INTERVIEWING INUIT ELDERS
Perspectives on Traditional Law

Mariano Aupilaajuk, Marie Tulimaaq, Akisu Joamie,
Emile Imaruittuq, Lucassie Nutaraaluk
Edited by Jarich Oosten, Frédéric Laugrand and Wim Rasing
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Volume 2

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Tirigusuusiit, Piqujait and Maligait: Inuit Perspectives on Traditional Law

Inuit concepts and traditional law

Maligait, piqujait and tirigusuusiit refer to what had to be followed, done or not done in Inuit culture. Nowadays, these words are often used as equivalents to modern Western notions of law. Through these terms Western notions of law may become more accessible to Inuit. In the Legal Glossary, authored by Desmond Brice-Bennet, Michèle Therrien (1997: p250) states: “New terminology is interesting because it uses ‘old’ materials to express today’s experiences and concepts.” In the process of translation, Western concepts as well as Inuit notions are changed. The Western concepts acquire new connotations and meanings associated with the old words that are not always sufficiently acknowledged by Westerners. The old concepts become imbued with new meanings attached to Western concepts of law. The use of these translations tends to obscure the fact that maligait, piqujait and tirigusuusiit on one side, and notions such as law on the other, derive from completely different cultural perspectives. In her instructive appendix to the Legal Glossary, Michèle Therrien explains some of the key notions in more detail. She is well aware of the risks involved in translating these terms into modern concepts. Her explanations are illuminating, as she carefully expounds the meaning and significance of these terms. Thus piqujaq is translated as ‘Inuit customary law.’ This translation is useful in the context of the modern law system, but obviously ‘customary law’ is a Western concept that did not exist in Inuit society before the introduction of the Canadian system of law. The back translation of piqujaq is ‘which is asked to be done (by somebody)’ and its implicit meaning is ‘which is asked by an authorized person to be done’. Therrien (1997: p253) explains that piqujaq “is used as a general concept pertaining to the obligation to respect rules imposed within Inuit society. These rules are orally transmitted and not codified. Only authorized persons have the right to make rules. Rules most often taught by parents concern offering help to the family or the elders, and respect due to animals’. In this explanation we come much closer to the meaning of piqujaq than in the translation ‘customary law’ but even here it is difficult to avoid such terms as ‘rules’ and ‘authorized persons’ that suggest a much more formalized structure than actually existed in Inuit society. Elders had much...
authority and were highly respected, but not in any formal way. The term ‘rule’ suggests a general principle, which is always applied whereas the term *piqijaq* emphasized the importance of the relation involved: people will comply with what those they respect ask from them. To understand how the principle worked we have to understand the social fabric of Inuit society. With respect to the term *maligaq* we are faced with similar problems. Nowadays, it is often translated as ‘Canadian law’. But *maligaq* is a relational term. According to the glossary *malik* means ‘to follow a person, an animal, an idea, an object. To travel with somebody not being the leader e.g. not owning the sled’ (Therrien, 1997: p255). Therrien, (1997: p256) explains that *maligaq* means, ‘which is followed in an inherent manner’ and comments, “Using *maligaq* or *maliksaq* instead of *piqijaq* for customary law would mean that the focus is put on the result of a request (the obligation to obey) rather than the request itself (the wish to obey).”

The third term, which we use in the title, is *tirigusuusiit*, a term frequently used by the elders in the interviews. In the anthropological literature *tirigusuusiit* are unfortunately often referred to as taboos or superstitions (cf. Spalding, 1998: p161) *tirigusungniq* superstition; belief in taboos). They refer to the observance of specific rules, usually with respect to game and they played an important part in Inuit society before the introduction of Christianity. The more an animal was used the more *tirigusuusiit* there were. The notion of tirigusuusiit is closely associated to that of *pittailiniq*, refraining from doing what is not allowed. In the wider perspective of Inuit society, a clear distinction between ritual and social rules cannot be maintained. In fact, ritual rules such as the *tirigusuusiit* tend to take precedence over general social principles of correct behaviour. The interviews with the elders made quite clear that *tirigusuusiit* played a central role in the preservation of Inuit society. Although most of the *tirigusuusiit* are no longer observed, the necessity of respecting game is still widely acknowledged by Inuit. The awareness, that the continuity of society depends on the maintenance of correct relationships with animals and the land, is still very strong.
It is doubtful whether the notion of law is helpful in understanding beliefs and practices covered by these concepts. An extensive literature exists on the question, to what extent Inuit had law. In 1954, Adamson Hoebel devoted the first chapter of *The Law of Primitive Man* to the Inuit and concluded that only ‘rudimentary law,’ existed among them. Van den Steenhoven did fieldwork among the Inuit of the Keewatin district. He gave a systematic account of many cases of conflict and finally concluded (1962: p1130) that the existence of some form of law among the Keewatin Inuit could not be demonstrated. Van den Steenhoven was well aware that Inuit were perfectly capable of managing their own affairs and in the last chapter of his book he discusses the problem of the maintenance of peace. Here he examines some of the principles which served that purpose in Inuit communities. In many respects the consequences of Van den Steenhoven’s pioneer study were never fully realized as many scholars continued to search for some sort of legal system in Inuit societies which could be studied as an equivalent to the Western system of law (Rouland, 1979). Other researchers opted for an alternative strategy by studying the ‘maintenance of the peace’ (Van den Steenhoven, 1962) or ‘social control’ (Rasing, 1994). These categories are useful in applying Western theoretical perspectives to Inuit society, but they do not help us to understand the Inuit perspectives. Inuit leaders and elders did not see themselves as agents of law and order or social control.

In this book the focus is on Inuit perspectives. Therefore we will not discuss the merits of Western notions such as traditional law or social control, but explore Inuit notions instead. The main emphasis is then on *tirigusuusiit, piqujait* and *maligait*. The notion of traditional law provides a first indication of the subject of this book, but the Inuit perspective encompasses much more. It focuses on the way *tirigusuusiit, piqujaq* and *maligaq* are embedded in social and cosmic relationships. From this perspective it can be understood why Susan Enuaraq (1995) who participated in the course, begins her paper on ‘Traditional Justice among the Inuit’ with an account of the famous creation myth of the woman who did not want to get a husband and then married a dog. For Susan, a discussion of traditional law begins with a discussion of the origin of the cosmic order of the world. This woman became the ancestress of different peoples as well as the mother of sea mammals, illustrating that the relations between human beings on one side, and between human beings and game on the other, cannot be separated from each other. Looking for a social order that only aims for social control and does not involve the relationship to game and the spirits, would make no sense to Inuit before the introduction of Christianity. In the interviews the elders repeatedly emphasized that transgressions were not so much sanctioned by the community as by spiritual ‘agencies’ such as the weather or the game. Stingy people would catch less game. Sins would evoke bad weather. Again, a distinction between social and ritual
rules hardly applies to Inuit culture. A murderer would have a short life. In case of transgressions, the elders would try to make the culprit see the foolishness of his behaviour.

The introduction of Canadian law into the North was a gradual process that is by no means complete. Even before the 1920’s, Canadian law intervened in occasions of famous murder cases such as the killings of Rouvière and Le Roux, and Robert Janes. Even though Canadian Law is now a generally accepted institution in the North, its perception by Inuit and *qallunaat* is still quite different. *Images of Justice* by Dorothy Eber (1997) aptly illustrates the problems of applying Western principles of law to Inuit culture, in her description of a few famous cases in the fifties and sixties. Nowadays, Inuit elders feel that their own perceptions of law deserve more attention. Looking back, Aupilaarjuk contrasts the written law of the *qallunaat* with the unwritten laws of Inuit.

It was only because my mother and father went through many hardships that we survived. They only survived because they followed the *maligait* of the Inuit. If they hadn’t followed the *maligait* our lives would have been more difficult. We are told today that Inuit never had laws or *maligait*. Why? They say, “Because they are not written on paper.” When I think of paper, I think you can tear it up, and the laws are gone. The *maligait* of the Inuit are not on paper. They are inside people’s heads and they will not disappear or be torn to pieces. Even if a person dies the *maligait* will not disappear. It is part of a person. It’s what makes a person strong.

But not only were these laws unwritten, they were of a different nature. Breaking those laws was not so much sanctioned by the community as by the wildlife. Aupilaarjuk continues:

When Inuit used to *ataaq-*, go down to the coast from inland, or when they would look for game, they would have to do this according to the *maligait*. There was a *piqujaq* that the sewing of all caribou clothing had to be completed before we migrated from inland to the sea; only repairs could be done once we reached the sea. Why did they do this? They did not want to
break the *piqjaq* because they did not want to go through hardships while they were out seal hunting.

Aupilaarjuk frequently compared *maligait* and *tirigususiiit*, emphasizing that breaking the law and transgressing *tirigususiiit* has similar consequences. *Tirigususiiit* were not only concerned with social relationships, but also with wildlife, and the weather itself. The elders frequently stressed that if people did not respect wildlife or the weather they would have to pay the price. The weather and wildlife would turn against them and disaster would ensue. Lucassie Nutaraaluk stated:

I believe we are disciplined for our actions through the weather. Ottawa and Montreal are perfect examples [the interviews were conducted right after the ice storm of ’97]. I believe a lot of people just see that as an act of nature or a scientifically explainable act, but to my mind it is a way of being disciplined for what we have done. Anytime there is too much wrong-doing being committed we get disciplined in various ways such as earthquakes. Even here in Iqaluit if we start fighting too much there could be an earthquake or really bad weather could come upon us.

The moral order implied respect for game. Imaruittuq said:

There is a story about a man who shot a caribou in the leg disabling it. The wounded caribou was still alive when he cut off its nose because he wanted to eat it. As a result of this, later in his life his nose became decayed and it fell off. This is what happens if you mistreat wildlife.
The Inuit elders were not concerned with theory, but with practice. They related traditional values to modern issues. Modern Western law has had a strong impact on Inuit society and Inuit elders are not too impressed by its efficacy. They feel that the many social problems in modern Inuit society should be dealt with within the community itself. The law should only be invoked for serious offences. Inuit communities should rely much more on their own traditions of counselling. Akisu stated:

If offenders were not made to feel embarrassed, and they understood what was said to them, there would be more of a chance to improve a person’s behaviour. The way it is now, it seems that people are left on their own. If we started to follow the way of our ancestors again, people would be helped and this would be very positive. Here in our community, when our young people started attending school, our elders were not included in their education. We were left behind. But now we want to take part in what is happening. That is why we should keep on talking about how things used to be done. Because it is not written, people think it does not exist. This makes us feel like we are caught in the middle. As our land Nunavut is different from the land down South, in the same way the culture of the two people is different from each other. Not everything that is taught in school is useful to our situation up here. You who have been educated in the school system, are probably unable to make use of the Inuit piusiq. If you began to understand this, then it could be put to use. Although we speak different dialects and are from different regions, for example, Aaju has come from Greenland, when we are speaking amongst each other, often the only differences are the terms that we use. My fellow elders do not speak the same dialect that I do. My dialect is uqqurmiutitut, but I understand what they are saying. They are saying the same things about the piqujait and piusiq of our ancestors. If these were understood by the younger generation, they could come alive again.
Emile Imaruittuq stated, “We should have used traditional practices when dealing with crimes.” The elders were greatly concerned with contemporary problems, notably among the adolescents. They felt the need for a new synthesis of Inuit and Western culture. The elders were not so much interested in punishment as in the correction and integration of an individual into society. Each human being was considered to be potentially valuable to the society. But when a person proved unable or unwilling to reconsider his position and accept the guidance of elders, camp leaders or kinsmen, he could be dealt with very harshly. He could be killed and often close kinsmen who somehow seemed to have accepted the responsibility for getting rid of the unmanageable relative conducted the killing. There was not the intent to do justice to this person. The reason was the wish to protect the survival of the community and to prevent (further) killings.

The elders were very frank and prepared to discuss controversial issues such as shamanism, murder and \textit{tirigusuusit} in detail. They gave much information on how Inuit managed their society in the past and they also conveyed the perspective behind it to a younger generation that now faces the task of integrating these insights into the Inuit society of the future.

The courses

In 1997 and 1998 two courses on law were organized by Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit. The 1997 course was supervised by Wim Rasing; the 1998 course by Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten. The courses were not organized in the same format, but they complemented each other in many respects. In both courses the purpose was to interview elders about the ways in which Inuit used to maintain and preserve social order in their communities.

The first course

The 1997 course was part of the first Legal Studies Program offered by Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit. The start of this Legal Studies Program consisted of a rigorous six-week introductory course in July and August 1997 called ‘Project Jump Start’. Its main purpose was to educate Inuit students who were considering pursuing legal studies at the university level or seeking employment in the justice system by making them familiar with the principles of the Canadian law and legal system. In all, eleven students began and completed the course. There were two men, Eric Joamie (Pangniqtuuq) and Paul Quassa (Iglulik), and nine women: Susan Enuaraq (Clyde River), Sandra Inutiq, Leetia Janes and Sarah Papatsie (Iqaluit), Julia Olayuk (Arctic Bay), Pauline Pemik (Rankin Inlet), Louisa Pootoolik (Repulse Bay) and Helen Tologanak and Betty Brewster (Cambridge Bay).
In addition to developing the skills required for the academic study of law and acquiring a basic knowledge of contract law and criminal law, it was evident to all involved in the Legal Studies Program that the traditional Inuit methods of dealing with rule-violations and violators should be an integral part of the program. The students would benefit most if they not only learned about the ‘traditional’ ways of maintaining order in Inuit communities but also acquired and developed (elementary) skills for interviewing Inuit elders. This would enable them to discover more about the Inuit techniques of preserving order in their communities. In view of these objectives, the students not only received instruction on the specific skills of interviewing but could also ‘practice’ these during the ‘traditional knowledge’ course, as Inuit elders from various Nunavut communities had accepted an invitation to participate in the program. The results of these interviews are presented in the first part of this book.

The Inuit elders who participated in the course were residents of various communities representing distinct regions in the Canadian Eastern Arctic, both genders and the two prevailing religious denominations. Mariano Aupilaarjuk and his wife Marie Tulimaaq from Rankin Inlet represented the Keewatin District (on the West Coast of Hudson Bay), although they are Natsilingmiut, originally from the Pelly Bay area in the Central Canadian Arctic. Aupilaarjuk, the son of a well-known shaman, and his wife Tulimaaq have been a married couple for many years. They spent the greater part of their lives hunting, and taking care of each other and their children. At present they reside in Rankin Inlet, respected as knowledgeable elders and consulted by many younger residents. Akisu Joamie spent his entire life in southeastern parts of Baffin Island and is a long-term resident of Iqaluit. Emile Imaruittuq, from Iglulik, was the fourth elder and represented the North Baffin region. For the students and staff of the program it was a special and gratifying experience to work with and learn from these elders.

Given the presence of four elders, a program was set up that would allow students to gain maximum benefit from the course. Apart from the opening and closing sessions in which all the elders and students participated, the actual interviews were conducted in simultaneous sessions that involved one or two elders with a smaller number of students. It was thought this would provide better opportunities for each of the students to practice their interviewing skills. Working in smaller groups could also be more comfortable for the elders and for some of the less assertive students. In addition, working in groups would enable the elders to provide more information. To counter the problem that not all students would receive the same information, they were given the opportunity to attend another session that focused on the same topic and were encouraged to share their information with each other. All interviews were audio taped facilitating exchange of information.

The interview-sessions greatly benefitted from the presence and the excellent assistance of Aaju Peter. She solved many practical problems, from attending to the
needs of the elders during and after the interviews to taking care of the audio tapes and equipment. Her assistance in and outside classes was valuable and much appreciated. It must be added that all interview sessions were eased by, and clearly profited from, the simultaneous translations of the skilled interpreters, Adamie Pitseolak and Deborah Qitsualik.

The options for the program were discussed during a meeting between the instructor/supervisor and the elders. All agreed to have simultaneous sessions dealing with four distinct themes. Each of these themes would be the subject of at least two other sessions so as to allow each student to acquire information on these subjects. The domain of rules pertaining to legal matters would be discussed in sessions dealing with four distinguishable categories:

1) Rules for dealing with nature (with animals in particular).
2) Rules for dealing with other people.
3) Rules for dealing with wrongdoers.
4) Rules for dealing with the spiritual world.

It was also agreed to have one ‘all-female’ session; Marie Tulimaq would be questioned by the female students on rules for women.

The data were subsequently organized into four chapters which compose Part One of this book. The first of these deals with the data pertaining to tirigusuusiit and maligait. The second discusses respect for wildlife. The third chapter deals with dealing with wrong-doers and the fourth chapter deals with advice for women.

Prior to the interviews, the students were instructed on the nature, skills and problems of interviewing people in general and Inuit elders in particular. They were...
also encouraged to prepare their interviews and were assigned to make a brief summary of each interview session. These summaries were to serve as a basis for the preparation of the next interview and could facilitate the preparations of their final assignment. This consisted of writing a five-page essay, in which they were to reflect on their findings by addressing the question of how Inuit ways of problem solving relate to the present-day with respect to the Canadian legal system and possibilities provided by the advent of Nunavut.

The second course

The 1998 course was part of the Inuit Studies Program supervised by Susan Sammons and Alexina Kublu. In this course the focus was not on practices and beliefs equivalent to a Western system of law. A separation of principles of social control from principles of control by outside forces (such as game, weather, and spirits) is artificial with respect to Inuit culture. Therefore, the facilitators focused on the question of how Inuit dealt with problems which in qallunaat society are usually dealt with by law. The goal was to explore the principles which guided behaviour; the norms and values in terms of which behaviour was assessed.

Obviously, it was not possible in a three-week course to deal with the whole complex of ideas, principles, and customs of Inuit society. Therefore the course focused on specific aspects of society and tried to assess how transgressions in such a domain were dealt with. The problem was discussed with the students who selected four topics which seemed of particular interest to them:

1) The role of elders, camp-leaders and shamans in guiding people.
2) How rules and values of family life were applied (ownership, distribution, sharing).
3) The dealings with murders and the sanctions connected to it.
4) The use of stories in guiding the behaviour of members of the community.

The elders in the course were Lucassie Nutaraaluk from Iqaluit (originally from Kinngait), and Emile Imaruittuq from Iglulik. The students were Susan Enuaraq, Myna Ishulutaq, Nancy Kisa, Bernice Kootoo, Aaju Peter, Jeannie Shaimayuk, Julia Shaimayuk (second year students), Vera Arnatsiaq, Matthew Boki, Kim Kangok and Johnny Kopak (first year students). The second year students had already participated in the 1996 oral tradition course supervised by Alexina Kublu, Frédéric Leaegrand and Jarich Oosten. They had experience in interviewing elders and were familiar with the approach of the instructors. For the new students it was their first opportunity to participate in a course focusing on interviewing elders and they benefitted from the experience of the second year students. We followed the same method as in the 1996 oral tradition course. An
outline of the method and the philosophy behind it can be found in Interviewing Inuit Elders: Introduction (Iqaluit, 1999). Interviews were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere and an informal setting. Interviews were prepared and conducted by the students. The first sessions focused on the life stories of the elders. After that, the discussions focused on the four themes that were chosen by the students. This approach enabled the students to connect their questions directly to the personal experience of the elders.

The students were divided into four teams, each team focusing on a different theme. A first year student was included in each of the four teams. Each team conducted interviews. The members of the teams took turns in the interviews. On the basis of the experience of the 1996 course, it was decided that transcription of the interviews from audio tapes into syllabics should be part of the course. Each team transcribed the interviews it had conducted with the elders. That was quite a job and it was usually not possible to complete the transcription in the hours reserved for the course. Much work had to be done at home. As most of the students had families to care for this was not an easy task. But the teams managed to complete the transcriptions in time. All students also wrote a brief essay on what they had learned during the course.

During the interviews the atmosphere was relaxed. Tables were removed from the classroom. The elders were sitting on a couch, the students were sitting on the floor before them. The instructors remained in the background and refrained from interfering in the interviews. They discussed questions and answers with the students before and after the interviews. We thank the staff of the residence for supporting the course and providing the elders with snacks, tea and coffee so they would be comfortable during their interviews. We wish to thank Archie Angnakak for providing the simultaneous interpretation.

Format of the book
In the book we have retained the dialogue form. It allows the readers to see how the knowledge of the elders takes shape in an interplay of questions and answers. We are
not dealing with an abstract body of knowledge that only has to be recorded on tape, but with a knowledge that is dynamic and flexible, always adapted to specific situations and contexts. The memories of the elders are triggered by the questions of the students and in answering their questions their memories come to life. Sometimes the students did not immediately grasp the meaning of a word. In explaining the word a better understanding of the concept behind it was usually provided by the elders. We have tried to preserve the flow of the interviews in the edited text. We have retained many Inuktitut words in the English translation of the interviews as discussions about words were a recurrent feature of the interviews. Often students did not quite grasp the meaning of a word or the elders wanted to clarify its significance. In the English version of this book, the meaning of the word is either indicated in the text or explained in a footnote. All words can be found in the glossary that was prepared by Alexina Kublu. We have also added a brief introduction to each chapter.

We wish to thank Alexina Kublu and Susan Sammons for the translation of these transcripts and Sally Mikijuk for typing them. We would also like to thank Roberta Roberts from Nortext for her help and support. Thanks are also due to Marja Korhonen for paraphrasing the introduction to the book and the introduction to each chapter. Thanks also to Julia Shaimajuk for typing the revisions to the Inuktitut manuscript. Many thanks also to Noel McDermott for proofreading the English version of this manuscript and to Mick Mallon for proofing the Inuktitut.

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The courses proved quite strenuous for all involved. A lot of work was done in three weeks, but it was also quite enjoyable. There was time for the wonderful songs of Emile Imaruittuq and games of checkers with Lucassie Nutaraaluk. We were impressed by the sincerity and wisdom of the elders and the skills of the students. For the instructors it was a privilege to be part of the process. The skill and competence shown by the students gives confidence in their capacity to contribute significantly to the task of shaping Inuit society and culture in the wider context of Nunavut. We wish to thank the elders, the students, the translators, the organizers and all others who contributed to the success of these courses.

Frédéric Laugrand
Jarich Oosten
Wim Rasing
Aupilaarjuk introduces the notions of tirigusuusiit, things that have to be avoided, maligait, things that have to be followed, and piqujait, things that have to be done, by comparing them to modern law. He explains the traditions in relation to the present, but the emphasis is on Inuit traditions. Aupilaarjuk states, “Whether people break the qallunaat laws or the Inuit maligait the consequences are the same. A person will shorten his or her life.” The conviction that breaking tirigusuusiit, maligait and piqujait will shorten your life is repeatedly expressed by the elders. The discussion rapidly shifts to the role of the angakkuq. Once people went against the tirigusuusiit, maligait and piqujait, social and cosmic relations were at risk and the intervention of the angakkuq might be required to redress the consequences of these acts. There were different forms of shamanism as Aupilaarjuk explains, some were good, some were evil. In the past, Inuit dealt with wrong-doings themselves. Today, the problem is to retain from the old traditions what is valuable to the present. Aupilaarjuk says: “When I think about this, I wonder how we can solve the problem. I would like to look at the Inuit maligait that we had in the past and compare them with the laws we have today, so we could develop better laws for the future.”

Aupilaarjuk: It was only because my mother and father went through many hardships that we survived. They only survived because they followed the maligait of the Inuit. If they hadn’t followed the maligait, our lives would have been more difficult.
We are told today that Inuit never had laws or *maligait*. Why? They say, “Because they are not written on paper.” When I think of paper I think you can tear it up and the laws are gone. The *maligait* of the Inuit are not on paper. They are inside people’s heads and they will not disappear or be torn to pieces. Even if a person dies, the *maligait* will not disappear. It is part of a person. It is what makes a person strong. When Inuit used to *ataaq-* go down to the coast from inland, or when they would look for game, they would have to do this according to the *maligait*.

There was a *piqujaq* that the sewing of all caribou clothing had to be completed before we migrated from inland to the sea; only repairs could be done once we reached the sea. Why did they do this? They did not want to break the *piqujaq* because they did not want to go through hardships while they were out seal hunting. Some *tirigusuusit* were similar to the *qallunaat* ways of doing things. *Qallunaat* are not happy if things are not done on time according to their schedules, following their watches. Inuit were like that too. If they didn’t get things done on time, they weren’t happy about it either.

As little boys we followed our fathers when they went out seal hunting. They would break off a piece of snow with their harpoons and give it to us. They were ensuring that we would be able to catch seals in the future. They wanted us to be successful when we became hunters ourselves. We would take this piece of snow to our mothers and give it to them as if it were a piece of meat. This was an Inuit *maligaq*.

We lived in small camps. When someone would come to our camp, my mother would go and meet that person right away, rather than have them come to her. When we were sharing meat, we would pass it clockwise, following the path of the sun. When my mother would go out and meet people arriving, she would also follow this direction because she didn’t want them to go through hardship and she wished them well. I have not forgotten this.

People needed to look after their health because there weren’t any medications back then. We only had *maligait* to follow. Back then we didn’t have radios and sometimes it took a long time before we heard of someone’s death. After my father heard of a death, he would wake us up early. Why? He wanted us to have a long life. He didn’t want us to be like dead people. I still follow this *maligaq*.

Meat was also used to help heal sick people. This is not done as often anymore. When I am sick and craving a certain meat, and I am given it, I feel better afterwards. If I kill an animal and it happens to be the kind of meat a sick person is craving for, I should freely give it to that person. We have had these *maligait* as long as we can remember, but people aren’t observing them anymore. We are not trying to revive something that is bad, we are trying to revive something that is good.
In other areas did people follow the direction of the sun while sharing meat?

Imaruittuq: In the Amittuq area, when we would share meat, we followed the direction of the sun also.

Aupilaarjuk: I didn’t mention it before, but when we visited a grave, we used to walk around the grave following the sun so that the person rested in peace.

Imaruittuq: This is still practiced today. My grandfather whom I loved very much passed away while we were in Naujaat. Thinking back, I think that maybe he died because he was old and because he wanted to see me so much. Not long ago, I was having a very difficult time shooting birds. I was on the island where he had been buried. I asked myself, “Why am I like this? Maybe I still need to visit his grave.” So I went down to see his grave and then I was able to catch birds again. I realized that we have to keep visiting our forefathers’ graves now and then.

Akisu: That was our tradition too. We had to follow the direction of the sun. Only the direction of building an iglu was different. Since we are right-handed, we built an iglu in the opposite direction. Only left-handed people built their igluit following the direction of the sun. We too followed the direction of the sun when we were sharing meat and when we went to visit graves.

Imaruittuq: For the more important traditions we followed the same things.

Aupilaarjuk: Through these iliqusiit, ways of doing things, we can see that we are all Inuit. Even though our dialects are a little different, our customs are the same.

If a left-handed man built an iglu, would it be as strong as one built by someone who was right-handed?

Imaruittuq: I’m sure it would be as strong if it was built with the same care. Likewise if you are right-handed and you don’t build it well, it would be a weak iglu.

Aupilaarjuk: It’s the same when building a house. You have to follow certain standards or codes, maligait, in order to build it properly. We should also talk about the tirigusuusiit which are not being followed anymore. When the doctors and nurses came up here and found people with tuberculosis, they were told not to live with others in order to prevent the spread of the disease. This is called tirigusungniq. The missionaries didn’t like us to tirigusuk anymore because they thought this was evil. But this was not so. Tirigusungniq was used as a guide by people on how to live well. It is difficult to define because it has so many different aspects to it.
We have heard about tirigususiiit and maligait, and how maligait have to be followed. Are they different or are they the same?

Aupilaarjuk: Tirigusungniit are the rules relating to pittailiniq, things one should refrain from. Maligait are things that had to be followed. Back then we didn’t use the term maligaq, but there was a set way of doing things that had to be followed. They are not really the same, but they are related to each other. To obey a pittailiniq, we would have to tirigusuk, refrain from doing certain things. If I did not follow the tirigusungniq, I would be doing something wrong because I would be breaking the maligaq relating to the pittailiniq. When a woman became pregnant, one maligaq she had to follow was putting on her kamiik, boots, right away and going out. Her husband had to do the same.

There was an angakkuq who broke a tirigusungniq, and as a result of this he died early. While he was at Ukkusiksalik he would sneak berries and eat them. There was a piqujaq regarding Ukkusiksalik which was anyone who went there for the first time was not to eat plants from the land until a year had passed. Within the year he became delirious and made the motions of picking something as if he were digging. My mother would ask him, “What are you looking for.” He replied that he was picking berries. He died shortly after that because he had not followed the tirigususiq even though he was a powerful angakkuq.

Whether people break the gallunaaq laws or the Inuit maligait the consequences are the same. A person will shorten his or her life. When I think about this, I wonder how we can solve the problem. I would like to look at the Inuit maligait that we had in the past and compare them with the laws we have today so we could develop better laws for the future. I know they are not the same, but in my opinion it is time we look at this, especially for when we have Nunavut. This is what I think. Please tell me if you’re not understanding me because I will learn from this too. Please point out things to me and tell me if I am wrong. I’m not saying these things rashly, I’ve thought about them for a long time.

Tirigusungniq and maligaq are different but they are related. Tirigusungniq are the things you are not allowed to do if you are following a pittailiniq. This was to help us have a good life so we could follow our maligait properly.

