

2 Well, the kids, our kids, we should teach them well. I mean about both Balanda and Aboriginal things, so they can go on and grow up and not forget. So they'll know. Just as the elders taught us before. And those children will then become the teachers in their turn. Of our culture. What the old people taught us, and we in turn have taught the children. Two ways: Balanda and Aboriginal.

3 SE: *Keep on talking while I test this.*

4 Do we teach them wrong things? No, only what's good we teach them so they'll grow up well. They will operate both in our own Bininj context, and in the Balanda. They'll go along and grow up, then have their own children in turn, have their kids, and teach them, in the same way.

5 SE: *Good. Keep going.* [[Background sounds throughout of children, their mother and cups of tea being organized.]]

6 Yes. That's what should happen. Our own children we teach good things. Good. And they go along and grow up. They grow up and learn for themselves. Just as the older people taught us, we in our turn teach them. They grow up, have children and so it goes on and on, its always there, history. It keeps going, from old to young. That's what we do, so this is what happens.

7 I teach them Balanda and Aboriginal things. I teach them our own culture, and about Balanda people, the Balanda system. They'll know that as they grow up, they'll know two ways: Balanda, Aboriginal. We don't just teach them the Balanda way. Or they'd grow up only going along the Balanda way, and they'd forget our own Aboriginal way. We must teach them two ways: our own culture, and they do the Balanda way at school. They learn about two ways. They can go along the Balanda way if they go to school, that's the Balanda way. They would grow up knowing Balanda, but they would just forget our culture. They just wouldn't know it any more. But if we teach them both, Balanda, Aboriginal, when they grow up they will know Aboriginal and Balanda ways. They would then know both.

8 They would go on and father their own sons, have their own children. And then teach them. They would teach them Balanda and Aboriginal ways. The same process again. That's what people should keep on doing. They'll keep doing this forever. From history to history. They go along, grow up, become adults, so then they can tell their children, when we (inc) have all gone. They'll be the ones in charge then. Then they can take the kids and tell them things. They'll teach the Aboriginal and Balanda ways. That's what people will keep on doing. They'll just keep on going.

9 For example, they teach them our business here, we (inc) blacks, the Aboriginal way. They go along according to our (inc) culture and learn that, then they come back and go into the Balanda system. They still do that, learning all the Balanda way. So they learn the two ways, Aboriginal and Balanda. We don't just teach them the Balanda system. If we just taught kids the Balanda system, they would then forget the Aboriginal one. They'd just go along the Balanda way. Then if we just taught them our Aboriginal system, then it's the Balanda one they'd forget. It would be gone. They'd know it but then forget it and just go along the Aboriginal way.

10 People go through life, they go along and teach their own children in their turn, just as I said to start with, they teach them. So it will be their children, after we've all died, who will then teach their children. It will be their turn. We were taught the Aboriginal way, and so they will teach them as well. The Balanda system as well. If they don't teach them that, they'll forget, if they just taught them the Aboriginal way. And the same would happen, if they did not teach the Aboriginal way and just taught the Balanda way. So we just teach them both Balanda and Aboriginal. We teach them both Balanda and Aboriginal, and so they know. When they grow up, and they become adults, we will all be gone. They will teach their children both the Balanda way and our Aboriginal way.

11 If we just left them to go on their own way, just going along, that would be the end of it. In that case they would no longer know. They would just go on their own way. Then they would teach according to their own ideas, and when they grew up and fathered children, they would teach those children their own ways. They would be ignorant of our culture, they would have forgotten, they wouldn't know it. So they

would teach them the wrong things, if they did all that, and they kept on doing that, if that was all they did.

12 But if we teach them the right way, so they know it, as they grow up and become adults, they'll still know. They'll teach their children as they are growing up. They'll teach them what is good, teaching them both Balanda ways and our Aboriginal way. They'll teach them what is good. But if we just leave so they go along their own way, then no, they won't know anything else, they won't know anything. So we tell them, we teach them. They'll grow up and teach their children. Then we'll all be finished, we'll all die. And then they'll be in charge. Okay.

13 SE: *Is it okay if I ask you something?* [Go ahead.] ***Did you go to school here in Kunbarllanjnja?*** [[Nods assent.]] ***Was it okay?*** [Mm.] ***And nowadays, do you send your kids to school?*** [Yes.] ***And are the teachers who work there okay?***

14 Oh, now you mean? [*Yes.*] Don't know. I'm not aware. I haven't been to see them.

15 SE: *When you went, I mean when you were little, were there good teachers working here?* [No.] ***Why? Go ahead and talk about it.***

16 Yes. Yes. I used to go to school here. In Kunbarllanjnja. I mean, I used to go sometimes, sometimes not. The teacher used to come and be angry with me. Or if I would, maybe, go to school late, turn up late, he would be angry with me. Or if I had been smoking he would be angry with me. But now, I send my kids to school. I mean, I send them and they go. I don't know but maybe they say the same things to them. I don't know, I'm unaware of it. I don't know. If they get angry, and maybe go crook at them, the kids would come home and maybe tell me, and I would go, and maybe say something to them, go crook at them or something like that, explain to them.

