

Dhuwa and Yirritja Yothu and Yindi at Garma 2000

The first thing is that there are two moieties, Dhuwa and Yirritja. Everyone and everything is either Dhuwa or Yirritja. Yirritja people sing about Yirritja things, like Yirritja rocks, Yirritja winds, wildlife, clouds, ancestors, creators, and many things.

A Yirritja person must always marry a Dhuwa person, and Dhuwa must marry Yirritja. You can't marry the same moiety. That's how the world works. It has been there for thousands of years. We live by that.

If a man or a woman is Dhuwa, their mother will be Yirritja. Also, Dhuwa land can have another piece of land nearby which is its mother, Yirritja. For example the Gumatj land at Bawaka, which is Yirritja, is right next to its mother, the Rirratji\lu homeland centre named Yala\bara, which is Dhuwa.

Everywhere we can find the child and the mother, not only when we see people, but also when we see the land. This relationship is commonly referred to as Yothu-yindi. In a yothu-yindi partnership, one partner is always Dhuwa, the other always Yirritja. The Yindi is always considered to be the mother of the yothu, even if we are talking about two men, or two pieces of land. Sometimes Yirritja is the mother for Dhuwa, sometimes Dhuwa is the mother for Yirritja.

**Notes from a talk by Raymattja Marika-Munu\giritj, lecturer,
Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies,
Northern Territory University & Yo\lu Advisor to FATSIS**

The Garma Festival 2000 is held at Gu'ku'a, which is Yirritja land. The bu\gul which is to be held here celebrates the ancestor who is locally called Ganbulapula. Ganbulapula is Yirritja, and all the songs and dances which relate to him are Yirritja. Ganbulapula is the particular form of that ancestral being when he was at this place. He is related to other Yirritja groups along the same track, where he had different names and performed different deeds. He is also closely connected with Dhuwa groups.

When Yirritja Groups perform their ceremonies, they always need their Dhuwa relations with them to perform important ceremonial functions. The Dhuwa groups and the Yirritja groups relate together as Yothu Yindi.