I was born with a tirigususiq. My mother also had to follow a tirigususiq in order for me to have a good life. I was born in July and there were a lot of mosquitoes. She was not allowed to drink water on account of me. After it rains puddles form in rocks. She drank water from the little hollows in the rocks using the palm of her hand but she did not quench her thirst. On her deathbed when she was very old, she told me that she had broken this tirigususiq once. She had drunk some water when she was not supposed to. She thought this would lead to bad consequences for me in my life. She never told my father or her mother-in-law. She was very thirsty and she couldn’t resist having a little bit of water. This was not imposed on her as a punishment. She was following it for me,
so I would be capable. She didn’t want me just to survive on the land. Although we are not following this today, it is still important we know about it.

_Because we do not know about this, does it mean it doesn’t apply to us?_  

**Aupilaarjuk:** Certainly if you don’t know about this, it won’t have the same affect on you. If you don’t know about this, you can just laugh about this. But if you are aware of this, it is very scary, and can have serious consequences.

There are three types of _angakkuit_. There are two types that we should not follow. The third is a healer. I would have died if I had not been healed by an _angakkuq_. I was secretly breaking _maligait_ and I wouldn’t tell anyone about this, and as a result I became sick. These wrong-doings were visible to the _angakkuq_. They were only removed by my confession. The ability to discern someone’s wrong-doings was the strength of the _angakkuq_.

Back then we did not have alcohol and drugs to tempt us; but we had other temptations such as the need for sex. This was the greatest temptation. We are a couple, husband and wife. If I did not have a wife I would be doing many things that I shouldn’t be such as practicing bestiality. I was given a wife to keep me from doing such things. I was not given a choice.

Let us think of the Earth as a woman. The Earth is very big and strong and gives us food. A woman is also very strong. She feeds the children and helps them grow. We are not to misuse our wives, we are to take good care of them. We also have to take care of our Earth so that it is not misused or exploited.

We men are like the rain. A flower will die if it doesn’t get water. Water is the source of life. God created incredible things. He created us with the ability to reproduce and multiply. A person could not have created anything like that. This is why we have to take very good care of ourselves and not destroy ourselves through drugs or alcohol, or allow ourselves to become depressed through keeping things inside and then killing ourselves. Back then we had the _angakkuit_, to help us with this. We don’t anymore. I am not trying to draw you away from Christianity. If you are a believer keep on believing. But there are also Inuit beliefs.

_You said there were three types of angakkuit; piusuginiit, ones that are vain; tammarsainiit, ones that tried to make you commit wrong-doings; and what was the third one?_  

**Aupilaarjuk:** I’uusajijillarik, the real healer. This is the type we should be using today. Today, there are temptations all around us whether we are _qallunaat_ or Inuit.
In the old days did they become angakkuit by themselves or did someone else have to turn them into an angakkuq?

Aupilaarjuk: This is very difficult to answer. You are not the first to ask this question. Children in schools, adults and qallunaat have all asked me this. You should be chosen to be an angakkuq. It is very dangerous to become an angakkuq by yourself. You could become an angakkuq without realizing you have become one. Only people who have been chosen to become an angakkuq should become one. If you become one yourself, you might accept something evil without being aware of it. I’ve said before that this is very dangerous because there are different types of angakkuit.

Before you become an angakkuq, you start dreaming or envisioning something. Some of what you see could be beautiful and some could be scary. This could be even more believable than a dream, but some of it could be false. You start dreaming or start seeing things in your head that seem real, but this would not be scary. You might seem to see someone but it wouldn’t be scary. Even though you are trying not to think about it, you might see that a person you are looking at is not alone, and you would think of that person as being different from yourself. All these things are being made visible to you by your helper. It would be your helper who was making you think these thoughts. You don’t know who is going to be your helper; it could be a deceased person, it could be anything. We don’t know, it is up to them. The helpers can be very different. If you have those helpers directing your thoughts and your words, and you become a very powerful angakkuq, they would have you saying things you had no intention of saying. They say it can be very iliranaq, intimidating, to be an angakkuq. If there is a person who is keeping bad things hidden that he didn’t want to disclose, and if you are able to see those deeds, it is very difficult not to talk about them even if you don’t want to. There are times when you don’t want to be an angakkuq. A tuurngaq is the spirit of the angakkuq. The tuurngaq is very difficult to describe because people think it is Satan. In the Natsilingmiut area in the Central Arctic, where I am from, we use the word apiqsaq to describe an angakkuq’s assistant, because tuurngaq is used for the word Satan. We can use the word tuurngaq but people think of it as being controlled by Satan. People sometimes think that the angakkuit had bad tuurngait, but it wasn’t like that. Some angakkuit wanted to do good. There were also those that probably were not so wise, that wanted the power to kill. Some could erase memories. It was probably the ones that had bad tuurngait that did that. I did not follow Satan, although I did search for tuurngait. One aspect which was very good was being able to help when there were people who were very sick or people who were hungry.
Some of the angakkuit used their powers to kill. What would happen to an angakkuq who used his powers to kill or who used his powers to give troubling thoughts to someone?

Aupilaarjuk: There were angakkuit who had the power to kill. They themselves not only had thoughts to kill, they were also listening to the orders that were given to them. If a person was laughed at by another or made angry by another, and this person was weak, then an angakkuq could use him if there was something that he wanted but was not given freely. If the angakkuq was too weak to get it on his own, then he would search for a helper. Of course he would use the person’s weakness to his advantage. If this evil did not take over the body, you were fine, but if ordered, the tuurnqaq would go into a body and use it to commit murder. Then the tuurnqaq would return to the angakkuq after committing the murder. This was very dangerous. Many children ask me about angakkuit and what they were like. I tell them that angakkuit can be very difficult. I tell them you have to be very wise to be an angakkuq. You cannot just request to be one because you could end up with something evil because you do not know what tuurnqaq you might get. It might pretend to be good but turn out to be evil.

If a person knowingly commits a murder, that is evil. If a tuurnqaq or some other spirit took over a person’s body and used it to commit murder, is this still considered murder, or not?

Aupilaarjuk: If a person commits a murder because they have been made to do it by an angakkuq, is that worse than someone knowingly committing a murder? Are you asking which one is worse?

Yes.

Aupilaarjuk: A long time ago I heard a man, who had committed a murder, talking to my father. Are you aware of Amarualik’s murder? It happened before I was born. We were related to him. He was related to Qaunnaq. Iksivalitaq used to talk about the murder he committed. He said he was very remorseful and regretted it and said he was very sorry. Iksivalitaq did not do it himself. An angakkuq’s tuurnqaq took over his body. It could be a polar bear or it could be any other animal that was ordered to commit the murder. After the murder was committed, the tuurnqaq would leave the animal or the person. People used to look for a reason why the person or the animal did such a thing. If the person had been ordered to do it they found that the person did not knowingly commit the murder. That kind of murder is not the same as a person knowingly committing a murder.
Is it true that angakkuit are not allowed to talk about the fact that they are angakkuit?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. They are very secretive about their powers.

Why can’t they talk about the fact that they are angakkuit?

Aupilaarjuk: If I said that I was an angakkuq, people would be suspicious of me and they would talk about it. If I was an angakkuq, another angakkuq might tirliaq, try to test my strength to find out how strong I was. Another angakkuq could find out spiritually through a channel that nobody else could see except the angakkuit, or he could put me through hardship. Any angakkuq could be in danger. The other angakkuq does not have to be from the same community. Another reason not to talk about being an angakkuq was that we were told not to be boastful. If someone was known to be an angakkuq and their presence was requested when someone got sick, if they were asked to come they would do so. The disclosure of being an angakkuq was not done at random. This disclosure had its own maligaq that had to be followed.

How was the power of an angakkuq removed?

Aupilaarjuk: I think my powers of being an angakkuq have been removed because I have gone through angakkuiqsajaujuq, a ritual of having the powers of the angakkuit removed. I was no longer an angakkuq. But I am still thought of as an angakkuq by some people, both Inuit and qallunaat. I have known for some time I am not an angakkuq, for if I were an angakkuq, I would be able to see among you those who had committed wrong-doings. As I’m not an angakkuq, I don’t know this. This would be something to fear if the angakkuq didn’t happen to be a good person. We were taught not to ask questions of our elders, that’s what used to be taught. But you are asking questions and I’m happy about this. My father took away my powers. He said he did not want me to be an angakkuq because he did not want me to have a short life and I was not wise enough. That was one way those powers could be removed.

We Inuit have numerous maligait, but the qallunaat say we don’t have any because they are not on paper. The things that I say are not on paper, but when you ask me good questions, I can share my answers with you. The elders have wisdom and knowledge but they won’t talk about it. It would be better if they started talking about it. When some of the elders, in Iglulik for example, say they don’t know about shamanism, I don’t believe them. I know they are the same age as I am and I know they know the same things. Those that won’t talk about this don’t want to be of any assistance.
Maybe they are embarrassed?

Aupilaarjuk: It is probably because they are embarrassed. But this is not something to be embarrassed about. We are not trying to get powers. Once we get the Nunavut government, you young people are going to have a lot of work to do. You will have to think about how we Inuit can start getting our knowledge back. Since we are going to get the Nunavut government, you will have an enormous task ahead of you and you will have to try and figure out how to do this.

I, too, know about qilaniq. One should not always believe what they find out during qilaniq for the answer being given might not be the truth. If I were to qila we would have a lot of information. A lot of people out there have heard about qilaniq.

What is qilaniq? I don’t understand this?

Aupilaarjuk: If someone was very sick, and I was unable to help this person because I was not an angakkuq I was still able to help by performing qilaniq. The person would qila on the bed, would lie down and I would put a band around the head. When I would start to qila I would ask questions such as, “What is the cause of this? What is making this happen?” If I had an apiqsaq I would request the assistance of my helper and I would say, “You are my apiqsaq, what is the cause of this?” Once the head started becoming heavy it would be impossible to move. I would start asking what was causing this sickness. My apiqsaq would provide me with the answer, for I personally wouldn’t know what the answer was. I would ask, “Is this what is making the person sick? Is this what is causing the sickness?” Then we would find out through qilaniq what it was. The head would become as though it was a magnet. When you received the answer you were able to lift the head. That’s the way it was.

Earlier, you asked if killing through shamanism and murdering someone intentionally were the same. I didn’t really answer that. If you still want to hear about this, I would like to talk about it.

Yes, please do.

Aupilaarjuk: A person could murder someone deliberately. There have always been murders that were not committed through shamanism. In those cases, the victims were usually avenged. If a person was murdered, and that person had relatives, they would avenge the victims’ death. That’s how it was.

If a person had been murdered, his body was completely covered with rocks. We Inuit used to bury people who had died of natural causes by placing rocks around the body, but the body itself was not covered. Why were they covered with rocks? This was done so they would not seek revenge after death. Also, some of the body parts were cut at the joints to prevent them from seeking revenge. I heard this from someone, now
dead, who had killed before. He did this to the victim so he would not take revenge. This is an example of a murder that was committed deliberately. Killing through shamanism is not the same. The *angakkuk’s tuurnqaq* which is invisible commits the murder. There might not even be any wounds. Neither murdering someone deliberately, nor murder through shamanism were condoned. This was a *piqjaq* and this was understood. If I were to kill someone through shamanism, my *tuurnqaq* could come back and kill someone in my family. That’s why it is dangerous.

*When your father gave you tirigusungniq to follow, did he want you to learn discipline and learn to be obedient so you could become a better man? Did I understand you correctly?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** You understood in this sense, that it was not for all people. It was only for me to follow. It did not apply to my brothers and sisters. Just to me.

*Were you given tirigusungniq to discipline you for the future?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** Yes, in a way I was given a *tirigusuusiq* to make me stronger, to help me have a stronger body. Not everyone had to follow this.

*Now it is more understandable. Everyone had to follow the maligait, but only some people had to follow tirigusungniq?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** Yes, it was like that.

*Only some people had to follow tirigusungniq?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** If the future was set for you and you were destined to this, then you had to follow the *maligait* of the *tirigusuusiq*. For example, if I went to a place where I hadn’t been before, I was not allowed to go barefoot. This was to keep the Earth from being ticklish because the Earth is easily tickled. There were *maligait* I had to follow that could be very tedious.

*Did you follow Christianity from the time you were born?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** I followed Inuit beliefs first.

*Were you baptized?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** Yes. I didn’t know about Christianity before that. I grew up following Inuit *ukpirijangit*, beliefs. That’s how I know about them. I don’t remember the year I was baptized. It wasn’t that long ago that I was baptized and my *ukpirijat* and *maligait*
changed. I stopped thinking about them anymore. The Catholic priest said that our Inuit ways were evil, and only the ways of God, Jesus and Mary were good. If he had told us that we had to follow the maligait of Jesus, then I would have understood. We were only told to abandon our Inuit maligait, but they did not give us anything to replace them. For example, I would no longer anijaaq, go out early in the morning. I felt like I was in a void. I no longer wanted to follow what my parents had taught me. If I did something wrong or something shameful, I did not need to tell anyone about it. I did whatever I wanted. I did not tell anyone if I did something wrong.

Before that, we had angakkuit who could see if we had done something wrong. Even if we didn’t want to talk about it, it was impossible to keep a wrong-doing hidden. We had to confess it. If we only confessed part of it he would know there was still some left, so we had to confess everything. This would not be brought up again. This was how we were. That is how an angakkuaq would iqqaqtui, question, you. Now we keep things hidden. Only God knows. These things will all come out on Judgment Day.

*If I broke a maligaq and you were an angakkuaq, and you knew I had done something wrong but I tried to keep it hidden, what would happen?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** If you were keeping a wrong-doing hidden you would be anxious, you would become so anxious that you would get sick from keeping this inside you. You could try to keep it hidden, but the mind is very visible, even if it is only thoughts. Perhaps someone in your family would notice that there was something wrong, and knowing that I was an angakkuaq would come to me with a gift. If I was given something, let’s say this pen, I would start searching for the cause of what was bothering you. I would see something but I wouldn’t know what it was. Even if you didn’t say anything I could feel it around me. My apiqsaq, helping spirit, that is not visible could see it, but I couldn’t. It would tell me what it was, but it would not be until you confessed that it would be forgiven.

*If a person in my family gave something to the angakkuaq, and I refused to confess, would the angakkuaq keep the present?*

**Aupilaarjuk:** The angakkuaq would keep the gift. The angakkuaq was not the one with the guilt, you were and you would suffer the consequences. Long ago while we still followed Inuit beliefs, we were told to confess or we would be placing ourselves in danger. I think this practice should still be followed today.
If my relative paid you something because he knew you were an angakkuq, and he wanted me to be well, and I was not healed because I didn’t want to be healed, and my relative wanted the payment back, what would happen?

Aupilaarjuk: I can’t answer your question very well. I told you the thing was a gift, it was not a payment. They used to give gifts to the angakkuq if they wanted him to heal them. When he was given a gift this made him happy. Because he was grateful this made him more powerful. People didn’t think about getting the gift back. An angakkuq would keep the gift if he was given one. If you refused to confess this could even lead to death. I don’t have anymore to say about whether this gift should be returned.

If a wife found out that her husband had killed someone and was keeping it hidden, did she have to keep quiet about this, or did she have to tell the angakkuq?

Aupilaarjuk: If he had killed someone and was keeping it hidden, the angakkuq would still know. This man’s wife wouldn’t need to go and tell the angakkuq. An angakkuq would know this and it would be dangerous if the man did not confess. Even if others didn’t find out, either he or one of his family members could get sick. If he didn’t want to become sick, he had to confess if he wanted to have a good life.

Which of the tirigusuusiit can be used today?

Aupilaarjuk: I think some of them could be brought back because they are not dangerous. We tirigusuk when we refrain from doing something. Qallunaat also have tirigusuusiit such as not working on Sundays. This is a modern day tirigusungniq. Following tirigusungniq is not bad, it is good because it is part of our tradition. Inuit moved from living on the land to living in communities. How are we today? We commit crimes. Back then there was not so much crime. Nowadays, there are no tirigusuusiit. We have left this behind. We need to think about what our future will hold. I think it is important we take back some of the tirigusuusiit. They will not cause people to become bad. Just because they are a part of Inuit ukpirususiit, some people think they are no good and come from Satan. We are wrong to think like that. What we are following today is wrong and people are killing themselves. Inuit weren’t like that before. We have to look at where we came from and where we are today. Back then we truly believed in tirigusuusiit. You need to think about this when you are preparing for your future.

Was it only angakkuit who had dreams?

Aupilaarjuk: I think even qallunaat and dogs sinnaktuq, dream. When I used to teach children I would ask them if they had any dreams. I even asked my grandchildren who
are now bigger than me if they dreamt. I told them they should tell me about their dreams but they never told me anything. When I was young it was very important to our parents that we told them about our dreams. “Where was the dream coming from? Was there danger ahead?” They would take dreams very seriously. They used to ask us a lot about our dreams but nowadays dreams aren’t important anymore. There is another thing that doesn’t seem to happen anymore, uqumangirniq. This is when you are not sure if you are asleep or awake. You seem to be awake and are aware of what is around you. There is an element of perceived danger. You can’t move your body at all.

There is also itsarunnguniq, ringing in the ear. This is a feeling you have in your body, but it is not painful. In Igdlulik they call this aviujiniq, but in my dialect I say sivanaaq.

Imaruittuq: For example, one of my ears rings when it is going to be windy. If I had planned on going boating and I heard this ringing, I wouldn’t go. I would wait until the wind I knew was coming had passed.

Aupilaarjuk: Our ears can aviuj and our eyes can sajuk even when we dream. When I was in a course I was told that this ringing in the ear was caused by atmospheric pressure, but I didn’t believe this.

Akisu: Since long ago, these signs have been known to Inuit.

I am very curious to hear what you have to say about why so few people disobeyed the rules back then?

Aupilaarjuk: It is true that there were few people who broke the maligait. Back then it helped a lot that people got rid of what was bothering them. Even if they didn’t want to talk about their wrong-doings, the angakkuaq would uncover them. I have gone through this experience myself, where an angakkuaq uncovered something I had tried to keep hidden, but it was impossible to hide it. Today people keep what’s bothering them inside and it collects. It gets overwhelming to the point where they can’t talk about it. Judges today only have a book to follow. If we compare the angakkuit with judges, the judges are unable to find something out without being told. Back then an angakkuaq could find out things even if he wasn’t told about them. This is one aspect of the strength of the Inuit. Today we don’t have any more practicing angakkuit. If this were to be revived, we must use great caution. We have to continue to believe in God while we are reviving our traditions. Faith is the only way we can do this. God is very strong, and we know that even the greatest angakkuit will die. God will be the only one left.

What does anngiarilugit mean?

Aupilaarjuk: It means keeping a wrong-doing secret. If I stole something and didn’t say anything about it, either an angakkuaq would uncover this, or I would become sick from...
it. I was told not to steal, because the consequences could be scary and lead to hardship. I wasn’t told anything about Moses’ Ten Commandments. I was told not to steal, and not to make anything mine through that. This was said long ago before Inuit found out about Christianity.

Imaruittuq: Back then, there were not as many people living together. There were not nearly as many material things or as much food available back then. If we wanted food we had to go hunting for it. Today, we live together in large communities, which is difficult. We hear of many things that are troubling to us. When a lot of people from different places get together, a lot of undesirable behaviour begins to occur. This is the case in Iglulik. All kinds of people from the surrounding area have moved together. Even if we are from the same place, undesirable things start happening, if there are too many people.

Is this because there are too many people?

Imaruittuq: Yes, they start doing things that are destructive. It’s just like when too many dogs get together. They create trouble. It is the same with people.

Aupilaarjuk: I became a Christian after the missionaries arrived. The missionaries reached the other communities long before us. When the iksirarjuaq, the Catholic priest came, we were baptized and became Christians. He told us that our Inuit traditions were not good and we had to stop using them. It felt like we had to stop listening to our parents. It was like we entered a void. Later, I realized that I had stopped following the Inuit way, but I was not really a Christian either because I was not a true believer. I wasn’t living the way God wanted me to, and I wasn’t living according to our Inuit traditions. Afterwards, I tried to go back to Inuit ways because I think they are good. Although we were baptized we didn’t fully understand Christianity, even though we accepted it as our way of life and started to follow it. We are the way we are today because we didn’t fully understand it. If we understood Christ’s teaching properly we would have a good life. Because we are not true Christians and because we don’t follow the Inuit traditions anymore, this has led us to suicide. We do not understand either way.

Akisu: Yes, it feels like we are in the middle.

Aupilaarjuk: From what I understand some parts of qallunaat and Inuit morals and customs don’t mix. For example, the south has trees, the north does not. The rules and regulations were brought up to the north recently. Without fully understanding these rules, Inuit started attempting to follow them which caused disruption in the family. I know this for a fact. Today, people that have been to school understand these rules but they don’t know Inuit values and morals and customs. We have to ensure that we give young people this knowledge because this pattern has been set. It is now up to us elders to impart what we know. Our maligait are still there, but we have not brought them out

 Perspectives on Traditional Law
in the open. It is now time to expose young people to our maligait. They know qallunaatitut and if they also know the way of the Inuit they will be much stronger people. Family and spiritual life will be strengthened.

I have attended courses side-by-side with Dene. In these modules they practiced their traditional ways. I really envied them following their traditional ways because we Inuit let go of our traditional ways. We started following the qallunaaq way of doing things. They gave us what they knew because they didn’t know the Inuit way of doing things, and we just passively accepted. Now we are becoming more aware that we should be following our traditional ways and we should be passing this knowledge on to people like you. I think we should be joining together the good parts of qallunaat and Inuit ways.

I was told as a small child that if my ancestors had committed a wrong-doing, that we their descendants would have to pay for their mistakes. I’d like to know if this is true.

Aupilaarjuk: This is exactly what happened to my wife and me. Our ancestor did something that was very wrong, and because of that several of our children passed away at a young age. Our great-grandfather was an angakkuq who had killed another angakkuq. He told us about this. He did not want the consequences to fall upon us because it was he who had broken the maligaq. It was a maligaq that pertained to him. Even after I am dead, my descendants will still continue to be affected. This is very unfair, but that’s the way it works.

If our ancestors committed a wrong-doing is there anything we as descendants could do to avoid paying for their mistakes?

Aupilaarjuk: I will give you an example of this being stopped. We have a son of our own. This old woman from Naujaat, who recently passed away, always had a strong love for my wife and me. She told us to come after our son was born. She gave our little baby a piece of her clothing and gave him some water to drink in order for him to survive. She stopped this ill fortune from continuing in my family, as the power of wise people is also very strong. This is one way it can be stopped.

Let’s say someone in the past who had been wronged said, “This is what I want to happen to your descendants.” If the person who had been wronged died, could the descendants break this by doing a good deed or by expressing regret?

Aupilaarjuk: There is an end. My great-grandfather was an angakkuq and we paid the price for his wrong-doing in the generations that followed. Part of it was that some of
his grandchildren never lived to be adults; they died young. That’s why we are constantly told that we have to try and lead a good life and try to do good deeds. We are always told to take care of our bodies because they are precious, and to take care of our minds. If we do we will be able to do many things.

Is one of the maligait not to tease or make fun of a handicapped person?

**Aupilaarjuk:** Inuit really believe this. Inuit were adamantly told not to make fun of people with handicaps or their offspring would be affected with the same handicap. If I made fun of someone who was cross-eyed when I was young, my wife might give birth to a cross-eyed baby years later.

If there was a person who was unwilling to share, how would they try to improve their behaviour?

**Aupilaarjuk:** People selling meat causes discomfort to us older people. In the old days before money came into our lives, people would give you anything that you wanted. When someone caught a seal that would be a glorious time. Our wives would go and get meat at no cost. This is an Inuit piisig, the way things are, that is not being practised as much today. People used to have terms for each other based on parts of a seal. For example, if a person caught a seal, the term you used to address him would determine what part of the seal you received. For example, if another man and I called each other ukpatiraq, we would give each other the hip of the ugiul. You could not change the tuqerusiaiq, the term you had been given because it was not gift giving.

For example, if you called someone ukpatiraq and you caught a seal would you have to give that person that part of the seal?

**Aupilaarjuk:** When I was growing up in Arviligjuaq another person and I called each other this term. While we were both out hunting, he killed an ugiul. When I came home there was an ugiul hip complete with the blubber there. I knew right away it had been given to me by the person I called ukpatiraq. This made me very happy.

Today if you break the law, you will be incarcerated. In the old days, before arrests and incarceration took place, what did they do to deter people?

**Aupilaarjuk:** I was told when I was young that if I laughed at an older person or made him sad, I would bring something bad upon myself either through sickness or disability. We didn’t know which would happen, becoming disabled or becoming sick. It might not be me that would suffer the consequences, it might also be my loved ones. That is how they deterred us so we could live in harmony. You don’t make a situation better by
threatening a person or by putting them in jail. In the past, the deterrents and consequences were extremely severe. I think threatening people with incarceration just makes things worse. I don’t know this for sure, but this is what I think. The consequences that people suffered in the past were quite severe.

My mother didn’t drink water so that I wouldn’t be harmed by the ill thoughts of an angakkuq or by other evil that might be directed at me. That was the real reason my mother didn’t drink water. It was like a shield of protection, so I couldn’t be hurt by an angakkuq or by his or her tuurngaq.

Was this a protection against an angakkuq’s attack?

Aupilaarjuk: It was not exactly a shield of protection. I had aarnguat, amulets, also. I had a lot of aarnguat. They were taken away by the Catholic missionaries when we were baptized. Now we see a lot of qallunaat in important positions wearing necklaces. The qallunaat took our aarnguat away because they thought they were evil, but they were not evil. Through the help of my aarnguat and through the protection provided by my mother, I have been able to live a long life. We were able to live a long life only if we followed the maligait. Even if you had a lot of aarnguat, if you didn’t follow a maligaq, you would still be breaking it. You asked how tirigusuusiit and maligait were used. My mother was following the rules relating to a pittailiniq which she broke when she drank some water. When she broke it she didn’t tell anyone about it. She was afraid this would have serious consequences for me. I too had pittailiniq I had to follow. If I didn’t follow this, even though it was hard at the time, it would lead to serious consequences. I was not allowed to eat the eyes of a fish.

Why couldn’t you eat those?

Aupilaarjuk: So that if I was out hunting, and tried to sneak up on a caribou or another animal, it wouldn’t see me. Also, no one was allowed to wear my clothing, not even my wife. I envied my brothers because other people could wear their clothes. Only after my father died were others able to wear my clothes. When I was a newborn, my father shaped my life by saying that as long as he were alive, others were forbidden to wear my clothing. He did this because he didn’t want me to be shy, he wanted me to be able to express my thoughts and be able to look others in the eye. As he was an orphan, he didn’t have these abilities himself. This tirigusungniq would be broken after he died through me giving my wife my mitten and having her wear it on the opposite hand briefly. After that, that particular tirigusungniq with the clothing would be broken. Before my father died, he said that because he was the one who had prepared me for life, I would be the one who would prepare his body after death. He told me that after I had prepared his body I was to undo my mitten and have my wife put my mitten on.
her opposite hand briefly and the tirigusunngiq would be broken. This was a maligaq
even though we are told today we don’t have maligait. Some of the maligait were
unpleasant. When my father was alive if I was sitting on the floor, no one was allowed
to step over my legs. My parents would become very unhappy about this if it occurred
because it wasn’t supposed to happen. My sivuniksaq, my future, was being prepared for
me.

Are we fixing the sivuniksaq, the future, for Nunavut?

Aupilaarjuk: Exactly. We are preparing the future for Nunavut in the same way that in
the past our future was prepared for us.

Someone who commits a murder and someone who steals are committing
two different offences. Were these two offences looked upon as being of the
same severity? Were the wrong-doers treated differently?

Aupilaarjuk: They are not the same. Committing a murder was very serious. There was
always a possibility that someone would avenge the murder. We weren’t told what the
punishment for murder would be. We were told not to kill someone, or that death
would be avenged.

We had maligait about stealing. We were strongly discouraged not to steal. The
consequences for stealing hard objects were very severe as hard objects had amnuapquti,
something that could cause death. If it was a soft object, if it was meat, and we stole it,
it was not dangerous. But hard objects were dangerous, and we were absolutely
discouraged from stealing them. I am afraid of stealing hard objects to this day.

Did stealing meat or other soft objects as opposed to hard objects have
different consequences?

Aupilaarjuk: They had different consequences depending on the severity of the theft.

The law today says you shouldn’t steal and has different penalties
depending on the severity of the theft. We also looked at the severity
of the theft. It seems to be very similar.

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. It looks similar if you compare it like that. It is different if someone
steals something of little value as opposed to something valuable. If someone steals food
this should not be a cause for penalty. You can steal food if you are truly in need but you
should tell the person you took the food from after. But it is very wrong to steal and it
is very much discouraged.
Because hard objects had annuaqquti?

_Aupilaarjuk:_ Yes because of *annuaqquti*. It is dangerous and it can cause sickness. I can’t explain it any differently than that. I understand it like that.

Is there a term for stealing food?

_Aupilaarjuk:_ I don’t know if there is a special term for stealing food. I’m glad you ask questions but I am not able to answer all of them. My knowledge is very small, and it won’t be long before it is finished.