17 But when we (exc) used to go to school, back then, the teachers would go crook at us, and they would hit us. But I don't know about this lot of new teachers teaching

our kids. Maybe they're scolding them or talking roughly to them, I don't know. Sometimes they let the kids fight among themselves. I mean they don't separate them, and this goes for our own Aboriginal people working there. I mean they don't say to the kids, "You two leave each other alone! Don't fight. Just leave it." Nor do they go crook at the one who started it. They don't go crook at him, or tell him, "Stop it. Don't look for trouble. Don't cause fights."

18 This one [[Indicating his son]] comes from school, and he works when he's there, at that Balanda system. Then maybe he reverts to doing things according to our Aboriginal culture, or something like that. But at the moment (the teachers) are leaving them alone so its fine when my children go to school. The three of them are going, there were two going to start with, but three now. And in fact, those three kids of mine like school. School is fun. Yes, but we'll keep an eye on them so if other kids start arguing with them, we can stop them, or tell them, "Don't go looking for trouble for yourself." But those kids of mine are all going. They like school. They really like it very much. They want to learn Balanda stuff, but then still come back, and that old man, their Mawah still talks to them and tells them stories about Aboriginal things about our (inc) Aboriginal culture. He's their Mawah and they still come back after school and we (exc) go and we take the kids to that old man, and he tells them stories. So when those kids grow up they probably won't drink, or sniff petrol or smoke grass, no way. They won't do that, never. These kids of mine. I don't know about other kids. But mine are well behaved. I only have to tell them something once, and they just obey me, and they don't answer me back. Okay.

19 SE: When these kids grow up, what do you want them to do? I mean about a job?

20 Yes, they'll get a job, they'll get a job, that would be good. I mean they'll get a good job.

21 SE: Have the kids talked, said anything or talked about it? [Ah.] Have H___ and whatshisname D___ talk about this? Did they talk about what job they would like, or whatever?

22 Yes, they've said. [*Really?*] Yes. They want, when they grow up, they do want to get a job, and they won't drink or smoke grass. Or sniff petrol. And that old man really loves them very much. Strongly. [*Nabangardi?*] Yes. And when he talks to them they still obey him. They don't answer him back. I tell them very clearly, those two, to be quiet and just stay still and listen to him.

23 SE: Ngabbard teaches them, but what about our uncle (the children's maternal grandfather) Our father in law?

24 Sometimes, yes. He teaches them. He tells them, for example, ah, yes, he and his wife come and get the kids up and send them to school if my wife and I are still asleep. [*And their maternal grandmother?*] Yes. Their maternal grandmother and he both love them and wash their clothes for them, they give them food they've cooked for them and they send them to school. They love those kids.

25 SE: What about Kormilda, did you go there? [No.] But the kids, would you send them or not?

26 I'll send them. Yes. I'll send them. When they grow up and get old enough, I'll send them.

27 SE: Brother, I suppose you went up to the ceremonies, didn't you? Some of them. [Yes.] And they taught you there. Is it okay if you talk about that. Not about the secret stuff, just ordinary.[] So when they taught you, were they hard on you, or not? What happened? Were they very strict with you? [Too hard, too!] They were angry with you?

28 Hang on, what else should I say?

29 SE: Hang on, which ceremonies did you go up to? Mardayin, Kunabibi [Kunabibi.], Wubarr [Yaburlurrwa.] Yaburlurrwa, the one here not long ago you mean? [Yes.] Just last year.

30 Yes, it was good that I went to that. They don't talk about that. Mardayin, Wubarr - the mother of the other ceremonies, I don't know about. I haven't seen it. Andrew saw it.

31 SE: Yes. I went to that one. But it was a long time ago, I mean 1979 or maybe 1980, and it's finished. The Yaburlurrwa has arrived, Kunabibi is still going along, although it is fading. [Mm.]

32 [[Break for cup of tea.]]

33 SE: There is one thing I want to ask you both, about teachers. When a good teacher is teaching, what does he do that is so good? You know? There are some teachers who maybe good, and some bad ones. [Yes.] **Perhaps you could talk about a good teacher? Ah, keep it there.** [[Referring to microphone.]] **If I asked you this question in English I would say, "What's a good teacher? And what's a bad teacher?"**

34 Teachers, yes. Some are good. Some are bad. The good ones probably speak to (the children) softly, for example. Oh, and they don't get angry with them, but they'll say to them, "Stop that. Don't get silly. You might cause the other kids to get all of yourselves into trouble and all get silly." That's what I think would make a good teacher. The teachers who are bad, when a child gets silly, he might hit him, slap him or something, slap him. It would be good if he just spoke quietly to that child or to those children. He should say to him or them, "Don't get silly. If you're silly you might make these other kids join in making each other misbehave and being silly. So just stop it, sit down and write, that would be good." He could say that to the child. Some teachers are rough and always angry with the children, with a child. When he goes on being angry with him, then the next day, something will be different because of that. That child will not come back to school, he'll just be there at home. Someone will put pressure on him, and tell him, "Go to school." But that child won't. He doesn't want to. He'll say, "Maybe that teacher will punish me again. If I'm silly he'll punish me." So he comes to dislike it and never goes to school again. Because

he may be frightened of that teacher if he had treated him gently it would be all right. When that happens kids just keep going to school all the time. If they don't get into fights with each other, the kids, among themselves. Kids' business. Well, then it's fine and they just keep going. If they don't start fights among themselves. If they do, a particular child will not want to go to school, he'll say, "If I go back to school, then those other kids will start a fight with me." So maybe if they were to separate them, if they stop them, that would be good.

