

D'harawal

DREAMING STORIES

Frances Bodkin
Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews
illustrated by Lorraine Robertson

**The Story of the seven peacekeepers
and the forgotten ones.**



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Foreword

Throughout the past two hundred years, society has come to regard the Koori Dreaming stories as something akin to the fairy stories they were told as children.

However, for thousands upon thousands of years, the stories in this book were used as a teaching tool to impart to the youngest members of the clans the laws which governed the cultural behaviour of clan members. The successive attempts to destroy the Koori culture and assimilate The People into the Euro-centric population were unsuccessful, and the Dreaming Stories were able to continue in their disguise as charming legends where animals became the heroes and the heroines.

Historians and anthropologists have studied the Koori culture since they first arrived on this continent, and have come to the conclusion that the D'harawal culture is dead. Of, course, this has been done without reference to the descendants of that culture, and without even asking the proper questions. The D'harawal culture is not dead, it is a strong, living, vital culture of the Sydney and South Coast regions that just had to go underground for a while to be able to survive. Now that the right questions have been asked, we have the key to unlock a vast wealth of knowledge of this part of the country in which we live.

It is difficult to explain to a society based on commerce fuelled by the profit motive, that D'harawal culture is not based on the ownership of tangible things like land and dwellings and possessions, but it does have a very strong sense of ownership of information. That information, particularly in story form, was not traded, but could be given, and given freely, but its ownership was respected, those stories were not told or passed on by those to whom they had been given, but the knowledge in them was used by the receiver whilst ever they walked in the Land of the D'harawals, This Land.

It is hoped that our present society is now mature enough to be able to accept the Koori Dreaming stories as they were, as they are, and as they were always destined to be; tools to teach the Children of The People about living with Earth, the Mother, in peace and harmony.

Each story contains several layers of knowledge, the first of which are the secrets. Which can only be passed on or discussed with persons of the same level of knowledge or higher than the story teller. These secrets are never told within a legend, but are remembered separately from the legend itself. These are very important components of any legend, and it is the knowledge of the secrets which determines the level of the person's worthiness to ownership of that story. The next layer of knowledge within the stories was the law, or laws, to be obeyed. The laws of the stories were told and often repeated after the telling of each story, after which the laws were discussed and their application in life demonstrated in a variety of ways.

The third layer of knowledge contained in each story was the lessons which could be learned from the story and the lessons were taught to all members of the group as well as visitors. These lessons introduced Peoples to the means to live in harmony with each other, and the land and its resources.

In this series of D'harawal Law Legends, there are many lessons to be learned. The D'harawals believed that children learned better and more quickly when they were encouraged to work through a problem, rather than be told the answer. By sharing the stories of our ancestors with you, it is hoped that not only will you recognise and learn the lessons and laws of the Peoples of This Land, but you will also come to understand and respect the culture of The People and our feelings and relationship with the land.

The stories do not in themselves act as an instruction manual - rather they point the way and encourage The People to think, to learn and to live. It is hoped that by sharing our stories, you too may be able to think, to learn and to live in This Land.

With understanding and respect for each other we can learn to more easily share This Land and live together in peace and harmony.

Frances Bodkin

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A very long time ago, there lived within the Lands of the Yandel'ora some Peoples called the Forgotten Ones, the Maian'ora dya'oun. At first, there not many of them, and they kept themselves hidden from the eyes of The People of This Land, some say out of fear, others said out of shame.

For the Maian'ora dya'oun were indeed the forgotten ones. They were of other Peoples who had been left behind or lost as children, or who had been driven out of their clans because they had committed a misdeed, or had left their homelands because of fear of a cruel leader, or had even left their homelands looking for another place to live, and because of the Great Meetings held there, and the law of the Yandel'ora that those who are in need can live there in peace, they moved into those green and plentiful lands.