**Footnotes**

1. Qilaniq, A ritual used to find the cause of what was bothering a person by lifting the head or the leg.

2. In the past when dealing with a wrong doing, during the first encounter a person would be _uqallaujjau_, told he/she was loved and cared for, by the elders. During the second encounter the person was _iqqaqtuqijau_, reminded by the elders in a more harsh manner, and warned of the consequences of the wrong-doings.

3. Tuq&urasiq, the way two people address each other, by a kinship term, through a name-sake relationship, or an invented term to avoid calling a person by name. Calling a person by name was a sign of disrespect.

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_Tirigusuusiit and Maligait_
Respect for Wildlife

Respect for wildlife is a marked feature of Inuit culture, in the past as well as in the present. In many respects it is at the core of the tiriguusiit, maligait and piqujait. Although it is no longer assumed that game has an inua, or spirit, animals are thought to be aware of what is done to them. If game is not respected it will retaliate against the hunter or even the whole community. In the past, that could mean starvation. Today, the emphasis is on management of the wildlife. Respect for wildlife plays an important role as new and old traditions clash. Qallunaat are often insufficiently aware of the impact respect for wildlife has on the interactions between Inuit and qallunaat. Imaruittuq relates, “When we started dealing with land claims we had to talk a lot about wildlife. This created a lot of fear amongst the elders. They used to tell us not to quarrel about wildlife because this was a very dangerous thing to do. We explained to them that we had to quarrel about the wildlife because we were negotiating with the qallunaat and this was a qallunaat process. We explained that we were legitimately negotiating over the wildlife. This is a piqujaq that we must adhere to. We should not quarrel about wildlife or it will take revenge on us” Respect for wildlife implies that people do not kill for fun. Aupilaarjuk explains. “A long time ago Inuit would prepare for the future. Because we did not want to experience hardship we were told not to kill wildlife just for the sake of killing them.”

Aupilaarjuk: Inuit are told not to abuse wildlife. Some wildlife are taken great distances and set in human environments that are too hot for them. In their natural habitat they travel great distances, and they are not confined. When we Inuit hear about incidents where animals, such as walrus, are taken into captivity, we think that this is painful for them because they have feelings also. We have always been told not to abuse wildlife because we believe this causes hardship to the animals. We were told not to make fun of wildlife so we and our children would have a good life. We were constantly told this. We were told to be fearful of something bad happening to us if we abused wildlife. We were told to take good care of our wildlife and our land. Caribou and beluga are abundant. Sometimes when they were too numerous we didn’t know how to kill large numbers of them. But now in the winter we use snow machines and we shoot them and they freeze. Some people just take the hindquarters. Some caribou only have the tongues taken and the rest is left behind. This is not a good thing to see. This is something we elders don’t like at all. This is not something we Inuit have just started thinking. A long time ago Inuit would prepare for the future. Because we did not want to experience hardship we were told not to kill wildlife just for the sake of killing them.”
If someone killed an animal, and was disappointed with it, would this affect the person’s ability to catch more in the future?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes, eventually they would become unsuccessful hunters.

Today when I go walking, I see carcasses all over the place with only a few parts or the hindquarters missing.

Aupilaarjuk: Inuit were told not just to remove parts. We were also told never to leave carcasses behind. If the animal was too large and we had to leave part of it behind, we had to cache it carefully so we could go back to it in the winter. That is how we put the whole animal to use. We were very well organized in this matter. According to the Inuit piusiq, whoever left a carcass behind would be known to the wildlife. The person might deny doing it but the wildlife would know about it.

There are times you would come across bones. For instance, bones from a caribou that had been killed by wolves. We were told if we came across bones on the ground we were to turn them around and then leave them. I still follow this practice today. I’ll explain the reason for turning the bones. If I am in bed sleeping, I would become very tired if I just slept on one side. I would feel better if I were to move. In the same way, bones become tired from just lying in one way. It is in order for them to feel better that we have to turn them the other way. That is the maligaq concerning bones. I still follow this because I want to take away their tiredness.

We shouldn’t be killing our wildlife without reason. We should only be killing them for food. There is no need to have new laws about wildlife for Inuit had their maligait about wildlife, even though they were not written. The present laws about wildlife are not our maligait. The maligait that we follow are not seen because the Inuit piusiq is not visible. What I told you about the bones is a maligaq although it doesn’t require a licence. It is a maligaq where respect is shown through wanting the bones of the caribou to feel rested. That way we show our gratitude to the animal. This is an Inuit piusiq that is not being practiced anymore. In the past, all bones were carefully gathered together for this was one of the greater tirigusuusiit.

Were caribou bones and seal bones supposed to be kept separate?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. I know of this practice where the bones have to be kept separate and not put together. I, too, have been told this by elders. I am very aware of this because I am an elder. I’m not that old, but my life really started to change when the missionaries told us about Christianity. We were told that Inuit piusit were really bad. That is what we were told. From that point on my life really changed. I felt that I went into a void. We were no longer to follow the maligait of the Inuit if we were to begin to follow that
which was good. I think we are still in this state today. I think we have to begin thinking about where Inuit have come from and where we are going to go in the future. I think we are in a three way situation. We have to really think about this carefully for we have to plan ahead. We have to look to the past and look at where we were, we have to look where we are today. We see that people’s physical and mental well-being are deteriorating. We have to start reviving ourselves again. We can do this together, Inuit and qallunaat. Through working together we will get strength. If we work together there will not be divisions. Life would be a lot easier and more enjoyable. If we don’t work together there will be more hardship. We don’t know of what kind, but it will be there.

Were caribou bones never supposed to be thrown in the water?

**Aupilaarjuk:** They were not to be thrown in the water. This is still practised today. Because we still practise this today we can say that we still tirigusuk. When we tirigusuk, this is an indication that we still want to follow the maligait of the Inuit. If we follow such a maligaq properly we are not doing something wrong.

How do you discard fish or other animal bones? How do you get rid of them?

**Aupilaarjuk:** We talked about caribou bones and how you shouldn’t throw them in the water. With seal and fish bones, it is all right to throw them in the water because that is where they came from. Maybe out of consideration of it being a land animal, caribou bones were not thrown in the water. We were told that if we are from the land we would not enjoy being in the water. I also talked about having to turn bones around. You can look at this in a similar way. That is why we were told not to throw caribou bones in the water. They were collected and left on the land.

What do you think about narwhal and polar bear tags being required?

**Imaruittuq:** I’ve never thought of this. I see it as a deterrent. There are now a lot of people up here, both Inuit and qallunaat, and if we didn’t have this licencing maybe we would just be killing wildlife indiscriminately and that is contrary to Inuit maligait.

Do you think the human mind can be affected by the weather?

**Aupilaarjuk:** When there is a full moon, the tide is high, it often rains and we know that the pull of the moon is very strong. We Inuit have known this for a long time. Even though it has never been put into words we are affected by the weather. When it is raining we would become lethargic. My mother and father would sleep during the day when it was raining. They never said why. I know that we are really affected by the weather.
What did you think about the arviq, bowhead whale hunt, that happened outside of Naujaat?

Aupilaarjuk: I don’t know how to answer your question fully because I am not a whale hunter, but I have been against the bowhead whale hunt since it became commercial. In the old days, we just hunted whale for the meat. We also didn’t try to hunt them to extinction. Inuit were not able to hunt bowhead for a long time. We feel that it wasn’t the Inuit that made the bowhead an endangered animal, it was the whalers. I’m not really able to say much about this, but it is my opinion that Inuit should be in charge of how the bowhead are hunted. Inuit should be in charge of their land because we do not try to hunt animals until they are extinct. We have always tried to be careful with our hunting. This is what I think. There has been a quota placed on polar bears. In the past we had no quotas. Because there is a quota system in place in the communities today, it seems that the number of bears killed has increased because the people keep hunting them until the quota has been met. I believe if Inuit were free to hunt polar bear they would be killing fewer bears than they actually are. In the past I remember that we wouldn’t even get five polar bears over the winter. Now they hunt them until they reach the quota.

Were there natural fluctuations in the polar bear and caribou populations?

Aupilaarjuk: The wildlife up here cannot be treated like domestic animals. They were given to us for our use. At times caribou are very hard to come by and then all of a sudden there is an abundance of them. They are like plants, sometimes they are here and sometimes they are gone. If we are good managers, they are not going to disappear. If we don’t manage them, there will be hardship. We have to constantly take care of each other and it is the same for wildlife. This is a strong maligaq for Inuit. If we followed this we would be in a much better situation. If educated people included Inuit knowledge when making decisions, the management of wildlife would be much better, even long after we elders are dead. You are asking this question based on your piusiit. I am always amazed when I learn about things based on questions of young people. It is sharing knowledge that brings us closer together. There are different piusiit among Inuit. For example, our custom is that if you are going to feed fish heads to the dogs you have to pop the eyes out first before you give it to the dogs.

I have heard there are some animals that try to trick us and give us bad experiences. Is this true?

Aupilaarjuk: I have heard about hunters being tricked by wildlife. Inuit believe that this deception is not coming from the wildlife but from another human being, likely an angakkuaq. Because this could be coming from an angakkuaq, it could be very dangerous.
The angakkut could become an animal and lead us astray, causing us to become lost. A real animal does not try to make you do something wrong; this instead comes from the mind of a person.

People say we should not make fun of wildlife, even in our speech. Is this true?

Akisu: Yes. For example, you are not even to laugh at wildlife. Although it is not abusing wildlife directly, you should not be doing this.

One time I was out hunting caribou near Allinaqtuq. I really wanted tunnuq. I had a rifle with me and I started walking inland. My father-in-law was walking with his son behind me. I was up ahead. There was a huge caribou in front of me that was watching me. Because it was so large I was amazed at the size of it. The beard hair was really long. I shot at it repeatedly but it wouldn’t die. It just looked at me. I was awe struck at my inability to kill it. When I ran out of bullets it started to move. It was with two smaller caribou that were following it. When they started moving I started following them, but they didn’t run, they just walked away. When I got back to my tent my father-in-law told me that it was a tuurnngaq. I was seeing the tarniq of the caribou.

Aupilaarjuk: This is true. There are numerous men who have experienced this and not told about it. In a sense we are just trying to hide the experience. Sometimes we are close to talking about it but are unable to do so. We are still like this in our lives. I too have something I should tell about, but I have not been able to talk about this thing that I saw not too long ago.

At that time I was thinking that it was because of my great desire to have something tasty that I saw something like this.

Aupilaarjuk: We can’t really say why it is we see these things. It isn’t because of wanting something too much that we see these things. We cannot control what we see, and don’t see. We cannot say, “I would like to see something because I have a child with me,” and make this happen.

Were birds of prey considered different from other birds?

Imaruittuq: From the time we were small we were taught to have the highest respect for all wildlife even for the smallest bird. We were told to treat all wildlife with respect, even baby birds and animals. If we didn’t do this they could take revenge on us. If we abused
a certain part of an animal, that same part within us would be affected. We have to ensure that the younger generation is aware of this as well. Wildlife have to be given the highest respect. There is a story about a man who shot a caribou in the leg disabling it. The wounded caribou was still alive when he cut off its nose because he wanted to eat it. As a result of this, later in his life his nose became decayed and it fell off. This is what happens if you mistreat wildlife.

Even insects should be treated with respect. We were taught not to mistreat black flies and mosquitoes because they could take revenge on us as well. There was a hunter who used his scope to burn mosquitoes. The next thing he knew he was being swarmed by them. When they swarm around you it can be suffocating, it can be that bad. You shouldn’t mistreat insects. You can squash them, but you can’t mistreat them.

You were saying that you had to respect wildlife and treat them properly. Let’s say I was trying to tire out a polar bear with my snowmobile, what would happen to me?

Imaruittuq: You are not allowed to abuse animals or toy with them. Not too long ago, there was a hunter who tried to tire out a caribou with his snowmobile, to a point where the caribou was having a hard time breathing. Later in life he developed breathing problems.

So it’s fine to hunt wildlife as long as you don’t mistreat them?

Imaruittuq: If you legitimately hunt wildlife and don’t cause them to suffer, if you respect them, then it is fine. There will be suffering on occasion but you have to try and minimize this out of respect for the animal. We should not even make nasty comments about wildlife. We shouldn’t quarrel about them amongst ourselves. Wildlife has been placed on this Earth for us to use, but we must treat them with respect.

When we started dealing with land claims we had to talk a lot about wildlife. This created a lot of fear amongst the elders. They used to tell us not to quarrel about wildlife because this was a very dangerous thing to do. We explained to them that we had to quarrel about the wildlife because we were negotiating with the qallunaat and this was a qallunaat process. We explained that we were legitimately negotiating over the wildlife. This is a piqujaq that we must adhere to. We should not quarrel about wildlife or it will take revenge on us.

Nutaraaluk said that because some people were arguing about food, the walrus population is low right now.
Imaruittuq: There are many stories that are passed on orally that make a lot of sense. There is a story about a hunter who shot a walrus. He was pushed into the water by another hunter so he would die from hypothermia. While the walrus was being hunted the crime was committed. The wildlife take revenge for incidents like this every time.

In Iglulik recently there was a hunter who never came back after narwhal hunting. He was always complaining about other hunters and competing with them. I started thinking about this and said on the radio that it is dangerous to quarrel about animals or to mistreat them. There are times when we are hunting and we are unsuccessful, but we shouldn’t get angry about it or say bad things about the wildlife or they will take revenge on us.

Even the lakes should be treated properly. We shouldn’t throw our garbage in them because the fish will disappear. The pijuajit about wildlife are very strict. We are told not to talk about wildlife as that can be potentially dangerous. For example, I shouldn’t say I want to see a polar bear because I will see one when I am off-guard and least expect it. This could happen from just saying that. We were told not to be disrespectful towards wildlife. For example, if you had a lemming as a pet and you used it to scare other children, this would be considered abusive.

If there was a hunter who abused wildlife would the animal’s revenge end with the hunter or would it be passed down to the next generation?

Imaruittuq: It could be passed to the next generation. It is not only the hunter himself, his immediate family could also suffer from what he did. If I was toying with or mistreating an animal, the very person I love the most could suffer from what I did.

For example, if you were mistreating wildlife, something could happen to you grandchildren?

Imaruittuq: Yes, something might happen to my grandchildren if I mistreated or abused an animal.

What would happen if you over-harvested wildlife?

Imaruittuq: There is no pijuajit about over-harvesting wildlife. We are told not to mistreat or abuse wildlife or it can become depleted. For example, there were two lakes that were known to be good for ice fishing. There was a man who grumbled and said bad things about wildlife. Because of what he said, one lake was rapidly depleted of fish and today it is a very bad fishing place even though it is a large lake which should have fish. The fish are coming back to the other lake because they have finished getting even with him. If we are happy and gracious towards wildlife, they will be in great abundance. If we are not thankful and do not appreciate them, they will disappear.
When I had a first kill I always had to give the meat to my wife through my name, or to my mother. Does it help to follow this practice?

**Imaruittuq:** Yes, it does help. When a person catches an animal for the first time it must be distributed and consumed completely. If any of the meat is saved it will stall the catching of more animals in the future. For this reason a first kill should be eaten as soon as possible. If you are named after a person and that person’s wife is still alive you are obligated to give some of that meat to your wife through your name. This is a strong maligaq that should be followed.

If the parents of the person you were named after were still alive, you were obligated to give them meat also. If you didn’t give meat to the people who should be receiving it, they would feel hurt. This is why you have to distribute a first kill in the community.

If I was a successful hunter and I bragged about how good I was, could this be dangerous?

**Imaruittuq:** Yes, it could be dangerous. If successful hunters from one camp said to the hunters of another camp, “What’s wrong with you? Why don’t you have any food?” this would be very wrong. Perhaps this winter they might have a lot, but the next winter they might go through hard times. That’s why we were told never to brag about how successful we were or how much food we had. We were told never to challenge or put down other hunters. Inuit always tried to help each other out. If I had a lot of meat one year, I would distribute and share it, for maybe the next year I would need assistance because I wouldn’t be catching anything. In the Kivalliq area there used to be times of hunger and they had to travel long distances to catch wildlife. In the coastal areas it was very different. In Iglulik there were always marine animals even though the walrus moved further away in summer.

When you are teaching your children to hunt, are there maligait for cutting up and butchering an animal?

**Imaruittuq:** Yes, there is a maligaq for cutting and butchering caribou. You have to remember that the skin is going to be made into clothing. If you didn’t skin it properly, the women would be very angry with you for ruining a skin that could have been made into clothes. You have to respect and follow the proper procedure for cutting up wildlife. You don’t have to pay much attention to winter skins but you have to be careful with summer skins because they are thin and if you ruin them they cannot be used for clothing. There is a proper way to remove the skin from the carcass. You also have to be careful with walrus. If you are going to make iguqaq, fermented walrus meat, out of it, you have to cut the hide properly. You can only learn this by watching others.
If there were a lot of caribou in a herd, did you have to pick a certain one to shoot? Did you have to pay attention to whether it was a yearling or not, or if it was male or female?

Imaruituq: Today, I like to get caribou that have a lot of fat on them. In the past, they used to try and get as many as they could because they had to provide food not only for people but also for dogs. The first thing you have to do is shoot the leader. If you don’t, and the leader escapes, the others will follow. The prime catches were female, calves and yearlings as they were the best skins for clothing. Although we don’t use caribou clothing as much anymore, it is the warmest clothing for the cold winter months. In the past, when we travelled by dogteam, I used to make sure my children and the older people had caribou footwear because it was warm.

You always try to pick the best animal for what you would be using it for afterwards. If we were making igunaq we would look for the fattest walrus we could get. If we wanted tusks we would go after the one with the biggest tusks. Before there were stores we were even more dependent on wildlife. We depended on them for food, clothing and other survival needs.

In Europe people are against the seal hunt because they say seals are being hunted for their skins only. What do you think about this?

Imaruituq: This is very frustrating. Except for wolverines and wolves all wildlife is hunted for food. In the past, we even used to eat fox meat. We eat all parts of the seal, even the flippers. What these people say is not true. The first time I heard about this, I couldn’t believe it because it was such a lie. Inuit are not the only ones that eat seal meat, qallunaat do as well.

Is it true that we were not to talk about how abundant the wildlife was in a certain area?

Imaruituq: Yes, I’ve heard this. I will explain this to you. Let’s say I was out hunting yesterday and I killed five seals in a certain area and I told another hunter this. Then he told me he was going there tomorrow. When he arrived there the next day there wouldn’t be any more seals. There weren’t seals there because people had talked about how abundant the wildlife was in that location. We were never to talk about this because wildlife are always on the move and chances are you are not going to find any more if you go back to the same location. That was a piqiujaq. We were not to talk about how abundant the wildlife was in a certain area for if we did, they wouldn’t be there when we went back the second time.
Dealing with Wrong-doers

In the past, elders corrected wrong-doers by counselling. They appreciate the value of Canadian law, but they are convinced that counselling is often a better way of dealing with offences, particularly with minor offences and first offences. Thus Imaruittuq states, “Serious offences should certainly be dealt with by Canadian courts. If we were asked to provide input into those serious offences, then we could. We should not let serious offences be dealt with only by the Canadian court system. We should also be involved with these more serious crimes because we do have knowledge and wisdom to pass on.” Young offenders should not be intimidated by courts, but counselled by elders. The second part of this chapter deals with offences against women and children. The attitude towards arranged marriages has changed, but the elders still feel that arranged marriages were a good institution. In the past, sexual morals were different and the treatment of widows and orphans was sometimes harsh. But there were also incentives to be kind towards those who had lost close relatives. Thus Aupilaarjuk states, “Children who lost their parents were not to be put through mental hardship for they say that a child has a nagilkti which cannot be seen. We were told not to mistreat orphans. We were told to help the child for our life would be prolonged through the nagilkti’s gratitude. Our family members would also have a good long life. I don’t think the need for us to look after children has changed.”

I think there were people in your community that misbehaved and didn’t follow rules. How were they dealt with?

Imaruittuq: Before the court system came into our lives and before the R.C.M.P. we always had rules in our camps. Misbehaviour has always been a part of life, and when there was misbehaviour, the community elders would get together and deal with that individual. The only way to deal with such people was to talk to them face to face.

Akisu: I have seen and experienced how people who had done something wrong were dealt with by the community. My father was an angajuqqaaq, a leader, in our camp. When another man did something he was not supposed to, my father counselled him himself. The next time he went with another person to counsel him. It was somewhat like going through the court system today. This was our way of correcting bad behaviour in the community. This used to be practised when it became known that someone was doing something they weren’t supposed to. I was also there when a man that took something he was not supposed to was dealt with. The owner of the object that had been stolen
approached my father as he was the *angajuqqaaq* and told him that something had been stolen from him and asked him to do something about it. My father went to the thief and he told him he should stop this type of behaviour because this type of behaviour was not acceptable. My father told him he didn’t want anyone to do this type of thing. I never heard of him doing anything like that again. I really remember that incident. That’s how they used to deal with someone who had committed a wrong-doing.

**Imaruittuq:** I can only agree with him. If there was any type of strife in the community, they used to get together and talk to the person or persons causing it. If they listened the first time, then that would be the end of the matter but if they persisted, the second round of counselling would be more severe and unlike the first time, they did not talk about the good in the person or about how the person was loved by the community members. If they still persisted, then the counselling would be even more intimidating. Nothing was written, what was said all came from the minds of the elders. My grandfather and his father before him used to do this since they were the *isumatait*, the leaders, of the people living in Avvajja. I have heard that my grandfather twice asked people who were not living in our camp to come because he heard about their unacceptable behaviour and he wanted to help them deal with it. The two people he did this with were adults so their behaviour improved right away. Even though my grandfather was a great counsellor he gave up on his own son. He kept trying to make his son a better person, but he gave up. Because his son did not want to change, my grandfather said that if there was anyone who felt they needed to take revenge on his son, they were free to do so. As his son did not want to change, he would have to face-up to the consequences of his actions.

You talked about counselling men. What was done if the offender was a woman?

**Imaruittuq:** Women would be dealt with by female elders, but if necessary men could also deal with them. I heard a story about a camp that was going through starvation. Of all the hunters in the camp, only the *angakkuq* was still able to go hunting. He went seal hunting and came back with three human babies. He brought three babies back with him from hunting. He had to deal with this as they were near starvation. Even though he was a man, he had to deal with three women. If he didn’t deal with this, the whole camp would have starved to death. He found out the reason why this was happening, because he was an *angakkuq*. These three women were the cause of them facing hunger. Problems that were not life threatening were dealt with by the elders, but if there was a crisis the whole community would become involved.
If I were the wrong-doer, would someone come to see me or would I be requested to go to see them?

Imaruittuq: You would be requested to go to see them.

How did they request someone to come?

Imaruittuq: If the person who was doing the counselling did not want the whole community to find out then they would go to the wrong-doer so they wouldn’t be ashamed. But if they felt there was a need for more elders to be present, then you would be asked to come. It is like today in the court system; there are some offences that are more serious than others. In the old days it was the same way. If it was a minor thing, if it was just a man and wife that were quarrelling, they would be counselled by one elder, but if it was a serious matter, the elders would get together as a group to deal with it.

Would the counsellors all be men?

Imaruittuq: Any elder could be a counsellor. Men were not the only ones with wisdom. In the old days, both men and women dealt with issues equally. For example, there was a male angakkuq who was unable to use his powers to help the whole community. So a female angakkuq was given a gift and through the giving of this gift, was requested to give assistance. The angakkuq always had to be given a gift. The female angakkuq was requested to give assistance because the male angakkuq was not successful. She said, “Here I am a mere woman who menstruates, I will undoubtedly not be successful.” She said this to all the people because she had little confidence in herself. But because people had given her a gift, and had shown confidence in her abilities, she had no choice but to perform. So she tried to cut the strength of the wind during a blizzard. At first she was unable to do so. She said, “I cannot use this knife because this knife has been used to murder someone.” She asked for another knife, and then it worked. There are times when a woman is able to do something that a man cannot. It has always been like that. After she cut the strength of the wind with the knife, she told them that the weather would improve and they would be able to catch animals again. She told them she wanted them to give her the first seal that was caught. That was the request that she made.

Akisu: Men are not the only ones with wisdom. Women’s minds have always been stronger. It is still like that today. We should never put women down or tell them they are weak and unable. We all have areas of ability. If we men were all to do an activity I might be quite poor at one activity, but I might be the best at another one. There are times we might think we are better than another person, only to find out they can better us.
I heard of situations where the whole community was present while the offender was being counselled. Was that the case?

Imaruittuq: Absolutely not. Only the elders were present when they would counsel the offenders. The elders did not want others present in case they might gossip. Gossip has a tendency to grow and as it grows people often add things that might not be true. Therefore only the elders that were to participate in the counselling were to be present. All the children were sent out and told not to come back in for a while. I have only heard of one individual who was counselled in front of the whole camp. This was done in an attempt to embarrass the person. Although this person had been counselled individually, he persisted in his bad behaviour and therefore the next phase of counselling was more harsh, more embarrassing and more intimidating for the individual. This happened only if there were further incidents of wrong-doing. This did not happen at the beginning, for at the beginning they took great care not to cause pain to the individual.

Akisu: The first attempt at counselling was more relaxed but still very serious. Sometimes even the second attempt was still relaxed, but if this went on and they didn’t change, it would escalate as Imaruittuq outlined.

Imaruittuq: The process was not an easy one, for people took care not to hurt each other emotionally. Therefore they did not do this frivolously.

Akisu: If offenders were not made to feel embarrassed, and they understood what was said to them, there would be more of a chance to improve that person’s behaviour. The way it is now, it seems that people are left on their own. If we started to follow the way of our ancestors again, people would be helped and this would be very positive. Here in our community, when our young people started attending school, our elders were not included in their education. We were left behind. But now we want to take part in what is happening. That is why we should keep on talking about how things used to be done. Because it is not written, people think it does not exist. This makes us feel like we are caught in the middle. As our land Nunavut is different from the land down South, in the same way the culture of the two people is different from each other. Not everything that is taught in school is useful to our situation up here. You who have been educated in the school system, are probably unable to make use of the Inuit pisig. If you began to understand this, then it could be put to use. Although we speak different dialects and are from different regions, for example, Aaju has come from Greenland, when we are speaking amongst each other, often the only differences are the terms that we use. My fellow elders do not speak the same dialect that I do. My dialect is uqqumiutitut, but I understand what they are saying. They are saying the same things about the pijuqait and pisig of our ancestors. If these were understood by the younger generation, they could come alive again.
Imaruittuq: One thing we know for sure is that there were no jails in the old days. Everything was dealt with through counselling, the offenders were never sent to jail.

*If there was a hunter who was killing animals just for the sake of killing them, would he be dealt with by the elders?*

Imaruittuq: Yes, he would be dealt with by the elders. He had to face the elders and face the consequences of his wrong-doing.

*If there was more than one individual who had committed a wrong-doing, would they go before the committee of elders together or would they go individually?*

Imaruittuq: I told you about three women who had caused a problem for the whole community. They were dealt with together. They were summoned together into one iglu. Two of them confessed but the other one didn’t. The angakkuit told her she would be the only one to die. Because the two other women confessed, the community was saved from the brink of destruction. They had the option to counsel a person individually; this was done where it was warranted.

*If the offender lied and said he didn’t commit the offence, how was he dealt with?*

Imaruittuq: That happened after we stopped relying on angakkuit. In the old days people investigated and asked other people if there were any witnesses. They investigated to make sure that what they were hearing was true.

**What is misiaqtuq?**

Imaruittuq: It is denying something completely. If a person denied something completely, for example, if in the case of incest where people are so embarrassed they deny this, this would be misiaq, even though their wrong-doing is pointed out to them. Misiaq is the word we would use to describe someone who is denying something even though all the facts indicate otherwise. The person who committed the offence would be asked again whether or not they committed the wrong-doing. It would be obvious that the person was denying it.

*If I committed a murder and everyone knew about it, could my immediate relatives go before the elders and ask that I not be dealt with too harshly?*
Imaruittuq: I have never heard of this, but we love our relatives dearly and always come to their defence. Of course there are the victim’s relatives who will always want revenge. There is a recent story about a man whose younger brother was murdered. He used to wonder how he could make them pay for what they did. He was mourning the loss of his younger brother and he wanted revenge. He wanted to kill one of the murderers. The victim’s relatives counselled him and said maybe he shouldn’t do that because it could have so many other consequences. An outright feud between camps might occur. I am sure our ancestors thought very clearly about what kind of action to take. The greatest consequence of committing a murder was that the immediate relatives would definitely want revenge. There were all sorts of ways that the immediate family could take revenge, and you never knew when that revenge would take place. Even women could take revenge. Today things are different.

Was that a maligaq?

Imaruittuq: If someone took revenge on another for committing a murder, there was nothing the community could do against the person who took revenge. It’s the same with children, if you had a child that instigated a fight and another child paid him back and made your child cry, there is nothing you could do about it. You couldn’t come to their defence.

Did people also pikkaqtitti, blame others for their actions?