35 They could say to them, "You two leave each other alone, and don't fight. If you fight, then the other boy might not come back to school. He'll just dislike it forever. He'll just stay at home. If you leave him alone, and you don't start a fight with him, that would be good. And he'll come every day." Those teachers should say that. That teacher should tell a child, or the principal should tell him, "Don't be so rough with him, with that boy. If you're rough with him, then he won't come back next morning or the next day. He'll dislike school forever. He'll just stay home, and he won't know about anything else. He won't know anything. Nothing. He'll just stay there and he might know about cards, smoking, he'll find out how to smoke and then start smoking."

36 But (the teacher) could say to him gently, "Don't get silly." So you just try and talk him out of it, that child, or the other children. Or they could explain things to them, talk to them softly, softly. If the teacher talks roughly with them, it makes it hard. The child will become hard himself, and won't come back to school.

37 And they tease each other too. And (the teachers) don't stop them. They just let them do it. A child will get to the stage of just being completely sick of it, and he'll just reject it and say, "That's it. I'm not going back to school. I don't want to." Because some other kid was starting a fight with him by teasing him.

38 SE: *This is good. Good stuff. Well, only one or two things and we'll be finished. Um, later on, when the children grow up, will you be sending them to ceremonies?*
[Yes.] ***You'll send them up. Go ahead.***

39 When they grow up, yes. They can see them. They can see the Kunabibi, Yaburlurrwa, Lorrkkon, Mardayin. When they are becoming fully adult. While they are still small, we (inc) won't send them up. Until then those who go can tell them about it, some other child can tell them, someone about the same age. They'll go off somewhere private and he can tell him about it. We (inc) won't teach him when he's too small. He can wait until he's got some whiskers. Then he'll go up. We'll (inc) teach him. Whether its Kunabibi, Yaburlurrwa, Mardayin, our Aboriginal culture. We (inc) won't teach him if he's small. He'll go and get another child, this one who hasn't been taught, who hasn't seen the ceremony. He'll go and get the other child and go and he'll talk about it, he'll tell him about it. We'll (inc) just let him go along and grow up, become more of an adult, grow some whiskers, then we'll (inc) teach him. Then he'll see (the ceremony) and say, "Yes. That's what Dad was talking about, when I was just little." He'll say something like that.

49 I mean, yes, when I've seen (that ceremony), my sister doesn't go near me, she avoids me. She goes somewhere else, stays a long way away. This is when the boy is a novitiate.

41 [[Interview briefly interrupted by visitor.]]

42 Yes, the boy sees (the ceremony), I mean we (inc) send him up to see the ceremony, our (inc) Aboriginal business. So we teach him. His sister can't come close or be with him. That would be quite wrong. Nor must she go near where he sleeps or sits. The sister just avoids him. Our Aboriginal law. That would be wrong. She must keep her distance. Yes.

43 SE: *So the last one. And it's a little bit hard too. If you see a child learning, maybe going to school, or (learning) at home. How does a child learn? Maybe language or hunting or whatever? This and that?*

44 It happens a bit at a time. Bit by bit just as we (inc) teach him. We say, "Say this. Do this." For example hunting: we tell him the names of all the places as he goes along, he goes along and we teach him about the place. For example, "Here, this is

our own country.” “This place here is called...” “They call this place...” So we tell him the names of the places. So maybe he can go hunting, and he’ll go to the right places when he does. If he goes off a long way hunting, he’ll go to the right place and he’ll come back again. If you don’t tell him when he’s small, if we (inc) don’t explain it to him, if he goes along and grows up into an adult, and we (inc) don’t explain it to him, then he’ll just forget. He’ll just go anywhere. He’ll go and get lost, and he won’t know any better. But little by little, if we tell him, we explain to him. We say, “This country here is...” We tell him all about that country, we tell him the names of all the places. We say to him, “If you’re going hunting, that’s where you should go, there. As you grow up you’ll know the country. And as you go along and father your own child, tell him the same thing. Tell him about it when he’s small. If you tell him about it when he’s nearly grown, if you tell him about it when he’s nearly grown up, he’ll just forget and get lost. He won’t know where he’s going, he won’t know any better. So tell him about it when he’s little. So then when he goes along and grows up, he’ll become an adult with that knowledge. He won’t get lost, never. He’ll know that, whatever you tell him as a child.”

45 SE: Great. Now, is there anything you want to ask me? [No.] Would it be good if later I ask you something? [Yes.] Yes. And I’m thinking maybe we should all meet together, all of you I’ve interviewed, taped, so you can discuss it, and maybe want to say something? So if you all meet together, would that be okay? [Yes.] That’s it.

[INTERVIEW ENDS]