Basedow was almost completely restricted to these bones. The mutilation of the body of the woman exhumed at Mundy Creek was largely restricted to the lower body, particularly the femur and long bones of the leg, and the bones of the right fore-arm, all of which have been broken with a heavy instrument, thought to be a ground-edge axe.

It is unlikely, therefore, that the mutilation of the corpse described by Basedow is, as he suggests, an instance of ritual cannibalism, the purpose of the splitting of the bones, according to his hypothesis, being to remove the marrow. Rather it would appear to be archaeological confirmation of the practice, described by living informants, of the removal of human bone, for the purpose of "boning" a victim.

There is, however, ethnographic evidence of ritual cannibalism amongst the Dieri, "the northern neighbours of the Adnjamathanha) recorded by Gason (1874, "The Dieyari Tribe).

Questioning of Adnjamathanha informants has confirmed knowledge of this, although it is claimed that they do not know of it ever having been practised by Adjamanthanha.

According to Gason (p22)

"the body is removed from the heads of the bearers, and lowered into the grave into which a native (not related to the deceased) steps, and proceeds to cut off all the fat adhering to the muscles of the face, thighs, arms and stomach
and passes it around to be swallowed. The reason assigned to this horrible practice being that thus the nearest relatives may forget the departed and not be continually crying.

The order in which they partake of their dead relatives is this -

The mother eats of her children
The children eat of their mother
Brother-in-law and sister-in-law eat of each other
Uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, grandfathers, and grandmothers eat of each other.
But the father does not eat of his offspring, or the off spring of the sire.

After eating the dead the men paint themselves with charcoal and fat, making a black ring round the mouth. This distinguishing mark is called muna muroo muroo (Adjamanthana - Muna (mouth) maru maru (black). The women do likewise, besides painting two white stripes on their arms, which marks distinguish those who have partaken of the late deceased; the other men smearing themselves all over with white clay, to testify their grief."

The avoidance of reference to the names of the dead is a widespread prohibition throughout Australia. Amongst the Adnjamathamha however, it is claimed that permanent prohibition applies only to members of the opposite moiety to the dead man. According to representatives of the group today, own moiety members may refer to the person (after a decent lapse of time) amongst themselves but never in the presence of opposite moiety members.

This prohibition has produced, in the past European period some unusual word substitutions. Following the death some years ago of an old man called Peter Fryingpan, the English word "frying pan" was dropped and the Adnjamathamha work alda wowarinna (thing with long tail) substituted. Similarly yama was substituted for 'milk' upon the death of Milky Billy. When a woman named 'Sissy' died it was apparently thought the word 'scissors' was too close to her name to be used and henceforth scissors were referred to as valda katea (cloth "cutter") katea being a borrowing from the English"cutter". Finally amongst the group, several natural phenomena are thought to indicate an approaching death. Two common signs are the appearance of a rainbow on a fine day, and a cracking in the nose or a ringing in the left ear. If ringing is noticed in the left ear the left arm is raised to the ear and then thrown out away from the body. If the arm cracks then it is claimed a death is about to occur.