Imaruittuq: Yes, there were people who blamed others for their actions. Some children always tried to blame others for starting something and that is not a good way to grow up. You come home and tattle about a person who hurt you so that you could hurt him back. There are many possible scenarios. When we were children if we were afraid of getting in trouble for something we had done, even though we instigated it, we would try to blame it on another child. There is a man who is an elder now, who as an adopted child used to blame other children for things he had done. His adopted parents loved him so much they believed him. Even today, he still blames his actions on others. He seems to look for the negative in other people all the time. When he blamed others for his actions he was believed, and this developed into a habit for him. I might be misjudging him, but that’s how I see it. If a child was brought up being told not to lie, but to tell the truth, then the child would not grow up to be a liar. But when a child is always lying and the parents believe him, then the child grows up to be a chronic liar. They learn that if they lie people will believe them, and they take this habit into their adult lives.

Back then didn’t people commit wrong-doings?
Aupilaarjuk: Back then, even if someone did something wrong and they didn’t tell about it, the angakkuq was able to uncover this, and get them to confess so their wrong-doings were out in the open. If there were no angakkuit these wrong-doings would have collected inside them. Today we can tell our ministers and priests about our wrong-doings, but we have to go to them first. But some young people today are unable to do this and there are not angakkuit around to see their wrong-doings anymore. It is like we are accumulating a debt that will not be paid until Judgement Day. This is how I think about this. Back then we didn’t have this problem. The angakkuit would make us confess what we did because it was visible to them, but now it is not the same.

Tulimaaq: The thing that made the person sick was taken away by the angakkuq.

Would the isumataq or the angajuqqaaq also be involved in helping someone who had done something wrong or was it just the angakkuq who would do this?

Aupilaarjuk: The wrong-doer was summoned to come to a gathering. Sometimes the angakkuq was present and sometimes not. I have done this myself in Kangiqsiiq. My nephew and his girlfriend were going through some difficulties. I asked them to come to my house and I asked all my other children to come too. Only our family was there. We locked the door because we were going to hear about some unpleasant things. If things of a serious nature were said, we didn’t want them spread around as gossip. They started talking about things they would not normally have talked about, things they were keeping secret. We can still do this today if we want to. But you should be careful not to include persons who are not part of the family because that person might repeat the things that were said. The wrong-doer who confessed might end up in a worse situation if what he said became an item of gossip.

Was that done in other communities as well?

Imaruittuq: It also occurred in Iglulik. If unacceptable things were happening, the people involved would be gathered together so others could talk with them. Our grandfather Ittuksaarjuat is known to have sent for people from outside his camp to talk to them about their behaviour. Elders would get together to try to put things in order again. As young people, we are not really concerned about how we live until someone makes us aware of our behaviour. You are not aware of your own actions.

What does suquisiqquujinani mean?

Imaruittuq: It is when your behaviour has changed but you are not aware of it until someone brings this to your attention. Inuit had to be aware of others. We didn’t just ignore people, although in some cases the angakkuit would advise us to ignore someone. I have witnessed these ways of doing things. Our lifestyle changed after people turned to Christianity.
When the elders counselled people who had broken the maligait, were all people treated equally? Would the isumataq be dealt with in the same way?

Imaruittuq: Yes. It used to be like that. Even the isumataq was treated the same. I had a lot of sons who always caught wildlife. I would be considered as the tuqqaggag, the man responsible for distributing meat in a camp. If I was distributing meat and discriminated against a widow or another who was less fortunate, I would be counselled, even though I had a very high profile in the community. If an elder felt that the isumataq had made an error, he would discuss with the other elders how to deal with the isumataq. In the old days, when we were totally dependent on wildlife, I would make the decisions concerning hunting. Hunting decisions were not my wife’s responsibility, but if she knew I was making a bad decision, she had the obligation to tell me. If I was going out hunting with two older men and the older one wanted to cross through very rough waters and I didn’t think it was safe, even though I was the youngest, I could say that I thought we should wait for better weather. Even though I was the youngest, I could tell someone who was older that I thought they were making the wrong decision. If a person who is older is making a decision and you think it is wrong, you have the obligation to tell them that.

Akisu: If you think that someone who is older than you is doing something wrong, you shouldn’t just think about this, you should tell them this directly, especially when there is danger involved.

Imaruittuq: I came into this world when stories of angakkuit were still prevalent, even though shamanism was no longer practised. I came into this world after boats with sails were being used. My grandfather had numerous sons and was able to buy a boat with a sail. I think that’s why I never saw qaajait being used. I came into this world after Christianity had arrived and by then the counselling process used by the angakkuit to find out about wrong-doings was no longer being used.

In the old days, wrong-doings used to be dealt with through counselling. What was done after Christianity arrived?

Imaruittuq: We’ve talked about how the elders would get together to counsel someone. This was done using words. Before Christianity, the angakkuit were able to make the causes of the wrong-doings visible. When the missionaries arrived they said that Christianity was beautiful, and it would lead to an excellent life. Only part of Christianity was relevant to our culture. Since Christianity has come into our lives we are miserable and unhappy inside. If Christianity had not preached that our culture was evil, maybe a lot of the people that committed suicide would still be alive today. The incarceration rate would not be as high if Inuit culture had been integrated into
Christianity. We should have used our traditional ways when dealing with wrong-doings. People that never went through the school system know how powerful counselling can be for dealing with a problem, without making the person feel bad. We had a system in place that did not damage a person emotionally. We would deal with a wrong-doer with sincerity and without hurting the person; we could rectify most behavioural problems. Only if there were repeated offences, were severity and intensity necessary during counselling. You have to look at someone’s face. You have to show a person that they are loved and that people care for them.

In the court system used today, do you think that people appearing for the first time are intimidated?

Imaruittuq: Yes. The person is faced with intimidation, fear and shame. They feel badly so they make things worse for themselves. If the Inuit ways were used, they would have felt sincerity and concern, but today they see it as hopeless. They just say, “Forget it. I don’t care anymore. I might as well just make things worse.” If I were before the court and was made to feel guilt, fear and intimidation and felt alienated from the whole process I would just say, “Forget this. I don’t care anymore” as well.

Akisu: If the court system dealt with people with sincerity and caring, I think we would have a lot fewer minor offences being committed. We have two ways of dealing with offenders; through the court system and the Inuit way. These processes are different from each other. We are forced to use a system we know nothing about. Imaruittuq was saying that the court system could be very detrimental to an individual. Inuit ways should be integrated into the court system. I have said this to key members of the community. Our system should be used to deal with minor offences, but not major offences. The elders have often requested that minor offences be dealt with in the community instead of being dealt with by the courts and sending offenders to jail. I have been dealing with people given probation by the court for quite some time now. I try my best to use the knowledge that has been passed down to me to help deal with these offenders. Part of their probation would be that they would come and see me every week. These people would not re-offend because we used traditional counselling while dealing with the person. Imaruittuq was saying that every individual deserves sincere, caring treatment if they are a first time offender. They shouldn’t be intimidated or made to feel fearful. The elders could easily handle first time offenders. This is an enormous resource that is just waiting to be used. More and more people are starting to speak up about traditional counselling as a way of dealing with first offenders. Even though our system is not written down, it works effectively as a deterrent to repeated offences. Some of our knowledge comes from what we have heard, and some of it is from what we have seen or experienced.
Imaruittuq: We want to make this clear to you, we don’t want to deal with serious offences such as offences committed using a weapon. We don’t mind the Canadian justice system dealing with serious offences. It is all right if those offenders are incarcerated. We are talking about dealing with minor offences. We do not want to deal with major offences. The Canadian courts can deal with serious offences.

Akisu: If it is a minor offence we can use the knowledge that has been passed on to us to deal with the problem right in our community. I would like to see the court system amended so that minor offences were dealt with in the community, while serious offences remained in the court. Minor offences could easily be dealt with by the community.

Imaruittuq: Serious offences should certainly be dealt with by Canadian courts. If we were asked to provide input into those serious offences, then we could. We should not let serious offences be dealt with only by the Canadian court system. We should also be involved with these more serious crimes because we do have knowledge and wisdom to pass on.

If you were given the opportunity to get involved with less serious offences, how would you go about it? Would you use the Canadian Criminal Code, or the Northwest Territories Act and other by-laws that exist today? If you did have a chance to deal with these minor offences, would you be willing to do this?

Imaruittuq: We could deal with it. We are discussing minor offences committed by people. In the future, if we are asked to deal with more serious offences, then we could. I was explaining to you earlier, we are talking about minor offences being dealt with in the community. We should be given the opportunity to deal with an individual who has committed a first offence.

Akisu: It should be made clear that we want to deal with minor offences. Of course in each case we have to clearly understand the facts and circumstances involved in order to be effective.

Imaruittuq: In the first stage we would only deal with minor offences. We want the opportunity to deal with first offenders. We want them to be dealt with by a sincere, caring person. That way there is more of a chance they will regret their actions. There are two types of people: those who regret their actions and therefore change, and others who do not and continue to re-offend. We have to realize we’re not always going to be successful. We have thought a lot about dealing with those committing minor offences.
How should we approach and counsel individuals who have committed serious offences?

Imaruittuq: In the court system there are two lawyers, the prosecutor and the defence who appear before the judge when they are dealing with a case. In the old days, the elders were the judges. They didn’t have lawyers on either side. The elders worked together. They were trying to rehabilitate the offender. That's what they were working towards. They didn’t say things like, “You committed an offence towards this person,” because that just made it worse.

Why do the elders feel they could not deal with major offences? Why do the elders feel this?

Akisu: In South Baffin before the courts came up here, we used to deal with more serious offences. After a serious offence was committed the whole community would watch the offender constantly because they felt he might offend again. The person needed to be watched continuously to ensure he was not going to commit an offence again. Today, this is not possible, so only the minor offences can be dealt with by the elders. The more serious ones should be dealt with by the Canadian court system.

Imaruittuq: Murder is the most serious offence. Once a person has committed murder, that person becomes a threat to the community for the rest of his life. Incarcerating these individuals is the best way to deal with them, because it removes the threat from the community. In the past, they dealt with a murderer with extreme caution at all times, because they knew it was always possible he would re-offend. Minor offences such as theft and breaking and entering can be dealt with by the elders. We can do marriage counselling. Attempted murder and murder are the most serious offences. Today’s way of incarcerating those offenders is appropriate, because then they are no longer a threat to the community.

Today in the court system we have a defence lawyer and a prosecutor trying to prove their own sides. In the old days, did the accused defend themselves? Were they allowed to speak on their own behalf or not?

If a person had been falsely accused he would have the opportunity to speak on his own behalf. If the person stated he had been wrongly accused the elders would tell him he could go for the time being so that they could speak to the person who had made the allegation. They would also try to find out if there was anyone else who had pertinent information. Once that happened they would decide what was the truth.
We have read in some of the qallunaat materials that sometimes offenders were banished from the community. Did they do that?

**Imaruittuq:** Yes. If the individual did not listen to the counselling after several attempts, then the person was told to live on his own if he didn’t want to abide by the rules of the community. Later he would realize that he did have something to contribute and when he started thinking about this, he would want to go back to the community. That’s part of being wise. All of us here have a mind. We are all able to think. The person who they were trying to rehabilitate also had a mind. They wanted him to be part of the community. If he decided not to listen they would either shun him, or as I mentioned earlier, whoever he offended was free to pay him back. They were not totally abandoned but they wanted them to think of the consequences of their actions.

In my community a person was not literally banished. Maybe they used to do that in other regions but in my community, I have never heard of this happening. I have never seen a person banished from the community. What happened was he would not be allowed to be involved with the community for a while. The offender would do what he wanted to, but he would have to do it by himself.

**Akisu:** An individual was not banished from the camp. They used to let the individual be by themselves for a while. They could do whatever they wanted but they had to do it by themselves. This was to give them an opportunity to think about what they were doing.

*Did mistreated children grow up to be wrong-doers?*

**Akisu:** Children that have been hurt emotionally at a very young age carry this into their adult lives. Of course when they grow older some of them retaliate and rebel against the person who was hurting them, sometimes taking revenge. Then there are those that will pay back the individual who had been mistreating them by being nice to them. For instance, if you did not want to give me food when I was young and hungry, when I became capable I could start giving you meat, to let you know how awful it is to be hungry. There are also those who were verbally abused who in turn grew up to be verbally abusive to others.

**Imaruittuq:** There is not a *maligaq* for this but what Akisu is saying is the same in my community. I have a cousin who used to be mistreated. After his parents died, he was adopted by a couple from Natsilik who mistreated him. The whole family would be given good things like biscuits to eat except him. He would go out. He didn’t want to watch them eating, knowing he wouldn’t be given anything. There were two of them that were treated like this, he and his younger brother. They were not allowed to eat treats but during the night he used to sneak some and give some to his younger brother.
When he was older and had a job, he decided to visit his father when he went on holidays. When he arrived there, he found his father sewing miniature kamiik. He asked him why he was doing this, and his father told him that was how he made money. He grabbed hold of them and threw them in the garbage. Then he reached into his pocket and gave his father some money, it was as though he had hit him with a stick. His adopted father started crying immediately. His father then recalled all the things he had done. This was an example of paying back with kindness. There were others who did the opposite. The most effective way to take revenge is through kindness. When you are kind to a person who mistreated you it really hurts them to the core, and it makes the revenge even more effective, as it effectively causes remorse.

Akisu: Even when people get older, there is still the possibility for improvement.

Imaruittuq: We as parents are all so different. Some are always nagging and some are constantly disciplining. I had an aunt that was like this with her own children, and eventually the children stopped listening to her. We have to have balanced discipline; not too much, not too little. This is a very hard thing to do. This weakness in parenting skills can affect the child for a lifetime. Too much discipline can ruin a child. Too much love can also ruin a child’s mind. Children like this know what is right and wrong, but they know nobody will do anything to them. I have seen this myself. Stories, such as the one I told you about the adopted parents who refused to share treats with their children, all have a strong message. This results in a painful experience in the end.

I heard this saying that I would appreciate if you could elaborate on. If you are hunting and you miss, you don’t have to worry, but if you missed a human, you have cause for concern. Have you heard this?

Imaruittuq: Here is the meaning. An animal will not retaliate, but if you go after a person and you miss, the person would have no choice but to retaliate against you. That would be the cause for concern.

If a person retaliated, would the community do anything about it?

Imaruittuq: They wouldn’t do anything because the person who made the first attempt would probably try again. The person who had the attempt made on his life would also be trying to retaliate. Because the community didn’t know the eventual outcome, they were unable to do anything about it. If I was a father and someone made an attempt on my son’s life and he wanted to retaliate, I could advise him not to do this but a number of people in the community could come up to me and say that no one was sympathetic to the instigator. You would know implicitly that nothing would be done to your son.
Let’s say someone started a fight and ended up killing the person he was fighting with, and then the victim’s relatives took revenge. Would this revenge be settled or would it go on and on and on?

Imaruittuq: For some, the revenge wouldn’t go on and on because there were not that many people living together.

What was done to a person who committed rape?

Imaruittuq: There was no rape in the old days.

Was it because the men hid what they had done that there was no rape?

Imaruittuq: A man could force a woman to have sex and the woman would be crying, but nobody would do anything. We were strictly forbidden to have sex with animals. For example, the animals we had killed. We were strictly forbidden to have sex with anything that was not human. That was a strict piqujaq. If a person did this, it would shorten the person’s life and could even cause death. We were allowed to have sex with other humans, except for our anivik, the person whose body you came out of [mother] and our aniqati, a person who came out of the same body [sister]. This was also a strict piqujaq. Sex with female in-laws was also unacceptable. There was no rape. Even if a woman was screaming and crying because she didn’t want a husband, she would be taken away for an arranged marriage. The wishes of her parents had to be followed. People in our generation also had arranged marriages. We would sometimes think, “If I had that other woman as a wife it would be better,” but we had no choice but to accept the marriage our parents had arranged for us. The piqujaq concerning bestiality had to be strictly followed, therefore sex with women was not considered rape. Nowadays, we seem to be forced to commit bestiality rather than have sex with women. We are told not to have sex with women, and it seems it would be better if we had sex with animals such as dogs. That’s the way we older people see this. There was no rape. A woman was human. She was not going to be hurt, she was not going to die. We were not to have sex with those we were closely related to. Another strict piqujaq was not to have sex with children that were too young. It was acceptable to have sex with children once they became sexually mature. We were strictly forbidden to have sex with non-humans. I know of people my age who are no longer alive who have broken this piqujaq. We had piqujait for things that were dangerous.

If a man came into my tent and I was alone and I didn’t want to have sex with him and he forced me, was this wrong?

Imaruittuq: If he was hurting you, he would be committing a wrong-doing. If he was physically hurting you, he would be doing wrong and he could have to face the elders.
How about if he wasn’t hurting me?
Imaruittuq: If he was hurting you while trying to have sex, someone could come to your defence. The reason this was accepted was that it helped to prevent bestiality.

Even if she wasn’t being hurt?
Imaruittuq: If she wasn’t being hurt there was no need to come to her defence.

Even if she was being very intimidated by the man?
Imaruittuq: Probably people would not be pleased about what was happening to her. Her mother wouldn’t be pleased this was happening to her daughter but because men were told not to have sex with non-humans, this made it into a lesser offence.

If the man hurt the woman and the woman retaliated and tried to take revenge what would happen? For example, if I killed that person what would happen to me?
Imaruittuq: You would not be blamed because he initiated the wrong-doing. It would be very hard to decide what to do with you. Perhaps his relatives would be unhappy about what you did, but by and large the community would support you. Back then it was extremely important to find out who initiated the wrong-doing as that person was the one who would be blamed. Because the victim did not initiate the wrong-doing everyone would understand and nothing would be done. Nowadays, it doesn’t seem right that the one who retaliates is the one being dealt with in the court system. That’s because we see things in terms of our piqijatuqait. What makes it seem wrong is that whoever initiated the wrong-doing is ignored and the person who retaliated is held responsible. The person I think should be held accountable is not being dealt with and the person who retaliated gets sent to jail. I think we can integrate the Inuit maligait into today’s justice system. Perhaps not all of them but we can figure out how the two systems can fit together. I know there are certain things that will not fit together. There are times when our two systems will collide with each other. For example, today we go to school to learn such things as how to negotiate land claim agreements. In negotiations you explain what you are willing to do and if the other side accepts, they tell you what they are willing to give. That’s how the negotiation systems works. It seems like these agreements are deceptions in a way, as nobody really states what they are willing to give.

Akisu: We labelled these agreements as lies. Those agreements, those words were all lies. That’s how we interpreted them.
In the old days there used to be pre-arranged marriages. When I became old enough to marry if I didn’t want to go through with it, what would happen? What would be the consequences?

Aupilaarjuk: Nothing would happen. We have different iliqqusiit, ways of doing things, in the Iglulik and Natsilik areas. For the Natsilingmiut, if I married someone who already had a pre-arranged marriage, I would be killed. That was the Natsilik practice. But if your mother arranged a husband for you, and your mother said she didn’t like the arrangement anymore, then nothing would happen. If the individual showed they were not going to be able to support you, and there were going to be concerns, they had every reason to change their minds. If you told your parents you didn’t want to have the husband that was arranged for you, but your parents insisted you have that husband, then it would be a real problem for you.

Children had to listen to their parents, but if the parents were abusing the children, could other family members intervene?

Aupilaarjuk: If other family members were intervening for the better, the whole community would accept it. You should not defend your partner when you know that he or she is abusing the children. If you know your wife is spanking and hitting the children, you should not defend her. It also works the other way. If the wife knows her husband is abusing the children, she should not defend her husband when they are confronted. If children were being deprived of food, or if they were physically abused they were to be protected at all times.

If we could see that you as a parent were constantly over-disciplining your children, and we intervened, what would happen? Also what would happen if someone made a complaint of this nature that was not true?

Aupilaarjuk: The whole community had the obligation to find out if and why you were doing this. The whole community would investigate. If it were true, we could certainly tell a person they shouldn’t be doing that. That’s where counselling comes in.

If someone in the community saw others who were abusing, could he go and tell them they were doing wrong?

Aupilaarjuk: Yes. You could go to them. You could tell them that one day this boy or girl would grow up and be stronger than they were. You would counsel them by making them think about the future. We would tell them that this boy would be all they would have left one day, to help them catch game, so that they would have food and someone to help them with things in the community.
What would happen if an older sibling was abusing a younger child?

Imaruittuq: In situations where a child was being mistreated by an older sibling, the older sibling would be counselled.

In the old days did they take children away from an abusive family?

Akisu: Yes they used to do that. Today people can also foster children. I am not aware of a situation where the children were really being mistreated by a family.

Imaruittuq: I think amongst our own relatives, we can deal with the issue and correct the problem.

We can give people advice but if they don’t want to listen to it, that is their choice. Can you give us your opinion on this?

Akisu: I have always told my children not to drink alcohol. I’d say, “Don’t do this.” My children have always drunk, and when they are drunk it is not fun to be where they are. A person can quit anything, if they choose to do so.

If we weren’t allowed to scribble on the frost formed on the window and we wrote on it, what would happen to us?

Aupilaarjuk: We were not allowed to scribble on the frost formed on the window at all. I’ve gone through this experience, I’ve forgotten it until now. When it frosted up you were really tempted to scribble on the window but we were told not to. But I forgot why. Do you remember anything?

Tulimaaq: When you scribble on the window it will weaken your life. That was the consequence of scribbling on the window.

Aupilaarjuk: If I became ill, I might succumb to the illness. It would shorten my life span. That would be the consequence of scribbling on the window. Even though we don’t know why we were supposed to refrain from doing this, we believed it.

When I was in Arviat I heard that if a child ran too much, to a point where they were having trouble breathing, the mahaha would come and tickle the child and the child might die?

Aupilaarjuk: We were told not to tickle young children too much because they could laugh so hard that they would have difficulty breathing and could die. There are variations to this story because we come from different regions. We didn’t call them mahaha. We say aagjuk, we don’t say mahaha. In the old days, the angakkuit were able to
go up to the moon. There were aagjuk on the moon as well as aagjuk that were stars. The aagjuk on the moon are like the mahaha you were talking about. In the old days the aagjuk tried as hard as they could to make the angakkuit laugh, either by making fools of themselves or by trying other ways to make them laugh. We too had this as a form of entertainment. When there was a group of many people around we would dance and do other antics trying to make them smile. As soon as someone smiled we would pretend to cut out their insides. They say that’s what the aagjuk did. If the aagjuk removed the insides of an angakkut, the angakkut was not able to return to Earth.

My younger sister used to pretend to cry all the time until my mother said, “Please don’t do that, don’t pretend to cry.” I never understood why she was told not to do this.

Aupilaarjuk: We were told not to pretend to cry because we might lose a family member. Pretending to cry was like making a request to have something to cry about.

I would like to ask you about the aqsarniit, the Northern Lights. When I was a child, I was told that if I whistled, my head would be taken and used as a ball. Is it true that the aqsarniit were once people?

Aupilaarjuk: It started out not being just an unikkaaqtaaq. There was a person that went to the moon. As he was going to the moon, he saw people playing kickball with a walrus head. These people were very happy. We were not told that if we were alone we were not to clap, because that would start them moving. We were told that they were fearsome and they would take your head off. I don’t know why. But I am a Natsilingmiut and I can’t say they would take your head off if you whistled because I have a different tradition. What I can say is that if you whistle at the aqsalijaat they get really close and you can hear a swishing sound. That’s why we are scared of them.

I forgot to ask what an aagjuk is.

Aupilaarjuk: An aagjuk is an ulluriag, it is a star. There are two stars. One is smaller than the other. The aagjuk is the one that’s not crouched.

What are ijirait?

Aupilaarjuk: Not too long ago, I was looking at a caribou that was an ijiraq. They say that ijirait used to be people.
We had a family member who would turn into a polar bear. My father and others watched him turn into a bear and fight with another bear. Are you elders displeased when you hear about people turning into animals?

Aupilaarjuk: It is very old knowledge that some Inuit could turn into wildlife. There is one story about Angusujuq. He used to turn into animals. I have never seen or witnessed a person turning into an animal myself. I have heard the stories about Inuit that used to turn into animals. Of course there are certain variations to the stories, but I have heard about this.

What do you think about men that carry babies in an amauti? Have men always carried babies in an amauti?

Aupilaarjuk: When we grew up Inuit were not as numerous. We rarely saw men carrying a baby in an amauti. Back then, a woman worked in the home and looked after the children while men were out hunting. When we went out hunting we didn’t worry about our children because we knew our wives were taking care of them, That’s the way we lived. I am unable to answer your question.

Were boys allowed to play with their mother’s things?

Aupilaarjuk: My younger brothers were allowed to play with anything they wanted to. But for myself, because my future had been shaped for me there were many things I was not allowed to do. I used to be envious of my brothers.

That’s how my youngest is treated. He is not supposed to touch my mother’s things and he is always being told how to act.

Aupilaarjuk: That’s the way I was. I was not to wear anything that belonged to a woman. For example, my wife’s mitts. I was not allowed to play with dolls. Being given a lot of maligait to follow is very difficult. I was even told not to pick things up that belonged to women while my brothers could do anything they wanted. I am now able to do what I want. I can now pick up items belonging to women and wear them if I want. Since I was not allowed to touch women’s things, she [Tulimaaq] knew I could not do a woman’s chores either.

What did they do to children that disobeyed?

Aupilaarjuk: When I was a small boy I had several uncles who used to teach me. Sometimes I was made to sleep over with them. I’d leave my father and I would see a different way of doing things. Some of them let me do whatever I wanted. I enjoyed that. Some of them didn’t and were very strict. None of them were like my father. Even if I did something wrong, they would not discipline me because I was a child. They didn’t
discipline me, but as I grew older I began to understand things more. When I began to understand that what I had done was not really good, I regretted it. Even though I didn’t talk about this, this helped to strengthen my mind. If my father had been present I wouldn’t have continued to do these things because he would have disciplined me, and I wouldn’t have done them again. Even if children sleep at other places they really base their actions on their parents wishes. Nobody can be like our parents. Today it seems that we parents don’t have control over our children anymore, because we are not teaching them Inuit morals and values. This is a side effect of attending school. It was different for our ancestors. It makes you wonder what will happen in the future to the Inuit maligait. We need to think about this seriously because it will have a major impact.

In the old days when children didn’t listen, how were they dealt with?

Aupilaarjuk: If I did something wrong and someone found out, my father or my relatives would tell me to come over and I had to face them. I wouldn’t know why I was being called. All my relatives would get together and start counselling me. They would point out that if I did the right thing I would be much happier and my relatives would be much happier. That’s what was done in the past, but we don’t do this anymore today. It seems like this circle has been broken. Even though we are related to each other, it seems like we act like strangers. In the old days we worked with each other and for each other.

If a child became an orphan what was done with the child? Was the child adopted?

Aupilaarjuk: There is a maligaq about this. People of my father’s generation would tell us that if we were told to look after a child we had to do so even though the child had a family. Especially if it was being abused, a child had to be looked after well. Children who lost their parents were not to be put through mental hardship for they say that a child has a naglikti which cannot be seen. We were told not to mistreat orphans. We were told to help the child for our life would be prolonged through the naglikti’s gratitude. Our family members would also have a good long life. I don’t think the need for us to look after children has changed.

Footnotes

1 Naglikti, protective force of parental love.
2 Mahaha, [Arviat] or Aagjuk, beings that lived on the moon, that tried to make people laugh so they could cut out their insides; [Iglulik] ululijarnaat.
Today, Inuit women feel strongly about controversial issues such as rape and arranged marriages. Did rape occur in the past and if so how was it dealt with? How did women cope with arranged marriages? Imaruittuq pointed out in the preceding chapter that rape was better than bestiality. That answer will not satisfy many young Inuit women. To discuss these sensitive issues an ‘all-female’ session was arranged and Marie Tulimaaq was questioned by the female students on rules for women. She describes how her marriage was first arranged. “Not knowing about how men were, not having had sexual intercourse, getting married and having a husband, were overwhelming for me.” But she remains firmly convinced that arranged marriages of the past were better than the modern forms of marriage, “I think it was better when couples had pre-arranged marriages and got together and stayed together. It is not like that anymore.” Tulimaaq did not feel a victim of her culture and when asked about the power of women she answers: “They used to say, ‘You are just a woman.’ Even though, women were very useful. They were the ones that created ties between families and the ones that kept everyone clean and well dressed. Maybe they thought there were too many women. As for me, I am a woman.”

Women have menstrual cycles each month. Indians had a custom for cleansing themselves. Did Inuit have the same custom?

Tulimaaq: Inuit had tirigususit. Men also had to follow tirigususit regarding women. Women were not supposed to have sex with men during their periods. It was said to be
bad for a man if he was to have sex with a woman during her period. That is what they followed, even though they were husband and wife. They did not have sexual intercourse during a woman’s period.

I was told that when I got a husband, I had to listen to him. My mother told me to obey him and said that this was important. If I had sex with another man then I had to tell my husband right away and not to be ashamed of this, because if I didn’t tell him and he heard this from others he would start distrusting me and not be happy. If I told him right away, he would be happier and more approachable. What my mother used to tell me has been very useful to me. She also told me to sew his clothing well so he didn’t become cold she told me not to be lazy to sew.

Was this so he didn’t freeze when he was out hunting?

