

Ten Years On (Walsh 1989)

Chapter Three:

The Local Descent Group

In *Kenbi 1979* the Danggalaba clan was proposed as the local descent group for the Kenbi claim (ibid:25ff). The members of this group were identified as:

Bobby Secretary

Gabriel Secretary

Prince of Wales

Olga Singh

Rachel (or Paula) Thompson

Kathleen or Dolphin Minyinma

Since 1979 Bobby Secretary and Paula Thompson have died. ..

In discussing how this group would constitute a local descent group according to the definitions in the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 the authors of *Kenbi 1979* relied upon principles identified by Stanner in the Walpiri land claim:

A small association of persons of both sexes and any ages each of whom is kin to every other person in the group through the paternal and grand-paternal line from a common ancestor or founder..."

The principle of descent is one of patrification. A person is therefore recruited by birth into his father's group and the members of this group are linked through a shared patri-spirit...this area is identified in *Kenbi 1979* (164-5) as a sub-territory within the territory of the Larrakia language group confined to:

2...From Belyuen it crosses to Kalalak in the Darwin area, where the traditional owners, the secretary family, now live...

However, the authors of *Kenbi 1979* (op. cit.:65) believed that with the extinction of all other patrilineal groups the Danggalaba has incorporated the entire territory of the Larrakia.

3.2 The Larrakia language group

Whatever the situation in 1979, 10 years later the primary basis for constituting a local descent group in the claim area is affiliation through the language label Larrakia... The mode of recruitment to the local descent group is filiation. This principle may be matrification, patrification or both. This notion is intended to include adoption following the approach taken in the Nicholson River (Waanyi/Garawa) Land Claim: "Descent is not limited to biological descent; it means socially recognised descent and so, for example encompasses adoptions into the group" (Kearney 1984 para 58).

The Finniss [Toohey 1981] and Malak Malak [Toohey 1982] claims have perhaps excited more interest than any other for Larrakia.... The outcome of these two claims appears to have led the Larrakia to a reassessment of the term "traditional" with respect to land claims...

In *Kenbi 1979* a relatively narrow interpretation of the requirements of the Act was adapted: the patrilineal clan. In the intervening period the land claim process has demonstrated that a wider range of social and cultural phenomena may fall within the purview of the Act {Kearney 1984, 1988; Toohey 1981, 1982}. This recognition by non-Aborigines encouraged more Larrakia to come forward as claimants for the Kenbi area by 1989.

Members of the Danggalaba clan are very willing to have this larger group listed as claimants...

This local descent group expresses its connection to country at a higher level of generality and, of course, includes as a small but very significant subset members of the Danggalaba clan.

Supplement to Ten Years On

Christopher and Lynette Shields are presumptively claimants who have taken a very active role in Larrakia affairs being the President and Vice-President of the Gwalwa Daraniki Association which has responsibility for Kalalak, a settlement in Larrakia country but outside the claim area [Kenbi]. Christopher [dec] and Lynette Shields have clearly not disavowed their birthright as Larrakia but are not listed as actual claimants because they have not activated their rights to the claim area.

However, they have activated their rights to other country within Larrakia territory and can be expected to become senior traditional owners for Larrakia country in Darwin.

References

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Walsh, M 1989b *Supplement to Ten years on.* Darwin: Northern Land Council.