But there came a time when their numbers were so great that they became a worry to The People who were the custodians of the land. When they could not find enough food, they stole it from the camps of The People. Because they had never been taught how to make weapons, they stole the weapons of The People. And they did not know the laws of This Land. The People called a meeting to decide what to do about the Maian'ora dya'oun, and one of those present at the meeting was Boo'nah, the Peacemaker.

By this time Boo'nah was an old man, well respected amongst The People. He and his wife, Naali were childless, but their camp was never short of children from other clans who visited to listen to Naali's stories, and to eat her tjonis, which are like little cakes made out of wattle seed. Both Boo'nah and Naali sat in the circle of knowledgeholders, and listened to the complaints of The People as they told of the misdeeds of the Forgotten Ones.

"We must drive them out." Said one of The People. "They do not obey the law." "They do not know the law." Said Naali. "They have never been taught the laws of This Land, or of any other land."

"If we drive them out, where would they go?" Asked another of The People.

"They could return to wherever they came from." Said another. "We would break our own laws if we bring harm to these people." Said Boo'nah. "You know that many of them would be speared if they returned to their own lands."

“Then they must be taught our laws.” Said Kai’yeroo, one of the Peace keepers. “We are old now, but we have not forgotten our skills. Give us leave, and we will seek out the Maian’ora dya’oun.”Mugga’go nodded. “It has been some time since our services were required, but I have an idea which may help.” He leaned forward. “A long time ago the Barra’woori, was defiled by a false magician and since then none have gone to that Place. We know that the land has been cleansed long since, but still The People hesitate to live there.”

“Why can not the Maian’ora dya’oun be given that place to live and to learn the law? The food there is plentiful, and not only could they be taught the law, they could also be taught the skills needed to hunt and to fish, and which fruits and berries to gather.” Now, in those days, the Barra’woori, which we now know as South Head and the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, was an island, separated from the rest of This Land by the Parramatta River, which flowed into the sea near where Bondi is now.

The other Peacekeepers nodded in agreement.

“But they are lawbreakers.” Objected another of The People “why else would they have been driven out.”

“Not all are lawbreakers. And most certainly their children are not lawbreakers.” Said Bai’yali. “If we were to give them the land of the Barra’woori, and taught them the laws, our troubles will cease.”

For the next two days the gathering talked over the problem, until finally all agreed that the Seven Peacekeepers and the Peacemaker were to go to the Maian’ora dya’oun, and persuade them to go to the Barra’woori.

Now the Forgotten Ones were made up of many peoples, some from so far away that it would take two moons for them to return to their home, and they spoke many different tongues. Many could not understand what the others were saying, and the Peacekeepers found it very difficult to converse with them.

However, Boo’nah, being of the Lyrebird clan, was able to speak all languages, and he and his wife Naali visited each group one by one. Whilst Naali told the children stories, and

taught them special dances, Boo'nah informed the adults of the offer. Some were afraid, some agreed, and some disagreed, but gradually, with the help of Naali, they reached agreement that the Forgotten Ones would move to the Barra'woori.

As each clan decided to leave the Yandel'ora the Peacekeepers helped them build their canoes that would take them across the waters to the island, then they accompanied them to the Barra'woori, and showed them the foods, how to hunt, and how to fish. Naali and the wives of the Peacekeepers, taught the women the law, and told them the stories that enabled them to teach the children the laws, whilst Boo'nah taught the men the law of This Land through dance and through ceremony.

When all the Maian'ora dya'oun had arrived at the Barra'woori, they held a big bunya, a celebration, that at last they had a place to which they could belong. It was then that Boo'nah told them that they were now the guardians of the Place of Secrets, and that they must look after it, and he taught them the proper ceremonies to keep it safe. He told them of the meeting of the clans who had agreed that when the Forgotten Ones had proved that they were indeed a People, they would also have the right to return to the Land of Yandel'ora and attend the Great Meetings.

"In your agreement to this," Boo'nah said, "you have proved yourselves to be a People."