Tulimaq: She said if I had a husband and I couldn’t sew him caribou clothes, he would freeze in the winter when it was very cold. I used to think she was always scolding me about making proper clothing, but it was because she loved me so much that she used to tell me this. It was only after she was not there anymore that I truly understood her words. I have forgotten a lot of what my mother told me, but I still remember most of it. She would show me how clothes should be sewn and how to get it done before the cold came. There was no cloth, all materials were of caribou. She wanted me to work on these ahead of time and she would tell me which months I should get different things ready.

What happened to men when they had sex with a woman who did not consent? I want to ask about that, because men say there were no maligait concerning this. If they were given a wife and the woman did not consent, they did not consider it rape. Was it like that?

Tulimaq: My mother told me when I was old enough to have my period, that if I allowed a man to have sex with me before I had a husband, I would bleed heavily and that it was dangerous. This was dangerous, and she did not want me to do this. It turns out she did not want me to be with anyone except my husband. She did not want me to have been with anyone other than my husband and so she told me that it would be very dangerous. I was scared to be with anyone else. We were very afraid of men when we were young women. I used to be very afraid of even getting close to them, even when I became an adult. I found it uncomfortable to be too close to a man. Back then, after a woman started her period she would get a husband.
A girl could get married only after she had her first period?

**Tulimaaq:** Yes, it was scary to have your period the first time, because after a woman began her period her parents would say ‘yes’ to her future husband. Our parents would already have chosen our future husbands. I was already promised to my future husband when I was still a foetus.

*Some girls start their periods around the age of nine or ten. Did they become wives at that age?*

**Tulimaaq:** Our parents would decide this for us. It was because they did not want men to have sex with just anything. This is why they got wives. This was our parents way of ensuring that when they were no longer around, there would be someone to provide for us. This was why they had pre-arranged marriages.

*If men were denied the woman they wanted by her parents, did they commit rape?*

**Tulimaaq:** I guess that is what they were trying to prevent. Maybe they were trying to discourage men from sleeping with just anyone by having pre-arranged marriages. Young men and women would not just go with anyone; their parents would have already decided who would be their son or daughter-in-law. Nowadays, it is not like this anymore. Young people today are free to choose who they want.

*(Kilaaja: Visitor to program that day)*

*I had a pre-arranged marriage. I did not agree but my parents did when they were asked, and that is how I was taken for a wife. It was not fun. I did not say ‘yes.’ But we have been together for many years and I love him. That is how I am today.*

**Tulimaaq:** Was this the man your parents had planned for you to marry?

*Kilaaja:* Yes, my husband and I have been married for a long time. We were very young when we got married. He had asked for me for his wife.

**Tulimaaq:** The man wanted you, or did his parents want him to marry you?

*Kilaaja:* He asked my parents. I was taken away without having consented to it. I wanted someone else that I liked more by appearance. I had heard, but never believed, that I would start to unga\(^1\) the one I didn’t consent to.
I have heard the ones that were taken without consent say, “I don’t agree deep inside, I don’t want to become a wife, I am afraid.” That’s how I was also. But it is true that I love him more as time passes.

Tulimaaq: Yes, I think this is very true.

When the woman just chooses who she wants to be with, is she less content, less happy?

Tulimaaq: I think so.

Let’s say there was a man who wanted to marry me but I wanted to be with this other man who didn’t want to marry me. If I married this other man would he be unhappy?

Tulimaaq: I have noticed this creates more problems. I think that if the parents choose the husband it is better. Back then, that is how it was. I didn’t love my husband right away, but now I never want to leave him. That is how I am. We have never been separated and I would never leave him.

I have seen women try hard to get a man and then get tired of him and leave him. My question is, is the couple happier if the man chooses the woman?

Tulimaaq: I think it is better if neither have been with someone else. If they have been with someone else, their minds are split in two. The man or the woman is not able to forget the other one they were with. They cannot forget the relationship they had. I think it was better when couples had pre-arranged marriages and got together and stayed together. It is not like that anymore.

At conferences some women say that they were raped when they were taken as a wife. What do you think about that?

Tulimaaq: I don’t think this is appropriate. If the woman’s parents and the man’s parents talked together, because they are older and wiser than us, they knew if the man is suitable. They knew their son and their daughter and knew the prospective in-laws of their children. The woman would be told, “If you are a nice person they will like you more.” The man would also be talked to by his parents. That is how they cooperated. Back then, a man would have a wife, and a woman would have a husband when the in-laws agreed to it. If the parents gave their approval, then she became his wife.
Did some ever deny the request for marriage?

Tulimaaq: I am sure there were some. Back then, men and women listened to their parents wishes. The parents knew if they wanted a certain woman as a daughter-in-law or they wanted a certain man for a son-in-law.

We have heard that if you are pregnant you are not to be lazy and you are not to just sit around. We were also not supposed to eat isiriniq, whale sinew. Have you heard of this?

Tulimaaq: I have not heard they are not supposed to eat isiriniq. We were not allowed to chop frozen meat in the winter. I heard about that, but I do not know the reason why we were not allowed to chop frozen meat. We were discouraged from just sitting around while pregnant, because if we just sat around, the placenta would stick to the stomach. We were supposed to move the foetus and also walk around when we were pregnant. Some women were pregnant for a long time because they didn’t do this. That was a very good iliqqusiq, way of doing things. We were also told to go out quickly and to wear mittens at all times. The reason for that was that the mitten was like the placenta. It was to ensure that the baby would come out quickly.

Did you even have to wear mittens in the summer?

Tulimaaq: In the summer and in the winter. It was fine to just wear one mitten if it was not cold when you were going out, as long as you were wearing one mitten at all times.

Maybe that’s why in some pictures there are women wearing only one mitten. Maybe it was because they were pregnant?

Tulimaaq: Yes, maybe they were pregnant, but even when I was not pregnant, my father told me to always wear mittens because he said that the placenta would stick inside and be hard to come out.

When you were in labour, were there only women present?

Tulimaaq: When I went into labour I was not happy and got mad. I told my mother and my mother-in-law, “Everyone who is in here, go out.” Perhaps this caused resentment to my mother and she said, “Let this one be in labour alone,” because I was not cooperating and I told them to go out. She went out and when she came back in, she had a big smile. After that I couldn’t deliver when there were too many people. That is how I used to be. Some women are like that, and some others don’t mind. I think if there were too many people present, the mother will nunu, have a hard time with the labour.

Advice for Women
Does nunu mean to hold back?
Tulimaaq: Yes, they hold back because there are too many people present, or because there is too much noise. When one person was present, that was appropriate for me. I didn’t have long labours. I had ten children. When I was born my grandmother and grandfather shaped my future so that I would have fast deliveries and my babies would be small. I have even heard people say, “She just got pregnant and she has a baby already.”

Your sanaji, midwife, shaped your future like that when you were born?
Tulimaaq: My grandmother and grandfather did this.

When the baby was being born, could a person say, “That baby will be a great hunter, or a great seamstress, or will have long hair?” Was it like that?
Tulimaaq: Yes, it was like that.

Is it true that character traits such as goodness and helpfulness were not bestowed at birth?
Tulimaaq: These qualities were taught to children by their parents, even before the child began to talk. But at birth the types of qualities that were bestowed were skills such as the ability to sew. So character traits were taught and skills were bestowed.

The sanaji, midwife, that delivered me, died when I was about five years old. She was an old woman. Back then, when qallunaat started to come up here, there was a lack of interpreters and, we did not understand each other. It is like that to this day. My sanaji said that I would become an interpreter. I thought when I was getting older that there would be old people going to stores, offices and other places too, and I would interpret for them. I was so proud when I did this, and I know my sanaji knows. She also wanted me to be a good dancer. Maybe she was too shy to dance even though she wanted to. Also, when she needed an interpreter, there were none. I thought that was why she wanted me to have these qualities. Did some people give or wish abilities they would have liked themselves onto the baby?
Tulimaaq: Yes, they bestowed qualities they liked in people. Our grandparents and our parents wanted us to have qualities and abilities that they liked, such as being capable.
Maybe through voicing these qualities, they shaped the future for the newborn. They wanted the child to be good at certain things.

_I don’t think that the woman should be blamed when a man is trying to have sex with her. What do you think?_  
_Tulimaaq:_ Both the man and the woman are to be blamed but if the family approved then it was not a problem.

_If a child was being assaulted sexually at nine years of age, would this be wrong?_  
_Tulimaaq:_ I have not heard about this, but my mother used to tell me not to be outside at night because I could be assaulted sexually by a man. So I did not go out at night back then. I was not supposed to be alone if I went out in the evening to play. If I was out by myself I ran the risk of having some man touch me or abuse me sexually, so I did not go out when it was dark. I was not supposed to be alone if I went out in the evening to play.

_If you were not outside, if you were inside the house, could you be abused sexually by someone visiting?_  
_Tulimaaq:_ I have heard that this happens to some when they are alone with a man. Nowadays, houses have separate rooms and maybe some men are taking advantage of this to assault a woman without anyone seeing them. They are doing it because they think nobody will find out. Back then, we were very well looked after, us girls, as our mothers watched over us. When I was young my mother did not allow me to be out by myself because she didn’t want me to be with a man. But when she wanted me to be with my future husband, she scolded me instead, even though I was crying.

_Was it like she was taking his side, like he were her own son?_  
_Tulimaaq:_ Yes, because he had been her future son-in-law for a long time. My mother treated him like her son, and I was treated as a daughter by my in-laws. My mother-in-law loved me very much. When I was not happy, she would scold my husband even if I didn’t say anything. My mother-in-law would scold him, her own son. That was how women were treated. They said if I was talking badly about my husband, or if I were trying to be stronger or have more power than him, people would feel sorry for him because of the fact that he was a man. They told me not to talk badly about my husband to my mother, because he would be treated badly by my relatives if I told on him, or told them that he treated me badly. They advised me not to talk badly otherwise my husband would feel unwelcome. They told me not to talk badly about my in-laws to my husband,
if they scolded me. I have never talked badly about them or tried to get sympathy, or said anything to my mother. If I did she would just scold me.

Who did you tell?
Tulimaaq: When I was younger I was very quiet. Only when my mother-in-law would ask, I would tell her and she would scold her son. I would not tell my mother anything. She would say that I was to blame since I was the woman.

I have heard that when women are pregnant they should not have sexual intercourse. Is that true?
Tulimaaq: I have not really heard that. Women should not have sexual intercourse after they recently delivered a baby. Also, when they are having their period, women weren’t to have sex with their husband. Delivery and pregnancy are very hard on the body and we would be told what lay ahead of us by our mothers.

Were you told in advance about your first period and what to do?
Tulimaaq: Back then the first period was very important. We were told to tell our mothers right away if we started bleeding. When I had my first period, my mother told me, “You have a son.” This was so I would have a son when I had my first child. This was what she said to me.

Did it come true?
Tulimaaq: Yes. My first two were sons.

Were women back then not allowed to have much power? Were they not allowed to have many rights?
Tulimaaq: They used to say, “You are just a woman.” Even though, women were very useful. They were the ones that created ties between families and the ones that kept everyone clean and well dressed. Maybe this was said by those that thought there were too many women. Since I was the only female I was treated well by my grandmother and my grandfather.

Was having your period very important?
Tulimaaq: Now that I am old I am not having periods anymore. I, too, used to have periods when I was young like you. Now that I am old, I don’t have them any more. Menstruation was very important. During your first period it seemed like everyone was looking at you. It was the most embarrassing thing.
When you walked outside after having your period for the first time, did it seem that everybody could tell?

Tulimaaq: You knew that they were looking at you.

I even hid when someone looked at me. I wonder if this happened to other women?

Tulimaaq: It is not like having your first child. Having your period is very embarrassing. It is like everybody is looking at you.

Do you think women are more appreciated today?

Tulimaaq: It is not the same anymore. Young women are treated differently today.

How? Were they appreciated more back then?

Tulimaaq: Back then, maybe because women were respected so much, they were told what they would be like in the future when they had a husband and children. They were told about proper behaviour towards their in-laws and that they should help them and not talk back to them even if they were being scolded. I was told by my mother not to talk back if I was scolded by my mother-in-law because if I did she would not be pleased. My mother told me, “She’ll be happy again shortly, and she’ll love you much more later, if you don’t talk back even if she scolds you.” This was very good advice I was given.

For us, men were quinangnaq, very scary. Even when they were not trying to touch you, they would come close and it was scary. It was kanngunaq, embarrassing.

It is like they can see right into you. It feels like our bones are not there anymore, and everything is visible.

Tulimaaq: When my husband came to fetch me and we were getting married my mother was scolding me, and I was crying. She said, “Get dressed, put your parka and your kamiik on, and go with him.” She was scolding me. I had no choice but to follow him. That night when I was sleeping he had sex with me. It was so painful. Not knowing about how men were, not having had sexual intercourse, getting married and having a husband, were overwhelming for me.

1 Unga, wanting to be with someone; missing a person.
Life stories provide an excellent start to a course on interviewing elders. Students pose questions about various aspects of life in the past such as starvation in the camps, first contacts with qallunaat, or pre-arranged marriages. In this way, elders and students get to know each other. In the interviews with the elders about various topics relating to traditional law, the students could connect their questions to the experiences mentioned by the elders in their life stories. The elders do not just present an autobiography; they explain what was meaningful to them and how it affected their lives. In the life stories, important values such as sharing were articulated. Imaruittuq relates, “I didn’t believe my mother out of ignorance because I thought what she was telling me was useless, but it turned out to be very valuable. Long after she died her words would come back to me after an incident had happened that would make me recall her words. At that time I would realize how true her words were. I didn’t want to listen. I really recall one of the lectures she gave me before I got married. She told me, “As a woman, asking for food can be very intimidating.” She told me never to be intimidating, to be approachable for food and never to be stingy about food with my wife. That’s the advice she gave me. If food was finished while I was away I was not to ask after it.” In this way the value of the words of the elders as well as the value of sharing were clearly expressed in the life story.
My name is Emile Imaruittuq. I was born in Iglulik in March, 1934. I was born in an iglu. It must have been very cold when I was born. According to my baptismal records I was born on March 3rd but the government has put it down as the 30th. I prefer to believe my baptismal certificate which says March 3rd. The government always changes everything, even people’s dates of birth. Sometimes they make old people much younger than their actual age. My mother’s name was Rosie Iqalugjuaq. My father was Bernard Ikummaq.

Nutaraaluk (to Imaruittuq): Our mothers were atiqqajariik. Your mother was Iqalugjuaq. My mother was Iqaluk. Here we call them atiqqajariik when the names are almost the same.

Imaruittuq (to Nutaraaluk): We call them avvakasagiik.

Can you tell us about your grandparents?

My mother’s adoptive parents were Qaumauq and Sivugat. My mother’s biological parents were Benedict Qumangat and Puja, also known as Kigutikkaarjuk. My father’s father was Ittuksaarjuat. He was the camp leader in Iglulik, the King of Iglulik. He had a number of wives. Ataguttaaluk was my father’s mother. Ittuksaarjuat’s baptismal name was Augustine and his wife’s was Monique. Those were my grandparents.

Did you have any siblings?

I have two younger brothers and a sister. Some didn’t survive. Including myself, and our adopted brother, that makes five. Because of the ones that didn’t survive, there are only a few of us. I am the oldest.

Where did you live when you were young?

I have always lived around Iglulik. I lived in Aggu with my in-laws after I was married. My grandfather, Ittuksaarjuat, used to be the leader of the camp. A lot of the people in outlying camps used to unqag him. We always lived with my grandfather. That’s how it was. When things were good, families stayed together. It was only when, for example, they lost their father that they moved elsewhere. They moved where they wanted to live. That’s what happened to my father’s family. When they lost their father it was as if they became afloat and started moving. When my grandfather died they were still very capable of going to various places as they were taught well. When my grandfather was alive, the whole camp was very well organized. In those days they depended on wildlife for clothing and for food. Some family members were sent out caribou hunting in the summer for clothing while others were sent out to catch sea mammals for dog food and for fuel. This is what I remember when I was a boy.
Do you have any children?
I have a number of children.

Is their mother still alive?
My original wife is no longer alive. She passed away in 1978.

What was her name?
Clara Aapak. She was Vera Arnatsiaq’s father’s sister. I have six biological children and two adopted children, one of whom is my grandchild. I have six biological children, four boys and two girls.

How about your grandchildren?
I don’t know how many grandchildren I have, and it will take a long time to count them all.

Were your parents married?
My parents were already together when Christianity came up here.

How about you and your wife?
We had to get married in church, because we were Roman Catholic. The Church was very strict about not being together if you were not married. It is not like that anymore.

Were you not allowed to have any children before you were married?
Absolutely not. That’s the way it used to be in the old days. It was quite strict in those days. In those days there used to be pre-arranged marriages. We used to be told, This is going to be your wife or this is going to be your husband. We were not going to get any other partner unless one of the partners died.

Was your marriage arranged as soon as you were born?
Yes. That’s how it used to be. I don’t know how it was in other areas. In Kivalliq and Amitturmiut marriages were arranged right at birth. I don’t know how it was in South Baffin. But for us, up to my generation, your spouse was chosen for you when you were born.
Did you always marry a younger person?
It didn’t matter if the spouse was younger or older. It was all right to have a nukaaktaq, a spouse younger than yourself.

Did they use to have spouses that were angajuaktaq, much older?
Yes. It could be either way. Women tended to have an angajuaktaq more often than a man did. It has always been like that.

Did you have dogteams when you were growing up?
Yes, when we were able. When we started going out with our fathers and uncles, we were mainly brought along to take care of the dogs. It was a way of teaching us so we would become more able. Our fathers or uncles would teach us all these things.

How old were you?
I was probably six or seven years old when I started learning how to hunt. I was around five years of age when I started looking after my father’s dogs when he was going after basking seals. One day when he was going after a seal he seemed close enough to grab it but he wasn’t moving at all. This was after he had told me not to come until either the seal went down the aglu, a seal breathing hole, or he shot his rifle. Since he wasn’t moving at all, I let the dogs go towards him. It turns out he had fallen asleep. No wonder I became tired of waiting. That was around the time when someone had just died and he must have spent the night with the family.

You just mentioned that there was a death. How did they used to bury people?
You had to bury them immediately. It seems to have always been that way for me, the same way there seems to always have been school for you. For us also, things seem to have always been the way they were from the time we remember them. There never seems to have been a time before religion. This is what I have heard. If a person died on an island, the body was brought to the mainland because the survivors didn’t want it to be left on an island. The mainland I am referring to is not Baffin Island, but the mainland up there. [Melville Peninsula]

Why did they do this?
It was the custom, but I don’t know why.

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If someone was sick, did they bring them along by dogteam?

Even when a person was very sick they still brought him with them by dogteam. In the old days they only lived off wildlife. My grandmother, my father’s adopted mother, used to have breathing problems. We brought her along covered in blankets. She would be totally covered. That’s how we used to transport her when the whole camp moved to find better game. Today they would not move at all.

How did they deal with cuts?

Bearded seal blubber was used most often when somebody got a big cut. The fat was removed from the blubber by chewing on it and when all the fat was gone what was left was used as a bandage because it healed the wound well. There were also pujut, plants which when broken have powder in them which were also used as killiqsiut, materials to heal cuts.

Has there always been disease?

All these years there has always been disease. There would be deaths happening in camps. We know of diseases attacking old people, babies and young people. It would attack different generations at different times. When it attacked young people, the adults used to lose very capable hunters. That was the worst loss, when it attacked the young people. When it attacked the adults it wasn’t as bad for the camp because the younger people could become the suppliers of food. I was born at a time when they depended on dogs, before there were any snowmobiles. In those days too, there were diseases killing dogs. Sometimes it would go on for over a year. Diseases that killed dogs were preferable to diseases that killed people. Old people and babies would die during epidemics. But what worried everyone the most was when young adults were dying of sickness. This worried the whole camp. When it happened to young adults it had a tremendous effect on the community. When it attacked young people, potential hunters would vanish and it was a big worry for the camp because they were the future providers.

Do you remember your first kill?

The first large animal I killed was a seal. Before that I used to kill snow buntings. The first time I killed a seal was very joyous. I would tend to smile at anything because I was so happy. When we were out hunting in the spring time at the floe edge I started shooting at a seal with a .22 rifle and that’s how I got my first seal. The seal that was to have been my first kill had its mouth open to me. I thought it was going to bite me and I got scared so my brother killed it. It was his first kill. When we started travelling again by dogteam I started crying. Because I was too easily frightened, my brother got his first seal.
Did you have a feast after your first seal kill?
Because we were travelling the whole family was there, even my grandparents, so my first seal was all consumed the same day. I was so happy!

Did you have to give some of your first kill to the woman who delivered you?
We don’t practice that in Amitturmiut. In Iglulik and Amitturmiut we always had to give something to the elders when a child killed an animal for the first time. The meat of the first kill would be distributed to the elders. You had to make sure the elders had something. If there were other people in the camp you had to save some so you could give it to them. The first kill was a joyous time and we celebrated. Everyone was already using rifles by the time I was born. I was born long after they had rifles. You had to put powder into them and pound it.

What did you play with?
We only played with bones. The boys used aksaqqaq, seal flipper bones, as dogs. These were our toys in the winter time, especially when it was too cold to play outside. We used caribou jaw bones as sleds because wood was hard to come by. But if there was wood then we started using sleds made out of wood. We used to play inugaaq, ajagaq, and ajaraaq. The seal flippers used to be boiled and cleaned and we used the bones for inugaaq. The young girls used to inuuaq, play with dolls. They would amaanguaq, carry little puppies in their amaauti. In spring we would amaauligaq, play baseball and in summer we would aattaujaq, play a ball game. During the day we would ijiraaq, play hide and seek, but never in the dark. We were told we might be hidden forever if we played hide and seek during the night. I don’t know if it was true or not. We were told to play hide and seek during the day and not at night. Were we the only ones doing this?

Nutaraaluk: We used to play hide and seek even at night. I guess it was because we were exposed to Reverend Peck at an earlier time that people were not afraid to play hide and seek even at night.

Imaruittuq: Our grandmother used to tell us not to play hide and seek at night because we might be hidden forever. I have never heard of anyone being hidden away forever though.

What kind of animals did you hunt in the winter?
In the winter time, in the Amitturmiut area walrus and ring seals were constantly hunted for blubber. We used it as fuel for the qulliq. In my area they always hunted animals that had blubber. Of course we hunted caribou but we hunted them at the prime
clothing time which was in summer. In winter, we didn’t hunt caribou much. Of course, that’s because we have different animals to hunt in our area. In Qamanittuaq [Baker Lake] they constantly hunted caribou because that was the only food they had. But this was not the case where we were and I am sure it was the same in South Baffin. Because blubber was our source of heat, it was constantly sought after.

Did they make games from animal parts?
When we played inugaq, we used a bag that was made out of the bladder of a ring seal. You blew it up first and let it dry and that became your bag. If that was not available you would use mitts. We used braided sinew for string in this game. In the old days people used to be more skilled in games. A game that only some played was called sakkuiq, pretending to harpoon a seal. They would use the seal hip bone as a seal breathing hole. A dried ugiq, bearded seal skin, was used for a ring or bearded seal and they pretended to harpoon it with a miniature harpoon. Those of us who were unable to play only watched, and those for whom nice things were made, played. We had real miniature harpoons, and the seal hip bone was used as the seal breathing hole.

Nutaraaluk: We used to use kanaaviniq, the upper part of an old kamik, for the seal breathing hole. Imaruittuq called it sakkuiq, we called our game tugannguaq. We pretended we were on the ice trying to harpoon a seal. Whenever we harpooned it, the harpoon head was made to itumi, come apart. When it went sideways we were able to pull up the pretend seal with our pretend harpoons which were made of tusk or antler with a hole in it to allow for a harpoon head. The piece of sealskin was tied down, but the kanaaviniq was not tied down because that’s what the seal came up through. That is how we used to tugannguaq. The two games were different.

Imaruittuq: Yes, once more we are a bit different.

Did you have to move to different places in the spring and fall?
Absolutely. This pattern was strictly followed. They had specific places for spring camp and specific places for fall camp. They lived in one place in the spring, another place in the summer, then they moved elsewhere in the fall. If they had enough food they would stay in one place for the winter, but if it was too far from the floe edge and they were not catching game, they would move down closer to the floe edge. I was born during a time when they had left their winter camp to move closer to the floe edge.

Did you ever experience a time without dogs?
I can only remember when there were a lot of dogs. Our ancestors had fewer dogs. When they got boats with sails they felt really capable. I came into this world when the
qajaq was no longer being used and boats had sails. Our ancestors were lacking in material things, but in my father’s time they had boats and no longer needed the qajaq as it could not carry a large load.

Did you ever overnight when you were travelling?
Yes. When we were moving camps, we would camp for the night. Iglulik was the last place to have traders. We used to go to Naujaat, Tununirusiq or Mittimatik to trade furs. We travelled long distances to trade. Sometimes it took over a month to get to the trading post. Sometimes we would trade once a year and, on occasions we would go twice, especially when we were running out of things. They would travel in spring when it was no longer cold and the daylight was long. They would trade for tea, tobacco and sugar and they used to cache some of those items so they could go back for them during the winter. Of course they would cache them very well so animals such as fox would not get at them. They would do a good job of caching the supplies.

What you do remember most as a young boy? What thing really stands out?
I think the first time I went walrus hunting was really memorable because I was scared. I was sitting in front of my grandfather who was steering the boat as we were keeping up with the walrus. They were right there beside the boat and I started crying. I was right beside my grandfather and although I was crying, I was being ignored. Nobody seemed to feel sorry for me. That’s what I felt the first time I went walrus hunting. It was the scariest experience that I ever went through.

Did you get a walrus?
No. I was not interested in hunting walrus. I was crying. I only caught a walrus long after that. I didn’t even think about shooting, I only wanted to cry.

Why were you scared of them?
It was because of the stories that I had heard. In those days, you heard many stories about hunting experiences. There had been a person in a qajaq killed by a walrus. I think I was very scared of walrus because I heard this story. When you were a small boy, they would look huge. Even when you are an adult, you have to be constantly cautious when walrus hunting. They can be vicious. They have no problem going after a boat. They can even puncture canoes. They would not even seem to touch a boat but the boat ribs could be broken.
Were you taught how to sew?
I was not taught how to sew. I was only taught to hunt. It was only in my later years that I learned to sew a few simple things. We would be very independent when we were out hunting. I was taught how to sew on the outer soles of kamiik when I was out caribou hunting on foot. In those days, you walked for days and days. Of course you would wear out the soles of your kamiik and have holes in them, and you had to know how to patch them even if you were a man. That was something that was impressed on me that I should know how to do. I was actually shown how to sew on an outer sole. If the stitching was not tight enough moisture could get in and you would start falling because of the slipperiness. So we had to be meticulous in patching holes. In the old days, we used to use dogs to carry meat. The dogs used to come with us with pack sacks made out of seal skin. We used to go a long way, walking inland to hunt caribou and the dogs always assisted us in carrying back the meat.

When you were a small boy how did you amuse yourself during the day?
It depended on the season. We used to do a lot of things. When it was spring, we used to spend a lot of time outside playing aqsaq, kickball. The area where I lived didn’t have sun for a period in the winter and it was very cold so we played indoor games at that time. During the summer months we used to spend a lot of time outside.

In the winter was this inside an iglu or a qarmaq?
We used to have both iglulivigaaq made of snow and qarmaat made of sod. In those days an iglu used to be called an iglu, not an iglulivigaaq. In the winter we had tents inside the igluit. It was a lot warmer that way and they didn’t drip.

Did you have a lot of chores to do?
Yes, I had all sorts of chores to do. When we became able, we assisted our father when he was preparing to go hunting. We always had to help. Since they would leave in the early morning around six we would help harness the dogs. In pitch darkness I used to put harnesses on the dogs. Of course we knew which harness went on which dog as each harness was fitted for each dog. Since they were of varying sizes we figured out which harness went on which dog. For example, we all have our own clothing that fits us. The harnesses were like the dogs’ clothing and was made to fit them. While the hunters were away, we amused ourselves around camp. Either we went sliding or if there were dogs and pups that weren’t being used, we used them to play dogteam. We used to have puppies and made harnesses for them. We would actually have our own little dogteams. The puppies did not like it but we played with them anyway. We used
to smell them. Puppies used to stink! But if we wanted to play dogteam we had to put up with the smell.

*The dogs weren’t scary?*

No. Each individual had his unique style of dealing with dogs. Some of the hunters used to have fierce dogs, some had dogs that were very tame, very good tempered dogs, some hunters had really lazy dogs and some others had really good working dogs. Sometimes there were dogs in the porch. When you were going in, there used to be all these dogs that you would have to go through, and it used to be scary at times. You feared that you might be bitten. In those days dogs were not tied up and it was a lot better for the dogs to be loose. They were able to walk all day and all night without getting tired. But today they are always tied up in one place, and get tired after walking for even half a day. If they are not used enough they have more difficulty walking.

*Since you probably didn’t spend the whole day playing, did you also make things?*

As our skills improved we were given more things to do, based on what we were able to do for our age. It turns out they were teaching us all along. This is how ignorant we are as children, while it turns out someone is trying to help us we don’t want to do things. The more we learned the more they taught us. My cousin would always get me to do things. I avoided visiting him because if I did he would give me all kinds of things to do. But in reality he was teaching me. I only saw this afterwards. It turns out he was trying to help me but I avoided visiting him because I didn’t want him to make me do things.

