

D'harawal

DREAMING STORIES

Frances Bodkin

Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews

illustrated by Lorraine Robertson

Gadi'gam

How the Little Black Ants Came to Be



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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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Once, long ago, there lived a man called Gadi'gam. He was a small man, with long thin legs and arms, and a large head and round body.

He was a most unattractive man, who had a habit of hiding in small places and spying on women as they went about their business. Now, the women knew about his habits, and they would sometimes show off, wiggling their buttocks, for, as you know, most of the men of The People judged a woman's beauty by the smoothness and shape of her buttocks.

But Gadi'gam was not interested in the buttocks of the women, he admired women who had big, round breasts that bounced as they walked along, the young girls wiggling their bottoms and giggling were of no interest to him. Long ago, he had realised that no matter what he did, the women with big breasts for some reason or other were not at all interested in him, except to throw rocks and sticks at him when they caught him watching them, but as he grew older he grew, as he thought, more adept at concealing himself.

There came a time when he noticed that many of the older women, who had the biggest breasts, walked alone to a secret place near the River of the Pelican. Now, he knew that it was forbidden for men to go near this place, but he was curious, whatever it was that the women did there, he wanted to know, but more than anything, he just wanted to watch them.

One particular woman, called Mirral, and whom Gadi'gam truly admired, often went to the Secret Place, and so he decided one day to follow her. Carefully and silently, he picked his way through the prickly bushes that surrounded the secret place, always keeping the woman in sight. Finally she stopped beside a small waterhole, and laid down the coola

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One particular woman, called Mirral, and whom Gadi'gam truly admired, often went to the Secret Place, and so he decided one day to follow her. Carefully and silently, he picked his way through the prickly bushes that surrounded the secret place, always keeping the woman in sight. Finally she stopped beside a small waterhole, and laid down the coola-

mon she had been carrying, and knelt beside it, taking a feathered headband from it which she placed on her head.

Gadi'gam watched her. She was a beautiful woman, made even more beautiful by her wonderful breasts, as she arranged the feathered headband so that the feathers fell down her back. Then satisfied that they were arranged in the proper manner, Mirral stood up, and with a glance around her jumped into the waterhole.

Gadi'gam started in alarm, but even before the water had fallen back into its place from out of the waterhole arose a Crested Pigeon, which circled the waterhole once, then flew off in an easterly direction..

He was about to move to the waterhole when another woman arrived at the waterhole and set her coolamon down beside that of Mirral's. From this coolamon the woman took a headband made of the feathers of an eagle, which she carefully arranged on her head. When she was satisfied that it was properly arranged, she jumped into the waterhole.

And out of the water arose an eagle, which circled the waterhole once, the flew off towards the north.

Gadi'gam was delighted. This was indeed a magical waterhole. As a child he had heard stories of it, around the men's campfire at night, they talked of the ability of some women to change into their totems, and now he had found their secret.

Thoughts raced through his head, he could use this waterhole to change his shape. He could turn into his totem and he could watch the women with big breasts without fear of being beaten by the angry husbands of the women, or worse still, by being beaten and ridiculed by the angry women.

But, he wondered, what was his totem. No one, not even his mother had ever told him what his totem was. “Perhaps,” he thought, “I am a dingo dog.” But he shook his head. No, he definitely was not a dingo. “Maybe I am a Raven.” He nodded to himself. “Or perhaps, an Eagle.” He smiled, he liked that thought. “Yes, I am definitely an eagle. I can sit on the branches and watch the women, and they would all look up and admire me.”

Gadi’gam stood up and looked around, listening carefully, no, there was no one around. Then he raced towards the waterhole and jumped in.

He went down deep, and came up spluttering and coughing with the water he had swallowed. To his surprise the waterhole had grown immensely. It was huge, and the mound from which he had jumped was almost as tall as a mountain. He climbed up over the boulders that now lined the waterhole until, exhausted, he finally reached the top.

He laid down on top of the mound, still spluttering and coughing, when he looked up, and in the distance he saw a woman approaching. She was smiling as she walked, and her beautiful big breasts bounced up and down as she walked towards him.

He was entranced, as he watched her drawing closer and closer. He could not take his eyes off those beautiful breasts as she walked towards him. And as she grew closer, her

smile grew broader and brighter.

“She is looking at me!” Gadi’gam thought. “She sees me.”

It was then he realised how large she was, and she was coming directly at him. She was a giant. She was huge.

Gadi’gam tried to fly away, but couldn’t. He looked around, seeking an escape, and it was only then that he looked down at himself.

The woman knelt down to set the coolamon on the ground, then sat down.

As the shadow of her smooth, shiny buttocks descended over him, poor Gadi’gam realised that he had changed into a small black ant.

Some information about Gadigam:

Gadigam Gah-dee-gam

All ants are in family *Formicidae*. They all have a waist. Their waist is composed of one or two knobs which are the first one or two segments of their abdomen. Their antennae have a distinct elbow. Ants live in colonies made up of several castes. These included the winged males, winged females, soldiers and workers.

Ants are social insects; they form small to large colonies. Ant colonies usually contain: an egg-laying queen and many workers together with their brood i.e., eggs, larvae and pupae. Worker ants carry out different jobs including nest construction, foraging, looking after the brood and queen, and nest defense.

When the ant colony becomes mature, the next generation of winged females and males are produced. They are present in the nest for only a short period. Soon after emerging, they leave the nest to mate and establish new nests elsewhere.

Females usually look similar to the workers (workers are wingless female anyway) but with larger size body. Males are the same size as worker or smaller, with smaller heads, larger ocelli and smaller mandibles. Males may look more like wasps than ants.

Most ants will attack their enemy. Some species have powerful stings. Others eject vapors of formic acid. From time to time, those ants may aggregate at some high points near their nest. Watch carefully you may find some ants with wings wandering around. The winged ants were those female and male, ready to have the so called "mating flight". They will fly to some meeting points, meet with the winged ants from other nests and mate. Female ants will then look for a suitable location to establish a new nest and build a new colony.