One of the old men of the Forgotten Ones smiled sadly. "At last," he said, "we are People, we are E'ora." There were tears in his eyes when he told of how he had thrown a spear at a kangaroo, but at the last moment the kangaroo took fright and hopped away, but his spear kept going and struck one of his clan's greatest warriors in the leg. The warrior demanded that he have the right to spear the old man's son as was the custom. But, instead of spearing the boy in the leg, the warrior thrust his spear through the boy's chest, killing him. His wife blamed him for the death of their son, and rather than stay and live in shame in the clan, he left. "For so long, I have lived as a No Person."

Soon, all were telling of how they came to have sought shelter in the Yandel'ora, including the children who had neither parents nor clan, who told of how they had become lost. The Peacemaker and the Peacekeepers listened to their stories patiently, then, when the last

had been told, took their leave, and went down to the beach where the canoes awaited them.

It was then that the water became disturbed, and the head of the Boo'ambillyee appeared above the waves. She smiled, showing her terrible teeth, bringing a shudder to all who saw her. "You have done well." She said to Boo'nah, "and you have acted wisely. I am happy, now that the Place of Secrets is to be properly looked after." She looked at the New People, "and you will now enjoy my protection, and so my children will not eat you, I ask that when you come to fish in the waters near my Boomatjaril, you have within your canoe a small fire burning that causes smoke to rise. When my children smell the smoke they will know that you are not their prey." Boo'nah and the Seven Warriors got into their canoes and paddled across the channel, escorted by the Great Shark Dreaming Spirit. When they reached the sands of Banarong, Boo'ambillyee farewelled them, and thanked them once again.

"You have my gratitude," she said, "Perhaps there will come a time when I can return the favour you have done. When that time comes I will be here, waiting." Then she dived beneath the waves and only her great fin could be seen above the water as she sped away to inform all her children of the E'ora who were the new custodians of the Place of Secrets.

The law of the Story of the Seven Peacekeepers and the Forgotten Ones:

Those who have knowledge of the laws have an obligation to teach them to those who do not.

Why do you think this is necessary?

What would happen if nobody knew any laws?

What laws do you know?

Aboriginal Words.

I'll bet that you didn't realise how many words of Aboriginal Languages that you use already.

Like the names of places: Maroubra, Gymea, Cronulla, Parramatta, Wollongong.

Or names like Nerida, Kylie, Tiana.

Or animals like Koala, Kangaroo, Wallaby, Wombat.

And of flowers, like Waratah, Lillypilly, Boobialla.

Can you think of any more Aboriginal words that you might know?

In this story you have learned some new words from the D'harawal language.

Yandel'ora; The Land of Peace Between Peoples, named by the early settlers as the Cowpastures.

Maian'ora dya'oun; The Forgotten Peoples. Those who had been left behind at the great meetings, or who had been driven out of their own clans.

Boo'nah; the Peacemaker. After his death he became the Angophora subvelutina.

Kai'yeroo; One of the Peacekeepers. After his death he became the gum tree that has rough brown bark and the base, and smooth white branches.

Barra'woori; This was the name given to what we today call South Head and the eastern suburbs. At the time of this story it was an island.

Bai'ayli; Another of the Peacekeepers. After his death he became the Stringybark Gum tree.

Mugga'go; Another of the Peacekeepers. After his death he became the Ironbark Tree.

E'ora; means the Yes we are People. The forgotten People who banded together and agreed to take over the custodianship of the Barra'woori, and to look after its secrets.

Booambillyee; The Great Shark Dreaming Spirit.

The Lessons of the Story.

The laws were taught to children through story and dance.

Men learned the laws through ceremony and dance.

Little sweet cakes could be made from wattle seed and honey.

Booambillyee, the Great Shark, guards the E'ora and the Place of Secrets.

Sometimes people break laws because they don't know them. Those people cannot be punished in the same way that those who know the laws, but still break them.