*When you were in a tent or inside an iglu, what was your daily life like? Was it enjoyable?*

When food was plentiful it was pleasant enough, but when food was scarce it was not fun at all. Where we lived you couldn’t go hunting every day. Because we subsisted on animals, sometimes it was difficult. For me, not having enough food was what I found the most unenjoyable. When you don’t have any food in your stomach and you are trying to play outside, you can really feel the cold. When food is plentiful you can spend hours outside without getting cold. It is the same today.

*Did you ever face starvation yourself?*

When I was married and I lived with my in-laws, I experienced hunger for the first time and it seemed like it was a very long winter. Although it was only three months it felt
longer than that. When you went through a hard time, a month took a long time to go through. It seemed like years, but it was only three months. These days a month goes by before you know it. In those days when game was hard to come by, weeks and months felt really long, but when game was plentiful it was fun. And the same thing in the summer. When the weather was bad you wanted to go hunting but you were unable to do so.

_Did everyone in the camp experience hunger?_

Hunting was seasonal and depended on the game. We lived on an island called Iglulik. The point of the island is also called Iglulik. There is a place to hunt walrus and we used to have our camp there during the winter. All my cousins and my uncles used to live in that winter camp. We used to have lots of dogs. I recall very clearly that we had a large number of healthy dogs. When we started using boats with sails we were still travelling long distances to go trading. The people of Iglulik would have numerous dogs. Therefore, they had to have food for them because they were going to go to where there were _qallunaat_, for great distances. Later, they moved closer to the floe edge because that was where the game was. They would spend the spring there, walrus hunting and caching walrus meat. The making of fermented meat would be started then. They would return to where they would spend the fall. It was not always like that. My father was a caribou hunter as well and he would take his nephew, Serapio’s father, with him. This was shortly after Serapio was born. My brothers and I couldn’t go because we were too young. They used to go after caribou so they could get good decent skins for clothing, while others of the family hunted sea mammals for _qulliq_ fuel and food for the dogteams. Everyone in the camp worked together so that the whole camp would survive.

_Were you born after there were _qallunaat_ in your area? Did you experience seeing _qallunaat_ for the first time?_

_Qallunaat_ were already in our area when I was born. I was born long after the _qallunaat_ started coming to our area. The first time I saw a _qallunaat_ it was a priest.

_What did you think of him?_

I didn’t think about him at the time, but afterwards I became really afraid of _qallunaat_. _Qallunaat_ were really scary back then. Probably because we didn’t see many of them. The R.C.M.P. would come from Mittimatalik. When we were young we were made to be altar boys. The first time I was an altar boy, I cried through the whole service, because I was so scared of the _qallunaaq_. I forget how old I was at the time.
We used to be scared of *qallunaat* because of lack of contact. I’m sure they were not trying to be scary. We were just not used to them. We were not used to seeing strangers. In later years it turned out that the *qallunaat* would become our relatives and our neighbours, but because we were seeing them for the first time they were strangers. These days, we seem to treat even our own immediate relatives as strangers.


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Were you taught survival skills by your parents?

Most of our learning was by observation. If my father knew I was not going to experience something personally, he would describe scenarios to me so I would still know about it. For example, how certain animals were hunted, what to do when the weather was bad or how to do things to survive. My father would occasionally tell me about things but it was my mother who constantly talked to me about how to conduct my life. Sometimes it was things I didn’t even want to hear about and I would say, “This is useless,” but it turned out it was only my ignorance. Long afterwards when I would experience something along the lines of what I had been told, I realized that she had told me things based on truth. That was one thing I have always followed, although it seemed like I was throwing away things my mother was telling me. There were two things that my mother told me that seemed to wake me up. My mother used to call me ani, her brother, and I in turn called her najak, sister. She said to me, just before I got married, “Anik, when you have a wife, please do not be stingy about your food, and do not question whatever food is being finished because when you are a woman, food can be a cause of intimidation.” This was a very powerful message for me in my life. There are all sorts of other things that my mother used to say to me. Of course we are learning all the time through words, for example, “When you are an adult and you have children you should be doing this,” or “When you have a wife you should be doing that.” What she told me is still there. We learned from what was said to us. At the time someone is telling you things they are just words, but they come alive when you actually use that advice in your life.

Of the advice you were given, what do you still follow today?

What I just told you, that when I had a wife I should be a good provider of food and not be stingy. That was the most powerful advice. The words that my mother told me, not to be stingy and to feed my spouse and any other family in need. When my mother passed away, I was wrong to think that there was no longer anyone to give me advice. I was free to carry on my life as I wanted because there was not going to be anyone giving me advice. It turns out this was not the case, for I was supposed to hang on to the advice she had given me and not let it go. This is where I went wrong. When I thought that no one would be giving me advice anymore, I did what I wanted. What I should
have done was follow the advice I was given on how to conduct my life. My way of thinking was very wrong.

*I did not quite understand, where were you born?*
In Iglulik. The community known as Iglulik today was not the original Iglulik. We live on an island and a little bit south of us is the real Iglulik, on a point. That is where I was born.

*The community that is Iglulik today, what did you call it?*
We called it Ikpiarjuk.

*Rosie Iqalugjuaq is your mother and your father is Bernard Ikummaq? Were they not married?*
They weren't married at first. It is only recently that we have started having names that are not ours [surnames]. We always had our own names. After they were married they retained their own names. Nowadays, I jokingly say, “No wonder we are awful people now, we are trying to carry on names that are not ours.”

*Who changed your names? Your name is not your real name is it?*
No, Imaruittuq is my real name.

*Who are you? Emile?*
Emile is my baptismal name. It’s not from Inuit tradition. Imaruittuq is my real name. I think my grandmother gave me my name.

*Were you baptized after the qallunaat came?*
I was born after the Catholic priests came. It was through the Roman Catholics that we received our baptismal names. I came into this world when the Roman Catholics were already up in our area.

*Did you have atiqaqati, people that carried the same name?*
Yes. There are two in Ikpiarjuk. I have two *avvaaq*, people that carry the same name. I tell them they are not Imaruittuq because they are female. Even though they are named after the same person as me I want to be the only one to carry the name. In the old days we used to have fewer *atiqaqatit*. Nowadays, there are many people who have the same name, probably because there are so many births.
You said that you had a pre-arranged marriage. When did you get together?
In 1951. I was 16 when I got married.

Was she from another community?
We lived in the same area. Camps would be separated but they wouldn’t be very far from us.

I did not quite understand. If there was another Imaruittuq, how could they tell which was which?
We were named after Imaruittuq. We were named after a person who passed away the year we were born. Because the person we were named after had lots of relatives, there are three of us that were named after Imaruittuq. There was also a fourth one who died. Maybe through my baptismal name or if you said I was a male they would know you were talking about me. The other two individuals are female. They would clearly understand you were talking about me because the other two were females and I’m the only male that has that name.

Were you baptized as a young person?
I was baptized right after I was born in 1934.

Was it in Avvajja?
Probably. No, maybe in Iglulik. That’s where I was born. I think that’s where I was baptized.

When was the first time you went walrus hunting on moving ice? Do you remember your first experience?
I don’t know how old I was when I went along for the first time. When we were young boys we looked after our father’s dogs as we became able. In the Iglulik area we hunt seals by searching for seal holes in the winter. That is not done in many places. Then we would go down to the moving ice to hunt walrus when the wind blew from the south east and blew the moving ice to the floe edge. The first time I went along we stopped when we saw a walrus. My father stopped the dogteam and started walking towards it. He said that I was to come when he would nulurag, wave to me. I waited and watched in case he wanted me to come. Right beside me there was the sound of newborn puppies crying and I became really scared. The sound was exactly like the sound made by newborn puppies. It turned out it was the ice creaking as it was made to pile up by the
current. Because it was the first time I heard this, never having experienced this before, I could only think of newborn puppies crying and it scared me. This was the first time I had heard the sound of ice piling up. Anytime we have a new experience, we are easily scared. I don’t recall how old I was. Before that we walked down to the walrus leaving the qamutik behind but taking the dogs with us. The dogs’ traces were rolled up so they didn’t drag them. I think they left the qamutik behind because they didn’t want to lose them. There were the four of us, my father, my angak, mother’s brother, and my atuatattiaq, grandfather. At that time we weren’t actually walrus hunting. I was brought along because they wanted to get meat from a qingniq, a cache. The next day, they wouldn’t take those of us that were too small along because it was too scary. The next day the wind started blowing from the south east and they went hunting. My grandfather and I followed after they had left. They had caught a walrus and had removed the guts and the ribs. The openings they had made to remove the guts and the ribs had been tied up by the time we arrived. We went back to the solid ice. The walrus was dragged by the dogs and my grandfather and I walked alongside it. Because I was very scared of falling through the ice, I started to cry. My grandfather started scolding me and telling me that I was a lot lighter than he was and I would not fall in. He was telling me the truth but because I was so afraid of falling in, I was crying.

When your father was out walrus hunting, did you children take care of the dogs?

Yes, we had to make sure that the dogs stayed put. The dogs were not allowed to follow their owners. If a hunter was by himself he had to go back and forth to deal with the dogs and deal with the kill as well. Because of that we were taken along so we could take care of the dogs while they were actually hunting.

How old were you at the time?

I think I was eight or nine years old.

Did the dogs listen when they were told to stay put?

Yes, they used to stay put. The only times they did not was when the hunters were going after basking seals or caribou. When they went walrus hunting it was different. The dogs were able to stay put because they couldn’t see the walrus.

Do you remember the first time you drove a dogteam?

We used to learn how to guide our own dogteams through practise. We started using little dogs at a very young age.
Did you go far?
No we stayed very close. It used to get scary if your dogs were going too far in any one direction. So we used to make sure we stayed in the vicinity of the camp.

You mentioned earlier that there were already Roman Catholic missionaries when you became aware. Did you go to school then?
We learned syllabics, we learned how to write.

Did you learn from the missionaries?
We learned syllabics. We would be taught English but that was very difficult to learn. We used to have English sessions, but it was very difficult for me to learn.

Were you taught by priests who weren’t real teachers?
Yes, they taught us. This was before there were teachers.

You didn’t have any grades?
No we didn’t have any grades. We were just taught English and how to read and write Inuktitut.

Is whale meat also eaten?
Yes, it is very tasty when it is fermented. We don’t eat it very often in our area. We tend to just use it for dog food. We eat the skin.

I want to ask about meat. How did you handle going walrus hunting alone as they are probably quite heavy?
Yes, they are heavy. If you catch a walrus on the ice and you are going back by dogteam you can get a walrus even if you are alone, if you have an aliq. You and the dogs could pull the walrus using an aliq.

I don’t understand. What is an aliq?
It’s a very thick long harpoon line which is very strong.

If there were a number of people walrus hunting, was the person who saw the walrus first the one who had to share the catch or ...?
I will explain it carefully to you. If there are five of us who catch a walrus, the first person to shoot it is deemed to have killed it; if it is not killed with a rifle, the first one to harpoon it is the aivvaktuq. The sharing practice that they followed was that the person who made the kill took the forearms. As people came they got meat from the middle part of the body. Then the next people got meat from the front of the walrus. If a lot of people came the portions were smaller. The last people to come got the meat close to the flippers.

What part was the preferred share?
The part that was considered to have the best meat was the meat and blubber near the headnipinnganiq. When the walrus was fat this part of the meat has a double layer of fat. When the walrus was skinny what would have been the fat is just tissue.

Was most of the walrus meat fermented?
Yes, it was fermented.

Was that the only way it was eaten?
It was eaten in many ways, fresh or fermented. In Iglulik we really make a lot of fermented meat.

Was the hide also made into rope?
Only if it was the hide of a foetus or a newborn was it possible to make rope because the hide was thin. It is not possible to make rope out of the adult hide because it is too thick.

Was the kauq, hide, dried first?
It was dried and softened by pounding.

Different areas have different customs regarding the sharing of meat. Was there also a set way to share whale meat?
The walrus and bearded seal were the ones where set rules were followed.

What were the rules for bearded seal?
The same as for walrus.

Was bearded seal skin made into ropes?
Yes. It was made into ropes and also used for the bottom soles of kamiik.
Did they share caribou meat this way as well?
Where we lived, no. Only bearded seal, walrus, and bear were shared in this way. We don't ningiq, have ritualized sharing of meat for ring seals.

Meat such as caribou wasn't treated like this?
Caribou meat would be brought out for special occasions such as Christmas. If it was cached summer caribou meat, ajalisaq, it was brought out at Christmas. I remember that very clearly when I was a young boy. When we say pirujaq in the Iglulik area it refers to the caribou cache itself and not to the caribou meat. But for marine mammals whether they are cached in the ground or with rocks over them it is called qingniq.

Was meat put aside for celebrations such as Christmas?
Just before Christmas, or any celebration, as I remember it, before there was a Hudson's Bay Company store, our grandmother Ataguttaaluk used to set aside flour for celebrations. After we had long used up all the flour she would take some out, just for a celebration. Often elders saved something for special occasions.

Does the meat seem to taste better on special occasions like Christmas?
Oh yes, yes. Back home in Iglulik during Christmas we always have a feast and it seems to have a special taste of its own. If you just looked at it, you would think there might not be enough but after we had taken from it there was always a lot left. I don't know how.

What did you usually eat on Christmas or Easter or other occasions?
Christmas is the only time that I remember when there were just Inuit. After the qallunaat came into our area they used to give us biscuits, tea and flour.

Did you celebrate Easter?
Yes, we celebrated it.

Did they have feasts then?
Yes, they had lots of feasts.

Can you talk about the dictionary project you were working on?
I used to be a teacher, an adult educator for five years. I started introducing Inuktitut literacy. There was no curriculum for Inuktitut so I had to create my own. I made word lists and wrote down the meanings. So ii, uu, aa and from there I started on my dictionary as I was working for adult education. Five years after I stopped working for adult education, I.C.I. [Inuit Cultural Institute] heard about my work and asked me if I could put a dictionary together using the materials that I had created. I did not hesitate to say ‘yes’ at all. Sometimes I would come to a point where things didn’t make any sense and sometimes it got to a point where I regretted the whole project. But I reminded myself, this is going to be useful, so I continued working on it. Hugh Lloyd used to be my supervisor and co-worker. We would communicate to each other and he always supported my ideas. When I tackled the project he asked me how I was going to do it. Was it going to be strictly in Inuktitut? That was the first thing I had to decide and I said I wanted to create a dictionary using Inuktitut only. We would worry about the other languages later on. After I was working on it, I decided it should be in both languages, have Inuktitut in one column and English in another column, so young people could understand what the words were. I was going to write down the old words that are no longer used. My proposal to write it in both languages was approved and I searched for a person who could help me to write it in English. I found three. Johnny Kopak was one of the applicants and I chose him. He translated the material that I had into English. We worked almost two years on the project. When we were about three months from completion, I.C.I. cut the funding off. We had been really sailing. I told them that when I completed the project, I didn’t want anything to be changed. I feared that they might introduce changes. I thought that if someone from another dialect started working on it changes might be made. I wrote it in the Iglulik dialect. When I knew words from the other dialects I would put them in, but it was basically in the Iglulik dialect because I knew it would be used in the schools in Iglulik once I had finished the project.

Since you have dealt with a dictionary, I would like to get the definitions of some words and I am going to ask you them. Do you understand naalagaq. Does it mean leader?

In some dialects, it was the leader or the boss. I will tell you what other dialects use, but I am not familiar with all of them. In some dialects it’s naalagaq. In Iglulik it’s isumataq, for others it’s angajuqqaaq and maybe in others ataniq.

So if a person is a naalagaq he needs to be listened to?

Yes.
Ungajuq⁵, what does that mean?
Even if you don’t ask I’ve written about qangatasuq, qangatajuuq, tingmisuuq, tingmijualuk, tingmisaqtuq⁶. When I knew all the dialectal differences for a word I would put them in.

How about piusiq? Are iliqqusiq and piusiq the same thing?
They are dialectal variations for the same thing.

Atuagaq, what is that?
Atuagaq, I think it is referring to a maligaralaq, a small maligaq, or rules.

Iqqaq what is that?
Iqqaq: We call it imaup natinga. The Kivallingmiut call it the aluq. It is a lake or sea bed.

I often heard that a person’s name is very important to them. Could you talk about that?
Among Inuit a name has always been important. It has been so important that we were told never to say the name of an elder. We never questioned why. This was very important to our ancestors. If there was a term they could call each other, they used that. In-laws call each other ‘in-laws’ whether ningau, son or brother-in-law, or ukuaq, daughter or sister-in-law or even nulirii, people whose children are married to each other. No one called each other by name. People had different ways of addressing each other, even their own wives, such as nuliarainnuk or nuliakuluk or nuliaraluk or nuliarraq. They would also use nukaaktaq, or angajuaktaq⁷, for addressing an older or younger spouse.

They didn’t even use the name of their wives?
Yes. From the time that we can remember we have always had a system for addressing each other and that’s what we used.

Could you talk about the advice you were given that helped you in your life or what you were told when you had done something wrong?
Even when I wasn’t aware that my behaviour had changed or I didn’t think I had done anything wrong, my mother would talk to me and that would seem to wake me up because sometimes you are not always aware of yourself.
Can you tell us some of the advice you were given?

There was a lot of advice that was given to me; two things really stand out. I didn’t believe my mother out of ignorance because I thought what she was telling me was useless, but it turned out to be very valuable. Long after she died her words would come back to me after an incident had happened that would make me recall her words. At that time I would realize how true her words were. I didn’t want to listen. I really recall one of the lectures she gave me before I got married. She told me, “As a woman, asking for food can be very intimidating.” She told me never to be intimidating, to be approachable for food and never to be stingy about food with my wife. That’s the advice she gave me. If food was finished while I was away I was not to ask after it.

The second thing she said was that some men were two-faced. During the day they seem fine, the men would look happy, but during the night they would abuse their wives. During the day a man would be fine, but during the night the husband would hog the blankets and the wife would be without blankets because the husband would show his anger at his spouse. My mother told me never to do that sort of thing.

Who would counsel such a man?

It would be the elders. That’s how it was in Iglulik. The elders would be the ones to give counselling on how to be better. A lot of the counselling and words of wisdom came from our mothers and grandmothers. That was my case. My grandfather Ittuksaarjuat acted like a judge. He was a leader and a judge at the same time. We are no longer like that in the communities. We just wait for outsiders to make the decisions. Although the mayor should be the one who is our leader, we wait for direction from outside. We don’t put our knowledge to use. Maybe when we get Nunavut we will stand up for ourselves. In the last few years we have been practically a door mat for the government to wipe their feet on. They always impose their regulations and their rules upon us and we just follow.

Do you remember the last time elders acted as judges?

I was very young when my grandfather died. Once my grandfather died, that’s when this system died.

Don’t you talk to the younger generation about how they should conduct their lives?

If they don’t ask me, I don’t. If I am asked, certainly I will give them counselling and help them. It is like that today. We are just sitting back waiting to be approached. If we are asked we will counsel.
Even with your own relations, with your own children, you don’t do that?
Of course I will initiate counselling with my children because they are mine, and I am able to counsel them.

Footnotes
1 Atiqqajariik, two people whose names are almost the same.
2 Rousseliere 1950.
3 Ungagi-, to enjoy being with someone.
4 Inugaq, a game with seal flippers bones; ajagaq, a game played with either a rabbit skull, caribou vertebra or a square flipper humerus where a stick was popped into a hole; ajaraaq, a game to make figurines using string or braided sinew.
5 Unga-, wanting to be with someone, missing a person.
6 Words for airplane from different areas.
7 Angajuaktaq, a husband much older than his wife, or a wife older than her husband; nukaaktag, a wife much younger than her husband, or a husband younger than his wife.
Chapter 6

Lucassie Nutaraaluk: Memories of the Past

The dialect of Nutaraaluk was not always easy for the students to understand but they became more and more familiar with it when conducting interviews on his life story. Nutaraaluk relates how his parents became Christians at his birth, “It sounds unbelievable, but I should have died after I was born because my muscles had been ripped apart. In the old days when they realized that a child was going to be severely handicapped, they would just let it die. My father said that if a child had a life ahead of it the child would live, even though it was handicapped. That is what my father said. Other people besides my mother and father would have just waited for me to die because I was handicapped. That’s how it was when I was born. My mother and father saw me as a miracle. That’s the reason they converted to Christianity.” He also related the sad story of the murderer Miqqualaaq that became a central topic in the interviews on murder. When all attempts to rescue Miqqualaaq from himself had failed, he was finally killed. The story testifies to the efforts that were made, even in extreme cases, to counsel people and integrate them into the community again.

My ataatatsiaq, grandfather on my father’s side, was Usuarjuk. He was married to my father’s mother Qimiqpikuluk. I never heard who my mother’s mother and father were. I don’t know exactly why I never found out who my mother’s parents were. I think she was adopted. I never found out who my grandfather and grandmother were on my
mother’s side. My father was Alariaq and my mother was Iqaluk. I was born in Itilliarjuk, not far from Kinngait, in 1922. My mother recorded the year I was born. She had learned how to record dates from Reverend Peck by making strokes on paper. There were already qallunaat in the Kinngait area. There were traders and missionaries. After England won the First World War, the Hudson Bay Company became established up here. After they heard of Christianity, my father and mother converted because of me. Because I was pulled out of the womb, many of my muscles had been torn. Over several days my muscles healed, one after another. Because I healed completely they came to the realization that there was a Saviour and they converted. There was no minister in Kinngait. My father became one of the lay-ministers.

In those days, we didn’t live in Kinngait but in a camp close by. When my father was a small boy, my grandfather Usuarjuk was out hunting on an ullit, an island where walrus were basking. The alivik, long harpoon line, was longer than a regular aliq, harpoon line, and became wrapped around him and he died after being dragged into the water.

In 1929, my aana, grandmother, died after being shot with a rifle. I was seven years old. Miqqualaaq killed three people near Nattilik, his father, his mother and my grandmother. I’m not going to tell you this story, I’m just telling you this for information because it would take too long to tell it right now.

When I was seven years old I got my first rifle. They had to cut the rifle butt so it could fit me. Ever since, I have always had a rifle. I keep buying rifles. I am very cautious with rifles and I have always been like that ever since I got my first gun at the age of seven. The next summer, I killed three yearling caribou.

When I was three years old my mother told me that my father was throwing rocks at ptarmigan. So I gathered stones and then when I threw one, I hit a ptarmigan and I had my first ptarmigan kill. That was at the age of three years old. I remember being small. When I was young I never had any cause to feel intimidated. I always felt loved. Today there are too many stresses and too many concerns.

Pitungnaq is when you tie the end of the aliq, harpoon line, to a rock, the other end being connected to the harpoon. Men used to uraq; make walrus sounds while they were hunting. They used to harpoon sea mammals from the land. That’s how they used to hunt in the old days, especially for walrus. They would go to the ullit for walrus. My grandfather Usarjuk got tangled in the harpoon line and that’s how he died.

Was that deliberate?

No, it was accidental. It was dusk. He threw the harpoon and his foot was caught in the line. He was drawn into the water by a walrus, and he went down under the water and he drowned. My atiq, namesake, Inugjuaraajuk tried to cut the line. He was also known as Inuk Kauki. In the old days, they used to have long lines when they were walrus
hunting. They used to pull in the walrus using these long harpoon lines and then they
would kill it using an anguvigaq.

Who was your wife and how many children did you have?

My deceased wife and I never had our own children. I never found out who the sterile
one was, or maybe we were the only ones who never made love [joking]. We never had
our own children. We only have children by adoption. At the age of eighteen I was made
to take a wife because I had no mother. When I was nineteen we adopted a child. When
we were living here in Iqaluit we adopted another child. He is the only son still living
today. We had another adopted child who passed away when he became a teenager.
Another adopted child never came back from hunting during a blizzard. I think that’s
why my hair is white. I have white hair due to the many headaches I had for a number
of years after he died because he never came back from hunting. When the blizzard set
in he got lost. He was out hunting with someone else and didn’t return home because
of the blizzard. I used to think I would never run out of meat because he did not drink
and he was such a good hunter. From the time he was young he was a much better
hunter than his older brother. The youngest of our adopted children is Elisapee
Nutaraaluk. I have a number of grandchildren. I have numerous relatives, from even as
far away as Uqsuqtuuq [Gjoa Haven] who were originally from the Kingait area. Those
who were taken to Uqsuqtuuq [by the Hudson’s Bay Company] were all related to my
mother and father. They also had relatives in Nunavik. I am the only one here, even
though I do have lots of relatives elsewhere.

Where were you born?

Killiajuk is the place where I was born. There are these huge caldrons, where they used
to boil blubber. A whaling ship had unloaded huge caldrons in which they had boiled
blubber and then left them there. I remember these as a child. If I went back there, I
probably would be very slow. At my birth place, I killed a bird that was in mid-air with
a sling shot, a qulliqilaq, a small brown bird. We used to have sling shots and whips as
small boys. We never had manufactured toys.

Although my father and my mother were in contact with Reverend Peck they had
doubts about Christianity. They did not truly believe in Christianity before I was born.
I was a miracle in their eyes. They used to tell me that. When I was born, my muscles
had been torn. My muscles had been so torn you could turn my mid-section all the way
around. To their amazement I healed completely. In their eyes that was a miracle. Every
night my muscles healed one after another. It was through me that they realized that
there was a Saviour who was able to heal. Despite that, even though I shouldn’t, I still
commit sins. I try to be helpful to my community because I think of how I was saved.
Anytime, that events such as foul and drastic weather occur, people think it is just nature at work. But I believe what I have heard. We were always told that if we did something terrible, God would pay us back. That is what is happening in Quebec and Ontario [the ice storm of January 1997]. The same thing could happen in our communities if we do terrible things all the time and don’t follow our values. We could be in danger from winds, heavy rains, flooding or other drastic catastrophes. That is why I pray every night so others will not be in danger during my lifetime. I always ask for God’s help in everything I do. I do not want to preach but I want others to understand. If I started to think of myself as someone who was very religious I would be in the wrong. If I considered my fellow men as being bad then I would also be wrong. I am telling you about these things even though I am not a minister, but I wanted to tell you anyway.

Before I was born, my father used to travel back and forth from Kinngait to Nunavik. After his father died, he still travelled to Nunavik because he had many uncles there. Because his mother was in Sikusiliq (the area around Kinngait) he returned there. I was born quite some time after the fur traders were established there. After England defeated Germany in the First World War, the qallunaat came up here and claimed our territory. Our ancestors were never compensated, never paid even though the qallunaat came up here and took over our land. I know our ancestors were very skilled people. They had very few tools but they survived. They were very strong and very capable. Thanks to their ability to survive we are here today. I know if we tried today to do what our ancestors did, we would die because we don’t have the same skills.

I was born in the month of April which is not a very good time for making an iglu and when the daylight is becoming longer. If you were born in the winter you would be aqiggiq, ptarmigan. This was still too early for the aggįq, old squaw duck, to come up here. Whenever I joined in kickball or in whipping contests I joined with the aqiggit. If you were born in the summer you would be an aggįq. Anytime we would play games, that’s how they would separate us. Aggit would compete against aqiggit. I was an aqigqig because I was born before the aggįt returned.

If someone was born in winter he would be aqiggiq?
Yes, you would be aqiggiq if you were born in the winter. Anytime we were playing baseball, soccer, or any sport, we would be in two teams, aqiggit and aggįt. They would be our opponents.
Maybe you could talk about your older brothers and your sisters. We would like to know who they were.

You mean my sisters and my older brothers? Usuarjuk was my older brother, Tajaraq was my oldest sister. Inuujaq was another older brother, and I also had another sister Ulluriaq. I was the youngest in the family. My older brother Usuarjuk was my angajukuluk, dear older brother, my sister Tajaraq was my najakuluk, dear sister, Inuujaq was my angajuviniruluk, my late dear older brother, and my sister Ulluriaq was my najakuluapik, my dear sister. There had been a child between my najakuluapik and myself. There were others but I never knew them.

What are the names of your children?

Iqaluk was the oldest, named after my mother. Ulluriaq was named after my najakuluapik. My daughter who is only called Elisapee is named after my deceased in-law Tajaraq. Even though I named him after my angajuviniruluk, I only called my youngest son irnilaaraapik. My only surviving son is named after my father Alariaq. He is also called Adamie.

Could you please tell us about your father?

Yes, he used to give sermons. Now, they train people to become ministers. Back then, even those who did not want to become ministers gave sermons. That’s why I said he was a minister. He was always helping the ministers when they came to Kinngait to look after their dogs and take them there. He was given a pendant to show that he was a lay minister.

Once, my father seemed to be trying to make me the leader. I don’t know why he did that. Maybe he was preparing me to feel comfortable to be a good camp leader. So I was already exposed to making those types of decisions. Maybe that’s what he was trying to do. Since my father taught me well in life, I moved down here as I wanted my wife to see her father. I used to follow my father’s words. That’s why I moved closer to the Iqaluit area rather than moving back to the Kinngait area. I know the area quite well around Kinngait. When my father passed away, I never went back to Kinngait, even though I knew that area very well. I stayed around here in Iqaluit and I had employment here with the military. When the Canadian military came here, I was employed with them.

Your anaanatsiaq, your grandmother, was shot when you were seven years old?

My aana. We make a distinction between father’s and mother’s mother. For a father’s mother we say aana and for a mother’s mother we say anaanatsiaq. That’s what we say in Kinngait and Kimmirut.
Where was your aana from?
She was from the Kinngait area.

Why was she shot?
Miqqualaaq was possessed by evil and killed his mother and father.

Your aana’s son was killing people?
No, he was not her son. My father, Alariaq was her son. I had four siblings. I was the youngest. My najakuluk, my angajukuluk, my angajuviniruluk and my najakuluapik. There were four older ones and I was the youngest. I am the only one alive now. I moved here after they had all died. I was the only son left to my father. We had to listen to our father’s words. My wife’s father was here [Iqaluit]. My father wanted my wife and her father to see each other because her father had requested that we visit him. Because my father was not worried about my hunting abilities he told me to come here to visit. I was unable to see my father again because he died the following year. That year, I told the police that I wanted to go to see my father. It was during a time when there was an epidemic, and I was told by the police not to go. That’s when the police also acted as social workers. I listened to them, and my father died before I saw him again.

When did you come here [Iqaluit]?
I came here in 1951. The military and the Hudson’s Bay Company were the only qallunaat here. The Americans had been replaced by the Canadians.

What was your wife’s name?
Piuliaq. She was also named Elisapee. She was called Piuliaq Nutaraaluk even though Nutaraaluk was not her name. That’s how people are called nowadays.

Were you married?
We got together in the spring. Her father was also a hunter for the ministers. He married us. We got married with rings. Later, I told Ajuriqtuijikutaak [Rev. Harold Quartermain] that we had not been married by a qallunaat, but by a hunter. He replied it was okay. I also told Mike [Gardner], and he said the same thing. We got married when we were very young. She was my first wife.
You were told to get a wife when you were so young?

Yes, men without mothers were told to get wives. Several had tried to marry her but had given up. She agreed to marry me. Perhaps she thought I was a great man. She had agreed to marry me. That’s how she became my dear wife. I didn’t have sexual intercourse with her for three months after she became my wife. I was too inexperienced. Maybe it was because I was too young. She became my wife when I was eighteen. Then when I was nineteen, we were given a child to adopt because we weren’t getting any of our own.

Were women allowed to say ‘no’ to a man who was trying to marry them?

Back then, they didn’t dare to say anything. They were not like you are nowadays. Even though she was afraid, she agreed to become my wife. Young women used to be very afraid of men back then.

Why did the men give up trying to marry her?

More than one person tried to marry her, but they gave up when her father refused his permission. That is why they gave up trying. She was not easily won over. I was not looking for a wife at the time I got one. Only when our parents agreed, did we get a wife or a husband. It was already decided that she would become my wife. I was seven when she was promised to me. When someone would ask to marry her, he would be told that she was promised to someone else. I was chosen to be her husband. She lived only with me until she died.

Did your parents have a meeting over this?

Yes, it was only after the parents had talked together that a man got a wife. Now, I don’t even hear about it when my daughters get married. They don’t even think of asking me. That is how it is today. Couples get married without anyone asking permission. Back then, they got married only after having asked permission. The better hunter would be preferred over one who didn’t seem like he was going to be a good hunter. That is how it was back then. That is what I have heard. I was not a great hunter, but I was able to catch some game.

The police didn’t want you to leave when you wanted to go and see your father?

That time when I wanted to visit my father, there was a lot of sickness around. The policeman said that he was very afraid I would get sick on the way and advised me to go the following year instead. I listened to him, and my father died in my absence. He
was the only one around for me to bring meat to. After he died, I didn’t want to go back there, even though I was asked to go, because I would not see him anymore and I wouldn’t be able to give him meat. My father who raised me, would not be there.

We had to listen to his wishes. Sometimes he would let me be the boss, maybe just to test me out. He got an outrigger when I was seven years old. I could pretend to be the boss of it. When I was older, I would be in charge of the boat whenever my father would let me. Inuit used to be very obedient to the leaders. Their wishes had to be followed very carefully. My father was considered a leader and was listened to by the people in the camp.

*What was it about him that caused him to become a lay minister?*

Even those who were not ministers were considered to be leaders because of their abilities to catch game. Their capabilities made them leaders in the camps. This is also why my father was the leader in our camp when I was a little child. That is what I know.

My father had been a great *angakkuq*. He even used to go down to see Sedna, when she was not happy because people had broken *pittailiniq* taboos, and the animals had disappeared. He would go down to get animals. The animals in her shed were as numerous as maggots. There were all different animals down there where Sedna was. He would also go to her dwelling. Even though he had been an *angakkuq*, he was not shy to talk about shamanism. After he gave up shamanism, he never again felt the presence of his *tuurngait*, helping spirits. He had worried about what might happen to him once he was not an *angakkuq* anymore. That’s what he first thought of when he decided to give up shamanism. After he gave up shamanism, he never felt the presence of his *tuurngait* again.

*Have you heard of *siqqitirniq* here?*

I haven’t heard of that word *siqqitirniq*.

**Imaruittuq to Nutaraaluk:** When people turned to Christianity the term we used for this in our area was *siqqitiq*. In our area people were said to be *siqqitiqtut* when they were turning to Christianity.

**Nutaraaluk to Imaruittuq:** I have never heard of this.

**Imaruittuq to Nutaraaluk:** It is not part of your dialect. It is a word we have for when people were turning to Christianity.

**Nutaraaluk to Imaruittuq:** When they were giving up shamanism they were said to *qaqialiqtuq*, repent. That’s how it was.
Have you heard about the way angakkuit did things?

Yes, I have heard about what angakkuit did. There are even angakkuit here in Iqaluit. Once, when I was in Puvirnituq I said, “This seems an unlikely place for angakkuit. It is fortunate that there are no angakkuit here.” Then I was told that every community has angakkuit and would always have angakkuit. That is what I was told. There are probably angakkuit here in Iqaluit, too.

How was your father selected to become an angakkuq? Did this happen before he was born?

An old woman who was thankful to him made him an angakkuq. He used to empty the honey bucket of Tunukallak when he was a young boy. He was quite young when he would empty her bucket. The bucket was qairningajuq, made of an old qajaq skin. He would also bring her ice. He was not living with his parents so he would visit her. He felt welcome there. She wanted to make him an angakkuq because she was grateful to him. She made him an angakkuq just by talking to him. She asked him, “Which do you prefer, the ones who are angakkuit or the ones who are not angakkuit?” He said that he preferred the ones who were not angakkuit. She said that she wanted to give him protective powers because some people try to hurt others. She said, “This is why I want to make you an angakkuq.” Then she made him an angakkuq. Tunukallak is said to have been a great angakkuq.

Long ago at Nuvuk a ship was wrecked. People built igluit for these shipwrecked qallunaat with the doors facing the wind. These people didn’t realize they would be paid for their help so they didn’t take very good care of them. They were not aware they would be paid. Some other qallunaat from the wreck were at another place. They had separated from the other group. One group were disembowled and the other group were ambushed at night because people wanted their knives and other things. This is what they did because they didn’t know any better. Some Indians went to kill the Inuit who lived along the coast who had done this. Tunukallak didn’t even realize that her tuurngait, helping spirits, along with other tuurngait had gone to stop the massacre of the Inuit by the lake. The tuurngait had knives. They appeared in the form of people and killed the Indians who were carrying weapons and provisions, sparing only a young couple so that they would live to tell about it. The couple was said to cry every time they would tell about what happened because they had been so terrified. The attempts to kill the Inuit failed, even though their enemies were trying, because the tuurngait would disappear and reappear. Several angakkuit’s tuurngait were brought together by another angakkuq.
These two Indians told this story first?

It was told by someone else, an old woman, Nuvukallak not Tunukallak. The Indians who were sent to massacre the Inuit by the lake were defeated. The Indians were killed by Tunukallak’s tuurngait. Some people went down to the lake but they couldn’t see the bottom because there was so much blood, even though it was a fairly large lake. Maybe the tuurngait threw all those Indians in the lake. It is so long ago that I will not hesitate to talk about it. Those Inuit killed the qallunaat because they didn’t know any better. They didn’t know anything about qallunaat. They did this mainly because they didn’t know that they would have been paid. They would have been rewarded if they had just kept them alive. They didn’t understand each other because they didn’t have the same language. These Inuit did this because they didn’t know any better.

Who was Inugjuaraarjuk to you?

Inugjuaraarjuk is my atiq. Since he wanted only to be called Nutaraaluk, I am only called Nutaraaluk even though my real name is Inugjuaraarjuk. My father used to call him his cousin. He became my father’s stepfather, after my grandfather died. My atiq had four wives that is why I don’t have any.

Was he your father’s adoptive father?

No, he married my father’s mother after my father’s father died. Inugjuaraarjuk my atiq had four wives at the same time. I should have had four wives at the same time, just kidding.

My parents used to be very open to me because they loved me dearly. Children that were not really loved rarely heard the old tales and stories. Today, there are too many things to be pre-occupied with so people don’t listen to traditional stories. I was loved dearly by my parents and by my immediate relatives.

My father was very successful and he always shared his food and the cache that he had; he used to be very supportive to the camp. I never really learned to hunt at the same level as my father. You were called a man in those days because you were a very capable hunter. But today, they say someone is a real man because he makes money. I am a real man. I am not challenging other males, but I think that I have ample enough knowledge and I have experienced what a man should have experienced. My father used to harpoon bearded seals through their breathing holes and in open water. This was no longer practised by the time I was old enough to hunt.

I used to get old saw blades and make them into knives. That is what I used when I cut up walrus. After my knives made out of old saw blades were taken by people from Greenland, I got a knife that wasn’t made from an old saw blade. When I tried to cut walrus I realized I was not a real man. I really had to exert myself with the knife that was made of a saw blade. I had to cut and cut and cut.
My father used to talk about when he used to harpoon bearded seals and walruses. I heard about that when I was a small boy. He used to harpoon walrus that hadn’t been wounded first at the floe edge. He used to harpoon bearded seals through the breathing holes. I have also harpooned walrus at the floe edge, but never before they had been wounded first. I have only once harpooned a bearded seal through a breathing hole. Quqiuqqajuq is when ring and bearded seals lose their hearing for a while and pass out from the noise from the gun. That’s what used to happen. Even though you didn’t intend to, they would be knocked out from the noise. It was at that stage that I harpooned a bearded seal. Anyone who could do that was a real man in those days. Before the government came up here that’s how we used to distinguish real men. A successful hunter was a real man, and the leader of the camp in the days when people lived in separate camps. Nowadays, they are called outpost camps. Before people didn’t think of them as outpost camps but as communities.

I shot a bearded seal in the head through a breathing hole and I would occasionally kill walrus at the floe edge around the Kinngait area. Anytime the wind was coming from the southeast you went to the floe edge to go hunting. If the ice was thick you went hunting. When it is thick, you can dig out a hollow in the ice and as the sun beats down and melts it, the top of the ice is nice fresh water. Fresh ice would be salty, but if you used seal blubber to melt this ice, kukuttugu, you would always have fresh water. The way you melted it was to light the blubber with the ice placed about it and when the ice dripped it would not be salty anymore. If you used seal blubber you would always get fresh water. That’s how I would get fresh water when we were down at the ice, when I was a young person out for a whole week.

Can you tell us at what age you became aware?

I remember snippets from when I was a young boy. When my father came back from walrus hunting I used to be asleep. I really liked walrus heads, their whiskers and their tusks. When I was around two or three years old, we moved up to Ammaarjuatq Lake for the first time. I was still being breast fed. I seem to remember my younger days; these days I seem to remember less. I really remember being loved by my parents and my older brother. I remember receiving immense love from my relatives because I was the youngest.

It sounds unbelievable, but I should have died after I was born because my muscles had been ripped apart. In the old days when they realized that a child was going to be severely handicapped, they would just let it die. My father said that if a child had a life ahead of it the child would live, even though it was handicapped. That is what my father said. Other people besides my mother and father would have just waited for me to die because I was handicapped. That’s how it was when I was born. My mother and father saw me as a miracle. That’s the reason they converted to Christianity. They had
heard of Reverend Peck, but they were not aware of Christianity until they were adults. They didn’t understand how my handicap could be healed. They were still committing sins according to Christianity. That’s the reason they turned to Christianity. They saw through me that there was a true Saviour.

When I started remembering, when I was growing up, we would go up to the Nattilik area in spring time. When I was a small boy, we used to go very close to Ammaaruq for summer camp. We used to go up there to hunt and then cache caribou meat that was used for food in the winter time. We went back to Nattilik in the fall and then we would go back to the caches and fetch the meat. After having been inland, we would go out to the sea ice.

Was that in the summer?

No, in winter and in spring we would go back to the sea ice. Once in a while, we used to run into Pangniqtuq people. My 
angajuvinirulluk
, late dear elder brother, got a rifle in an exchange with a Pangniqtuq person named Nutaralaaq. It was a single shot, bolt action. It was for my 
angajuvinirulluk
 to use until the next year when I was seven. He had to cut the rifle butt so it would fit me because it was too long. The summer I was seven, I shot three calves with it. Those three caribou that I caught for the first time were given to my 
arnaquti
 midwife, Pitalusi.

Another time I remember, I had caught something else for the first time. They used to untie the belt of the qarlikallaak, short pants, when there was a first kill. I remember my 
arnaquti
 untwisting her qarlikallaak. Whenever a first catch was made they would untie their qarlikallaak. I remember my 
arnaquti
, untwisting her qarlikallaak as I had made a first kill, but I don’t remember what it was.

The following fall, Miqqualaaq started shooting people. He killed my grandmother, his mother and his father. I think Miqqualaaq also wanted to kill my 
angajuvinirulluk
 as well but he wasn’t able to see him as he had a sapujjiji, protector. He wasn’t able to kill everybody even though he wanted to. He tried to kill all of us. There is an old belief we have, that you cannot wipe out a whole camp. You cannot wipe out everybody. While he was shooting, my brother went out through the side of the tent.

What happened to him?

Miqqualaaq lived with us for awhile. It was on a Saturday that he went on a shooting rampage and every Saturday after that he had this funny breathing that sounded like an anxious dog.

Nobody did anything to Miqqualaaq?

They wanted to take him down to the sea alive. They didn’t want to agitate him so they went along with everything he wanted because they were afraid of being killed.
What does ataujjau mean?
Going down to the sea from inland is ataujjau. They also say ataaq for this. They wanted to take him down to the sea. They didn’t want to kill him where they were. My angajukuluk, dear elder brother, used to go out hunting with him. My angajukuluk was a very quick and very swift runner. When caribou came to our camp during the mosquito season, the dogs would be running loose with traces attached to them. He used to run after caribou with a rifle and bullets. That’s how he used to catch caribou, especially when they came into our camp. I remember that we used to pursue them. I remember doing it. I was not like my angajukuluk, I was quick but not as quick as my brother. I am not trying to boast. I am just telling you how it used to be. Back then I did not want to show off my abilities. In those days swift, strong hunters never showed off. That’s how my older brother was, and I was the same way. I never used to show off.

Were women made to move in with their husband’s family after they were married?
Yes, they used to move to the husband’s camp. The woman would leave her parents’ camp and move to the camp of her husband and his relatives. My wife’s parents left the Kinngait area when dog food was scarce. They went to Pangniqtuuq and because they later moved over here, my wife and I moved here too. My father died afterwards so I never went back to Kinngait. My father was the only person I hunted for. Since he was no longer there I didn’t feel like returning.

I am not trying to say that I am skillful. I am just letting you know what I have gone through. I too used to provide meat to be shared. I want to go back to the memories of my childhood. When I was a boy I used to make small igluit, and I learned how to make the blocks. Every time I went out hunting overnight, I used to pretend to make an iglu. In the old days we had to know how to make an iglu. In those days we used to get fresh water ice and chip out a block and use it for the window. My brother made a sled for me out of lake ice to go sliding wherever we spent the night. I would leave it behind when we started travelling again. I would just have caribou jaws for a qamutinnguaq, toy sled, when we moved. In the old days, wood was hard to come by when you were inland. If you lived close to the coast it was possible to have toy sleds made out of wood. We used to have a number of toys that you have never heard of and you will never see.

During the peak mosquito season, the dogs wouldn’t be tied up?
No, you would not tie up the dogs during the peak mosquito season. You wanted the dogs to be free to run away from mosquitoes during the peak mosquito season. During the summer months at Nattilik you could easily spot the caribou because of the greyish
cloud of mosquitoes above them. That’s how we used to spot caribou up in the Nattilik area. The dogs in the old days were never tied up during the mosquito season.

How about during the summer? Did you leave the dogs on an island?

No, you always used your dogs. If you went caribou hunting you would take them along with you because they could carry meat on their backs. We would make these pack sacks for them that we would put the meat in. That’s how they helped us carry the meat back to our camp. The caribou meat that had been in the pack sacks tended to be juicy. When it was no longer fresh it was a lot juicier than meat that hadn’t been in the pack sack.

You never left your dogs?

We never used to leave our dogs. They were always with us. Close to the coastal waters they didn’t help you out, but inland they really helped out by carrying meat back. We used to use old qajaq skins and turn them into pack sacks for the dogs.

Did you have mosquito repellent?

In the Kinngait area, they used to have mosquito repellent. The children were covered with white material that hadn’t been made into clothing yet. Probably the adults had clothing made out of it too to keep away mosquitoes. After I was married we used to walk up to that area and the mosquitoes were very numerous. Even the tent would make a noise. Even on the calmest day, it would sound like it was windy because there were so many mosquitoes hitting the tent. The tent would be so covered with mosquitoes it would look black.

The back of my hands would be covered by mosquitoes during the peak mosquito season when I was cutting up caribou. Sometimes I would have to wear gloves so my hands didn’t get swarmed by mosquitoes. Between Nattilik and Ammaarjuaq is the worst place I know for mosquitoes. It is located between Pangniqtuuq and Nattilik Lake. We also lived at Palliq, which is quite a distance from Nattilik in the summer and winter. Palliq is close to Ammaarjuaq where it drains into Nattilik. The part where the river narrows is Palliq.

Have you ever heard of people dying from mosquito bites?

Only a dog. I have heard about a dog being killed by mosquitoes. But I have never heard of a person.
These days do you think there are fewer mosquitoes?
No, I don’t think so. We are close to the coast. I remember that once they sprayed chemicals to control the mosquitoes here in Iqaluit. I also think that the exhaust from vehicles is another reason why there are less here. But I am pretty sure there are still the same number up in the Nattilik area, as long as it is sunny, the sky is blue, and as long as it is not windy.

How did you travel in summer and fall? Was it by umiaq or qajaq?
During the summer, we would walk. In the fall, we had our camp at Itilliarjuk near the coast. During the winter months, we would camp at Ikirasak. It is close to the ullit where the walrus bask in the sun. That place was very popular because you were likely to find bearded seal when you ran out of walrus meat.

When you were a small boy, did you have a boat?
I think I was seven or eight years old when my father first got a boat.

Was it made out of wood or canvas-covered?
It was from the Hudson’s Bay Company. They didn’t really want to sell it because it belonged to the Hudson’s Bay workers. The Hudson’s Bay fur traders really liked my father’s trapping ability. I think that’s why they said ‘yes’ to him when he wanted to buy the boat. It had a bow and a stern made of metal. I think my father was the first one to have a boat in those days. It had metal “U” shapes where you placed the oars.

You didn’t use skin-covered boats?
I was born when they were no longer used. In the years before I was born, whalers had already brought boats up here and everyone was using wooden boats.

Earlier on, you mentioned that someone threatened to wipe out the whole camp but was unable to do so.
Anytime there is a person attempting to murder the whole camp, each of us has a sapujjiri, a protector. For example, when the murderer went on a shooting rampage, my angajuwiniruluk went out through the side of the tent. Even when he went out, the shooter did not notice him going out through the side. He didn’t see him though he should have because his sapujjiri was protecting him. Anyone can be protected from someone who wants to kill them.
Why can’t a whole camp be wiped out?

I think this is not allowed to occur because someone must survive to tell what happened, because there has to be someone to tell about what happened and that’s why they don’t all die. Even though my qangiakuluk, dear nephew, Simonie [Simonie Alainga] and the others all died in a boating accident, there were two survivors. And for this reason we believe no camp can be wiped out completely. Considering the circumstances, they should have all died, but yet for some reason or other there are always survivors.

Has this always been the case?

Yes. From what we have been told this has always been the case. A long time ago, a whole family was travelling by boat. They were struck by gale force winds, and the whole family was almost wiped out. Even though it was before the time of religion, they saw a bright light and qajait going up to the bright light. This was before the time of religion.

Do some of those who survive experience something like a miracle?

Yes, all of us have sapujjiji or protectors. If someone tried to wipe out all of us here, there would be one or two of us who would survive. It is not possible to put everyone together and kill them all at once.

You said that your older brother was a fast runner. Why was he shy about showing others his great ability?

It was obvious that he was quite shy to demonstrate his running ability. When we were going quite fast downhill on a sled after a caribou, he went ahead of us to corner the caribou. Maggujjijuq is a way of catching caribou using a dogteam. When I was a small boy there were two men that I myself saw who had great running ability, the one that went to Qausuittuq, Joanasiaraq and my angajukuluk. I have never seen such great runners as those two men again.

You spoke earlier about a man who was trying to murder a camp. Why was he doing that?

He was hearing bad things inside his head. He travelled to his grandparents camp to talk about this. He told them he shot at his dogs but they wouldn’t die; they only cried out in pain. He removed the cartridges from his gun and the cartridges were still whole. He told them his intention was to kill the dogs and then to kill his parents but he was unable to kill the dogs. He used his father’s dogteam to visit his grandparents. This
experience that he went through triggered his attempt to wipe out the camp. Before he started killing people, he was counselled but because he didn’t talk about what the voices were telling him to do he started killing people. If a person talks about what the voices tell him to do, then what the voices tell him to do won’t happen. Because he didn’t talk about the voices telling him to do things, he followed those voices as he started to believe what they were telling him. This is the way I have understood this.

Can you tell us more about Miqqualaaq?

Several days after the murder Miqqualaaq wanted to play cards. He had a knife with a blade on both sides, and he was looking for anything to get angry about. He was looking for something to agitate people so he could pick a fight. Miqqualaaq said, “The loser will have to do what I say.” He said to my brother, “Give me that, give me your jacket.” My angajuviniruluk gave him his amnuraavik, a pant and jacket set that he got from his brother for Christmas. My angajuviniruluk told us later that he knew Miqqualaaq was going to beat him in this card game and that he was agitated. Our iglu was covered with skins. Even when it was terribly cold outside, it used to be nice and cozy inside our iglu as it was covered with skins on top. Because it was hot my angajuviniruluk was only wearing his inner caribou pants and he had his belt loosened. Because of this he did not go after Miqqualaaq when he started to leave. Miqqualaaq took off on a dog team. Later in the early hours of the morning, they could hear his footsteps when he came back. They told him that as his sister and her family were alive he should look forward to seeing them again. They noticed that Miqqualaaq was becoming more and more agitated. Just by looking at him they knew that they would have problems wrestling him down. Miqqualaaq wanted to come in. It seemed like he was going to open the door and he shouted inside, “I wasn’t to leave, let me come in.” He wanted to come in but he was told, “You killed your mother and father. They would have been the only ones to tell you to stay. Nobody told you to leave.” His voice was very deep and hoarse. They prepared to meet him again. They put all the leg bones and caribou antlers in the porch to act as a shield against him. Since the time he had arrived people said good things to him, bad things to him, trying to make him talk.

They managed to capture him and tied his hands behind his back. They asked him if he wanted to be killed with a rifle or be stabbed. They were threatening him, trying to get him back to reality but he didn’t reply. Then they left for the open water. He did not resist as he was being pushed along because his hands were tied behind his back. Even though it was cold and he was wearing only a jacket he didn’t freeze. He wasn’t even wearing mitts. When they got close to the open water he finally said, “Let me say something for Inuit and qallunaat to hear.” They said to him, “If you want to live, say what we want to hear.” They tried to talk to him again, but this is what he said, “People will know of me because I am unable to freeze.” He didn’t say anything more.
They travelled on the ice to a place where the water didn’t freeze because of the current. After they arrived he started resisting. When his younger brother started to help, and as he was about to be pushed into the water, he jumped in. His hands were no longer tied behind his back when he bobbed back up. He didn’t float away even though there was a current. My father said, “Please let someone help us. I want to live to see people again. If we are being watched, please help us!” After my father said that Miqqualaaq started floating away through the cracks of the ice. My father went to check to see if he had gotten back on top of the ice. Of course he didn’t see him. The current had taken him under. This happened between Ammaarjuaq and Nattilik.

Is that is how Miqqualaaq died up there in Nattilik?

Yes, he was thrown into the current where the water didn’t freeze. Before this incident occurred my older brother had tried to get him to go down to the coast by using trading as an excuse, but they had to return to the camp.

They had tried to make him confess to committing the murder. They shouted good things and bad things at him. My brother tied him up and they killed him. My brother would say to my father, “Father, you are older than me, talk to him.” All my father would say was, “If we let him live, I am not going to be able to retain my strength.” Because that was all my father would say to my brother, Miqqualaaq was killed. My brother had wanted to kill him right from the time Miqqualaaq had killed his mother and father and my grandfather.

What was done to the people that killed Miqqualaaq?

They reported this incident at the Hudson’s Bay post. Everyone was happy that Miqqualaaq had been killed. This whole incident was reported to the R.C.M.P. as well. There was only one R.C.M.P. officer in Kimmirut. The R.C.M.P. officer never came to the Kinngait area because he had heard the whole story. They used to use Morse code for communication. The whole incident was reported by the Hudson’s Bay trading post to Tujjaat where the R.C.M.P. were notified.

Footnotes

1 Ullit/uglit, an island where walrus go to bask.
2 Siqqitirniq, ritual of conversion to Christianity [North Baffin].
3 Honey bucket: before the days of plumbing, or even trucked water drop-off and sewage pick-up, residents in the arctic made use of the “honey bucket” as a means of bodily waste disposal. The honey bucket was essentially a pail with a disposable liner – such as a plastic bag – inside. Feces and urine would be collected in the disposable liner.
Chapter 7

Leaders, Elders and Shamans

Leaders, elders and shamans played an important part in preserving the peace and settling conflicts within the camps. The elders had great authority. As Kim Kangok stated in her essay, “The innatuqat, the elders were known to have powerful minds, so powerful that they were capable of changing one’s future for good or bad.” When they thought people were not behaving correctly they would counsel them and their words carried great weight. The angakkuit were particularly important in cases of sickness or when the relationship with the game was disrupted. Aaju Peter stated in her essay, “The angakkuq was not there to judge a person, neither was he there to set the laws. He was there to find out who had broken the tirigusuusit and get them to confess. At the same time he held a lot of power since he could kill people with his tuurrugaq.” Finally, the camp leaders exercised considerable authority. In Aaju’s words, “These great angajuqqaat who got their status through their abilities as great hunters, or through a combination of ability and birth-right, held a lot of power. In a world where you depend totally on game you owe your life to the people who feed you.” If the camp leaders went astray, however, the elders would not hesitate to counsel them.

There are two words that I want to understand better; isumataq and angajuqqaaq. What is the difference between them?

Nutaraaluk: Each area has its own dialect. North Baffin uses isumataq; in South Baffin we use angajuqqaaq. Words like commissioner and prime minister are borrowed words in Inuktitut. In the old days, we never had those positions, so we borrowed these words. An angajuqqaaq is a wise older person in my dialect. We need to listen to what they say because they are wise. They were well respected, especially by the young. When you were young, you were easily intimidated by a person who knew a lot. Each camp leader, angajuqqaaq dealt with wildlife and hunting. The camp survived because of the angajuqqaaq.

Were there a number of angajuqqaat?

Nutaraaluk: No, there were very few angajuqqaat. Each camp usually had only one leader. These days we call them outpost camps, but in those days they were real communities, each having their own angajuqqaaq. I think my father was training me to become a camp leader. As he was getting older, he always asked me where I wanted to move and where I wanted to go, because he was testing my abilities for after he died.
Each camp leader used to keep an eye out for who was capable. I used to watch my father making a *qajaq*. I used to help him and he used to help me when I was making a *qajaq*. He used to say that if the hole of the *qajaq* followed the bow too much, the *qajaq* would be tipsy, but if you made the hole in more of a V shape it would be a lot easier to bring it back upright if it tipped over. This was the kind of advice he would give me.

**Your father was the leader of the camp. Was leadership passed on to the son?**

*Nutaraaluk:* He used to watch what the younger generation did. I think that’s why he asked me questions such as where I would like to live or where I wanted to go. Most of the time, the fathers were the camp leaders. He tried to make me be the leader in deciding where to go when we were moving from camp to camp to see what my abilities were for after he died. My father did this with me as the previous generation had done with him.

**If your father was too old to be the leader of the camp, did another individual take over the leadership? If there was someone else who was more capable than you, and wasn’t his son, would he have become the camp leader?**

*Nutaraaluk:* My father used to be the most capable and he always shared with the community. He always invited people to come to his camp to share his food, that’s what I remember.

**Did these leaders have to be angakkuit?**

*Nutaraaluk:* My father stopped being an *angakkug* when he began working for the ministers. It seemed that those who worked for the ministers tended to be leaders. Before the missionaries came up here, I don’t know if the leaders had to be *angakkuit.* The leader was the one who knew about good hunting areas and about hunting. I got to know where the caribou were around Iqaluit and Kingait because I would follow those who knew. In those days, caribou were hard to come by and I used to follow others who knew where they were.

**When you moved down here, was the leadership in the camp different?**

*Nutaraaluk:* Every camp had their own leader.

**Did the people gather to decide who would be the leader?**
Nutaraaluk: They never formally decided it. The ones who appeared to be the most knowledgeable about hunting were the ones who were noticed the most. In times of scarcity these leaders were the most noticeable.

You mentioned that your brother was a very swift runner. Do you think that he too would have been an angajuqqaaq when he became older?

Nutaraaluk: He didn’t try to replace our father as the leader. My father was the one who decided. Even though my older brother was very capable he still had to listen to my father. We can’t become leaders by ourselves. My father watched to see how I would look after people if I became the angajuqqaaq. He started to show me how to be a leader by asking me what we should do, and where we should go when I became his only son after my brothers moved away. I think he was preparing for someone to take over his place once he passed away.

You told us the story of Ailaq and Papik1. Do you think the elders had powers even though they weren’t angakkuit?

Imaruituuq: Angakkuit were not the only ones with powerful minds, the elder’s minds were powerful also. This was the reason why we were not to burden them, as even though they were not angakkuit, whoever caused the elder’s minds to be in turmoil would be affected. The saying that an elders’ mind can become very powerful, is true. When a young child thinks to him or herself, “This is the way I’m going to be when I grow up,” this will also happen. For example, twice I mentally took my father’s side when my mother was scolding him. I would think he is the only one providing us with food. Maybe because I was a child I took his side. I used to think I’m not going to be like my father and be brow-beaten by a woman. This has become true and I am never brow-beaten by my wife. I had that thought as a child, and that thought has become true. No wonder they say an elder’s mind is very powerful.

Are elders to be treated as though they were nikanaqtut, thought to be fragile?

Imaruituuq: Yes. Those that are nikanaqtut are to be treated as though they were fragile. Especially those who appear to be helpless need to be helped. It is true that we need to help those who need to be helped. I have travelled to many places. When I was in Pangniqtuq, I used to visit Qilavvak’s widow. I enjoyed visiting her, and she told me all kinds of things. She told me when she was young, she and another girl used to go to the house of an old woman living alone and they used to empty out her honey bucket, refill her water pail and put oil in her qulliq. They did that everyday. Qilavvak’s widow said that if the saying about old people’s minds being powerful were true, then what the...
old woman told them was true. The old woman they helped used to say that as gratitude for the help they gave her, their lives would be lengthened. If that old saying were true, that is why she is an old woman today. Because of that, she believes this saying, and I believe it to be true also.

I heard that bad things could happen to a person that didn’t listen to an elder or to a person that put down an elder.

Imaruittuq: Piugaattuk told me this story. He said that when his father was on his deathbed, his mouth became swollen and enlarged. He said he had really swollen lips because whenever an elder tried to counsel him he would always talk back. He told people this so they would always respect older people.

I want to ask questions about Ittuksaarjuat and Ataguttaaluk. How were they related to you? They were leaders in the camp. Perhaps you could talk about them being leaders in the camp?

Imaruittuq: These two people were born in the latter part of the 19th century. Ittuksaarjuat died in 1944. I clearly recall him being the leader in the Avvaja and Igdluk area. Even people who were not part of his immediate family enjoyed being around him. I think it was because he was such a kind man who was willing to share food. When my generation came into being we were still not dependent on the traders for food. We only depended on wildlife. In the late spring we would eat plants, but in the winter there were no plants at all and we only ate meat. Ittuksaarjuat was the true leader of the camp. He remained the leader until his death. He had four children from his first wife, Qattalik. Taqaugaq was the oldest. The second son was Arnattiaq. Their sister was Qattuurainnuk. The youngest son was Ukumaaluk. He was trying to raise his oldest son Taqaugaq to become the leader but his son died before him. Because Taqaugaq died he continued his leadership until he, himself died. Because his mind was sound, people continued to listen to him until he passed away. Qattalik was originally from the Kivalliq area. When she passed away, he took a second wife named Kalluk. Because Kalluk was an older woman, they only had one son, Qattalik. He still had Kalluk as his wife when he took his last wife, Ataguttaaluk, after she almost starved. He took her in as his second wife as she had no one to look after her. That’s what our ancestors used to do. There was no government assistance in those days. If a woman became widowed it was up to good hunters to look after them. At the time Ittuksaarjuat became a Christian, he had two wives. He had five children from Ataguttaaluk. The oldest was Piugaattuk, then a daughter, Alakaat, then my father, Ikummaq, a younger son Angilik and the youngest was Niviattiat. When Ittuksaarjuat was alive, the whole camp was very well organized. His grandchildren started to become capable and assist him and
Ittuksaarjuat had plenty of help in terms of hunting and working around the camp. I remember my father used to take his nephews, Piugaattuk’s children, out after caribou so they could obtain good clothing. Some other hunters went after sea mammals for food and meat for the dogs. That’s how the camp used to be structured.

Ataguttaaluk, was she an angakkuq?

Imaruittuq: I never heard whether she was or wasn’t. I never heard whether the wife or the husband were angakkuit. After they became Christians they completely stopped talking about angakkuit.

Ataguttaaluk went through extreme hardship, and almost starved. Have you heard this story?

Imaruittuq: Yes, I have heard part of it. During the summer, they went out caribou hunting on foot. They were walking toward the coastal waters. They were stricken by a sickness. Before they reached the coastal waters, they experienced starvation. Because of the sickness they were very weak. Ataguttaaluk’s first husband was still alive. There was one person who left to find help. He never came back, and I think he was killed.

They started moving more inland and had to resort to cannibalism. Ataguttaaluk’s husband said to his wife, “If I die you are going to have to eat me. You have lots of relatives. You have to survive and let other people know our fate.” Of course, this was her husband, so she did not want to resort to cannibalism. Her husband said, “If I die you are going to have to eat me.” There were only two women left. Finally, her husband passed away. They tried to wake him but they couldn’t move him. They couldn’t even lift him to bury him. I think this was because he wanted to be consumed by the survivors.

Finally, the two women decided to eat him, and then they were able to put him on the floor. When the women said, “Let’s eat him,” they were able to move him and they were able to put him on the floor. They removed his head because they didn’t want to see his face while they were eating. Ataguttaaluk was crying when they did this. Because they were in dire straits they ate him. There were the two of them for a while and then the other woman died.

Ataguttaaluk had to use her for food as well. Once she heard a thud outside her shelter. When she went out she found a hind quarter of caribou so she used that for food also. She had no idea where it had come from because there were no other people around. It was a miracle. The roof of her iglu eventually began to melt and she had nothing to make water with. She became very thirsty. She put some snow in the lid of a tin can and she placed it where the wind couldn’t blow it dry but where the sun could melt it. That gave her a better chance of surviving and being found alive.
There was a family that was going to the Mittimatalik area. They were a family of three with a daughter. They only had a few dogs. They were slowly making their way. Even before they encountered her they were experiencing hardships, and the wife had a premonition that something was wrong. She would say to her husband, “There is something really terrible ahead of us.”

They continued to travel and came upon what looked like two people. Ataguttaaluk’s husband had put his rifle and telescope upright so they would be visible to anyone passing by. They had been upright all winter. These objects looked like two people to those who were approaching. When they found Ataguttaaluk they said she looked like a bird with a very long neck and very long legs. She was found in May. They had been missing since October. She had been starving all winter. After that they turned around and brought her back to the Iglulik area. They brought her to an island called Siuqqat. It was after she had been through that ordeal that my father took her for a second wife.

**Before they starved, did they have any children?**

**Imaruittuq:** Yes, they had children. They had adopted children as well as children of their own, but I am not clear on the number.

**Were they the only ones that starved?**

**Imaruittuq:** No. They were not the only ones. There were two women sharing the iglu. I think there were originally two families but I really haven’t heard about this.

**Were people who were starving unable to survive just on water?**

**Imaruittuq:** If they aren’t eating or drinking at all they die sooner. If they have water, they will survive longer.

**Did Ataguttaaluk become the leader when her husband died?**

**Imaruittuq:** No, she became a leader when she married my grandfather, Ittuksaarjuat. She became a co-leader when she married him.

**Were his other wives also co-leaders?**

**Imaruittuq:** Probably not the first one because he had his first wife when he was a young man. I’ve not heard if she was a co-leader. I knew him as a leader after he had become an elder.
Have you ever heard how Ittuksaarjuat became a leader?

Imaruittuq: I am not sure how. Maybe he became a leader because he was able to direct people and he was able to talk to people when there were disputes. Even when there were disputes in other camps people went to him or requested his presence, and he would talk to them. He would tell them how they should behave. It was his way of helping others that made people consider him a leader.

Did other elders also tell people how to behave?

Imaruittuq: Yes. The elders were the ones that kept order in the camps.

When they got older, where would the elders live, with their oldest sons and daughters?

Imaruittuq: Yes, with their children. With the youngest, or whoever they wanted to stay with. Ataguttaaluk lived with her youngest son, because she wanted to be there.

The Amitturmiut people used to hunt in different areas. Did they take the elders with them when they went hunting?

Imaruittuq: Yes, most definitely. They would always take the elders or they would scout for game and then come back and fetch the elders. Our other grandmother, Ittuksaarjuat’s sister, who was my father’s adopted mother, would be taken along and because she had a hard time breathing, they would cover her with a blanket. They never took her out in the open. They always had to keep her covered and move her covered with caribou skins, because she had a hard time breathing. That’s how we transported her to where we were travelling. She wouldn’t be taken along when they were hunting, only when they were moving camp. In the old days, before they had rifles, they used to iksinnai, to abandon, the elders that had to be left behind.

What do you mean by iksinnai?

Imaruittuq: Abandoning someone, just leaving them behind. I was told a story by the little old man Itikuttuk who was from the Kivalliq area. He used to visit me, and stay long into the night. Shortly before he died, he told me about things he had experienced. He used to tell me about the old days. He told me his first wife had been quite a lot older than he. When they were inland, returning to the coast, they had to leave her behind while she was still alive. He said she died after they left her behind. It is true that they used to leave elders behind. They used to do that more in the Kivalliq area.
Although he loved her he had no choice but to leave her?

Imaruittuq: Yes. That’s what he said. Although he didn’t want to leave her behind, he had to listen to what he was told and that’s what he did.

Why was he told to leave her behind?

Imaruittuq: They had to leave her because they had no means of transporting her. They had no dogs.

Who made the decision to leave her behind?

Imaruittuq: Probably the leader of that group. Undoubtedly that’s who it was.

Peter Pitseolak was the camp leader in the Sikusilaaq area. We heard that he tried to take a girl that was too young as a wife. Have you heard of this?

Nutaraaluk: I don’t know if he had a girl that was too young as a wife. But he did have young women that were no longer children as wives.

What did the elders say to him?

Nutaraaluk: I don’t know what they said to him because that happened after I moved here in 1951. When a man gets tired of his wife he goes after another one. Men and women are probably different from one another.

What have you heard about Peter Pitseolak?

Nutaraaluk: He was my uncle, and my son through my name. I’ve heard things about him from my relatives after my father died, but I don’t know these things personally. Peter Pitseolak, Ittuluk and Putuguq had the same mother. Piitaulaasi, Iqaluk and Paulussi were also brothers who had the same mother. They had my atiq, Nutaraaluk Inugjuaraajuk as a father. He had many wives. He had many sons who had different mothers.

If an elder disagreed with the camp leader, could he talk to him?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, an elder could say anything he wanted to the camp leader if he knew he was doing something wrong. If an elder felt you needed talking to, you would be filled with trepidation. We had great respect and fear of elders.
Even though he was a camp leader, if his actions were not considered to be correct, could he be questioned about this by an elder?

**Nutaraaluk:** If the elders disagreed with what the leader was deciding, they could say anything they wanted to him. The elders would not be afraid to speak to the leader, and point out what they disagreed with.

*Did the angakkuit, the elders and the camp leader work together?*

**Nutaraaluk:** When there was a crisis the elders got together and talked to the person causing the problem. Today, that doesn't happen anymore. Even when we talk to our children, they think we are just scolding them. They don't realize we are trying to correct their lifestyle. They think we are getting angry at them. We are not. We are passing on wisdom. Today we seem to be scared to talk to our leaders about their behaviour because we feel they are not going to listen.

*Do the elders no longer counsel the leaders?*

**Nutaraaluk:** The elders used to speak to the leader when they knew that the leader was doing something wrong or something that was not going to help the community. They used to speak up if what they were going to say was for the betterment of the camp. In those days too, people used to quarrel with each other, especially when there was a strong disagreement between two families or if there was a struggle for leadership. Of course that existed in those days as well.

*How were individuals in the communities who misbehaved dealt with?*

**Imaruittuq:** The elders would get together and would talk to the person and try to make them feel that they were cared for. If the behaviour didn't change they would talk to them again in a more serious manner and explain the possible consequences. If the person still did not change they left the person to face the consequences on their own.

*Why are elders not being listened to by younger people today?*

**Nutaraaluk:** I think education is the root of this. The school children are being taught in English and are taught to ask questions. They know a little of the *qallunaat* way and a little of the Inuit way. They are caught in between. They call their parents by their names. I find it hurtful to hear this, because it takes away from the role of the mother and father. Even toddlers learning to talk call their parents by name. People no longer use correct kinship terms. They call their relatives by name. This seems to take away the feeling of family. We used to address people by using kinship terms to avoid using their names. For example, he [Imaruittuq] is my *ilimniaqtisijuqati*, co-teacher.
How did the camp deal with people that were widows or children than had lost their father?

Nutaraaluk: In the Kinngait area, the whole camp worked together with the widow to help children that had lost their father. In the Kinngait area we really tried to help each other out so a family would not go hungry. In the past they noticed that a lot of people were hungry because we were not working together. Today in Nunavik people ask over the radio, “Who does not have meat, who is hungry?” They do not hesitate to distribute meat anytime someone needs it. I’m not trying to pass judgement on the people of Nunavut, but I’m going to tell you what I see. People do not help each other out enough. In Nunavik they always make time to help single parents, and elders who are no longer able to keep their houses clean. Nunavik people always find time to assist an elder or to do something for a single parent.

In the old days were children or elders mistreated? Do you recall that happening as a child?

Nutaraaluk: As a young boy, in the Kinngait area, I recall children without parents being very well taken care of. When a child lost a parent, there was extra love, and special consideration given to that child. Even if they still had a mother they used to be given hand-me-downs. Even my own clothes would be given away. I don’t know if they used to that before Christianity arrived.

We are going to be talking about shamanism. What is an aarnguaq, amulet?

Nutaraaluk: That’s not our dialect. Each area has its own dialect and old words. Although I’ve heard the word aarnguaq, I do not have a full understanding of what it means.

What did the angakkuit use?

Nutaraaluk: The angakkuit used everything for their tuurngait, helping spirits, from insects to animals to qallunaat, even before anyone had ever seen a qallunaaq up here. They used everything, including things you would find down at the shore such as shrimps, krill and seaweed.

Nutaraaluk, you mentioned how your parents repented and became Christians because of you. Did you mother and father talk about what they used to do before they became Christians?

Nutaraaluk: Before they became Christians my father was an angakkuaq. My mother told me that he used to pierce his side with a knife made out of an old saw blade, but there
was never a scar. He used to let himself be harpooned to get the walrus to come close to
the camp. After they had harpooned him, a lot of people would pull the harpoon line,
and then they would hear the walrus not very far off. He used to go down to Sedna, the
woman who had a dog as a husband.

Animal species would vanish or retreat if people broke a pittaliniq. When this
happened, the angakkuit would have to find out exactly who was the cause of the
animals being scarce. Both my father and step-mother used to be angakkuit. I used to
listen to them talk about when they had been angakkuit. At that time they were no longer
practising.

There was one incident when another angakkuaq tried to take over my step-mother’s
qaumaniq. Another angakkuaq was trying to kill her by removing her qaumaniq. The other
angakkuaq’s tuurngaq was present in human form holding a bucket that was tipping
towards itself away from my step-mother. The more the bucket tipped the more my
step-mother’s qaumaniq would be pulled away from her. My mother’s tuurngaq was also
in human form crouched beside her. When it seemed that the other angakkuaq’s tuurngaq
was about to succeed in pulling out her qaumaniq using the bucket, my step-mother’s
tuurngaq removed her kamiik and pounced at the other tuurngaq. The other tuurngaq
moved out of the way. If my step-mother’s tuurngaq had succeeded in knocking over the
other angakkuaq’s tuurngaq the angakkuaq could have died. Alurut’s husband, the other
angakkuaq said “ajai.” The other angakkuaq didn’t realize that my step-mother was aware
of what was going on. He almost killed himself when his tuurngaq came back and
turned on him.

Were there three kinds of anngakkuit?

Nutaraaluk: There were angakkuit who used to help people, annaumatsi, healers. My
father used to talk about one incident where he itigauqqajuq, revived a man who was
going to die. He did not have inuuniuti, the power to kill someone. He never tried to
take a person’s soul, or take advantage of the weak. My father practised shamanism so
that a person could get better. If I started speaking real Inuktitut I don’t think you would
understand.

We are going to ask you about some words that we don’t use anymore so
that they won’t be forgotten. Is the term itigauqqa used for a person who is
being healed?

Nutaraaluk: It referred to the angakkuaq while he was trying to revive a person.
Were the angakkuit said to have a tuurngaq or were they said to have an apiqaq?

Nutaraaluk: The angakkuit used to receive powers from their tuurngait. It was like having an extra person who would assist them in doing things. For instance, they could control the wind. When there were gale force winds, they would get a gaff and a knife to cut the wind. While they were performing this practice with the gaff and the knife, it would be as though they would almost be lifted up. Once they succeeded in cutting the strength of the wind, there would be calm weather.

Did you ever see that practice yourself?

Nutaraaluk: No. I came into this world after shamanism was no longer practised.

Did your father miss his tuurngait?

Nutaraaluk: When they were going to remove his tuurngait from him so he could become a Christian, he wondered where he could go as he was having second thoughts. He thought he might go somewhere where there weren’t any people.

What was the first thing that he did as an angakkuq?

Nutaraaluk: Tunukallak turned my father into an angakkuq simply through talking to him. She had been a powerful angakkuq. It was through her that all but two of the allait, Indians, were killed.

Were your father’s powers and the powers of your step-mother and other angakkuit different?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, each angakkuq had different powers. Some had powers to kill people. Some angakkuit had the power to heal those that were sick and some concentrated on locating wildlife by visiting Sedna, the one who had a dog as a husband. They would visit her. There were some that could manipulate the weather by cutting the strength of the wind.

What do you mean by inuunniutiliit?

Nutaraaluk: Those were the angakkuit who had the power to kill for whatever reason, whether it was a person they didn’t like or someone they were displeased with. They were also able to cause people to be sick. That is what I have heard.
Did the angakkuit saka, chant, first?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, they probably did before they started. Especially when an angakkuq was trying to get game closer to the camp.

Do you know how they would saka? Can you show us how they used to do it?

Nutaraaluk: They would be tied up with a harpoon line. It would be wound all around them. Once they started to bounce, people would know the angakkuq was being used as a ball by the ullurniit,⁴ the people of the day. After he was used as a kickball, he would be levitated and the rope that had been used to bind him would fall down in a coil and the angakkuit would then descend. This was one of the things they used to do. Also the angakkuit used to go to the moon.

What happened to the rope?

Nutaraaluk: The rope used to fall back down to Earth in a perfect ball. You could not locate the other end of the rope.

Imaruittuq: Sometimes the rope turned into animal figures. If there were going to be lots of caribou around, then it would turn into a caribou figure.

Why did they go to the moon?

Nutaraaluk: They went to the moon to find out what was going on in the other communities. When they went to the moon they were able to see if people in other communities were hungry or were lacking things.

When they performed saka, were there other people around or were they alone?

Nutaraaluk: My father would be harpooned. Then he would take the shape of a walrus. He even had tusks. There were no scars where he had been harpooned. He would heal after taking the walrus’s form while he was trying to get the walrus to come closer. I would look for the scars while he was putting his clothing on but there weren’t any.

How would the angakkuq tuurngi?

Nutaraaluk: I don’t know exactly as I never saw it.

Were the tuurngait the angakkuq’s assistants?

Nutaraaluk: Yes. If another angakkuq who had the power to kill was trying to kill him, his tuurngait would inform him.
 Were people scared of the tuurngait?

Nutaraaluk: They probably were scared of some of them.

When the missionaries came up and converted the Inuit, where did the tuurngait go?

Nutaraaluk: They disappeared. As soon as my father converted he never saw or heard from his tuurngait again. After an angakkuq denounced his practices, the tuurngait went away immediately.

Did these spirits just vanish?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, they just vanished. They never came back. As soon as an angakkuq decided not to practise anymore, the spirits left that individual.

How did an angakkuq make another person into an angakkuq?

Nutaraaluk: When an angakkuq was trying to make another person into an angakkuq, he would give some of his tuurngait to the other person. Tunukallak turned my father into an angakkuq just by talking to him. Other angakkuit turned an individual into an angakkuq just by bumping heads with the person, maybe because their power wasn’t as strong.

After an angakkuq died, did his tuurngait move to another person?

Nutaraaluk: No, they didn’t move to another individual. They just simply vanished.

How was an angakkuq selected? Was a person chosen to be an angakkuq before they were born?

Nutaraaluk: I don’t know about that.

Have you heard how Tunukallak was made into an angakkuq?

Nutaraaluk: I have never heard how Tunukallak became an angakkuq. All I know was that she was very powerful. Because she was so powerful another angakkuq used her tuurngait to assist him, as I told you in the story when all but two of the allait, Indians, were killed. Her tuurngait took the form of people, but they weren’t real people.

Were they turned into angakkuit when they were children or did they wait until they were young adults?

Nutaraaluk: They usually waited until the person had reached maturity but my father was made into an angakkuq as a child.
Did some people pretend to be angakkuit so that others would fear them?

Nutaraaluk: Probably, but some of them were probably exposed as pretenders.

Have you ever heard of taqqiq, the moon, having an inua?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, I’ve heard of taqqiq having an inua. The angakkuit in the old days used to visit the moon.

Have you heard of people living on the moon?

Nutaraaluk: I’ve heard of people up there that are not like us. They have similar forms to inugarulligait which do not always appear to people.

Did the inugarulligait live down by the shore?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, they lived down by the shore with the tuurngait that the angakkuit used. The inugarulligait are little people who are very fast runners. If they were going to kill you they jumped up and wrapped themselves around you and suffocated you with their groin area. I’ve never experienced an inugarulligaq myself but I’ve heard about them.

Someone said they saw a small person on the shore wearing sealskin. What kind of clothing did they wear?

Nutaraaluk: There was a hunter who fell through some fresh ice that was quite thin, down by the floe edge. In those days they used to run into those little people, but nowadays we rarely hear about hunters finding inugarulligait. They used to have the same clothing as Inuit made out of skin. I think it was an inugarulligaq who was seen by the shore.

Can everyone see them or can they only be seen by some people?

Nutaraaluk: I think these inugarulligait are quite violent people that live on wildlife.

Did they kill people?

Nutaraaluk: I heard a story about inugarulligait that were towing a bearded seal, cut in half. A grandmother and grandchild had been left in an iglu by a family that intended to go back for them later. The inugarulligait left half of the bearded seal at their iglu. They went inside another iglu and made noises like people talking. The other iglu shouldn’t have been occupied but the grandmother and grandchild heard voices coming from there. The inugarulligait said, “Maybe there are tau, humans living in that iglu.” When it
sounded like the inugarulligait were sleeping, the grandmother told the grandson to spit at the bearded seal and she caused the bearded seal to stick to the ground from his spit. I think she must have been an angakkuq. The inugarulligait tried to peel the bearded seal off the ice but the inugarulligait got scared because they could no longer move the bearded seal meat so they left without their meat. When the family came back to fetch them, they found they had a lot of meat, and they had plenty of fuel for the qulliq. I think inugarulligait are very strong even though they are very small. This story was told to me by more than one person and it was always the same.

Did the angakkuit also have to follow the camp leader?
Nutaraaluk: Of course. They had to follow the camp leader, even though they were angakkuit. The angakkuit would manilirusiq\(^6\) in order for the hunters to catch wildlife.

Did the angakkuit go out hunting with other hunters?
Nutaraaluk: Some of the angakkuit used to go hunting. Once my father’s camp ran out of food. The people ended up staying in bed as they were weak from hunger. My father tried to go down to the floe edge but it had frozen up as it was so cold. He encountered tracks of what turned out to be walrus in search of open water. At that time he was no longer an angakkuq but he was sure the tracks he came across had been made by tuurngait. After he had killed the walrus, he brought some of the meat home to feed the camp. The next day he went back to get more meat to share with the camp. On the third day some bears came and my mother killed them. That’s how the camp stopped being hungry. My mother and father talked about this incident quite frequently, how they had found both walrus and polar bear during this time of hunger.

Were the angakkuit sometimes the leaders in the camp?
Nutaraaluk: The angakkuit were not always the camp leaders. Usually it was the successful hunters who were the leaders in the camps. That’s how it used to be. The best provider was the leader. When I was a small boy, I never saw my father go through hardship because he was a very able, excellent hunter. He was the leader of our camp. If they were going to the floe edge they would have a short meeting before they went down. In those days we used the term asivaq only for hunting down at the floe edge. Other dialects use sinaaliaq. They did not use the term uumajusiug which means searching for wildlife, as a term for hunting at the floe edge in those days. In the Kinngait area when we went down to the floe edge and were hunting on moving ice we called it sikuliqaq. In other dialects it is aulaniqtiug. When there were south-east winds but it was snowing, we weren’t able to go hunting. We wanted south-east winds because they brought the moving ice that the walrus were on closer to shore.
What did the elders do when they were no longer able to go hunting?

**Nutaraaluk:** They would just stay in the camp.

What would they do in the camp?

**Nutaraaluk:** They would help make things. They would do a lot of walking. People would get very old in those days, sometimes more than a hundred years old. My father did a lot of walking. Even when he was an old man he would continue to hunt. He stopped going hunting shortly before his death when he was going blind. When he was checking his traps one snapped and something went flying into his eye. He got cataracts and eventually became blind.

How old was your father?

**Nutaraaluk:** He was over a hundred years old. Our ancestors used to live to be over a hundred years old. But nowadays our life spans are becoming shorter and shorter. Maybe this is because life is being lived at a faster and faster pace, or maybe because of the alcohol and drugs that are destroying our bodies. When people are just sitting around the house, indoors, staying in one place, you age faster than being outdoors a lot. When you are working hard, being outdoors, doing a lot of physical work, you age slower. I think that because they were very active every day of their lives, they lived a long time.

How did the angakkuit cause the strength of the wind to lessen?

**Nutaraaluk:** The angakkuq would hook the wind with the gaff. He would use a knife to cut the strength of the wind. I guess because nobody has cut the strength of the wind since the time of the angakkuq, that’s why it is always so windy now.

Why did it used to get windy?

**Nutaraaluk:** When it got very windy, the wildlife were not very abundant and that’s why the angakkuq cut the strength of the wind so they were able to go hunting.

Was the wind angry at people for breaking pittailiniq?

**Nutaraaluk:** That was not the reason why it was cut. This was not related at all to the breaking of pittailiniq.

When the wildlife became scarce did the angakkuit visit Sedna?

**Nutaraaluk:** Yes, the angakkuq used to visit Sedna, to bring wildlife back into people’s lives.
Did the angakkuit try to find out how people were doing in other camps?

**Nutaraaluk:** Perhaps the angakkuit found out through their tarniq which would leave their body to see if other communities were in need, or had enough food.

**What is the word for that?**

**Nutaraaluk:** They would qila7 to find out how people were doing, to find wildlife or to check on someone they were worried about.

Did people make stories or songs about the times they confessed their wrong-doings?

**Nutaraaluk:** When wrong-doings became known, and there was no other way out, they would confess. They would be in front of people and talk very openly about all the bad things they had done. The women had more rules to follow than men, especially just after they had a newborn. They couldn’t have this meat, they couldn’t have that meat. There were a lot more rules for women. This was in the old days before Christianity arrived.

**Imaruittuq:** When I was young I was told they were only made to confess if their wrong-doings were discovered by angakkuit or if they were found out through qilaniq.

You talked about qilaniq. Were people tied up during this?

**Imaruittuq:** Only their heads would be tied.

Did you ever wonder if you could have prevented your son from dying in the blizzard if you had done things differently?

**Nutaraaluk:** I was unable to pray for him. I think there was a force that was against me that was trying to get him.

**What was that force that was against you?**

**Nutaraaluk:** It was something evil that was trying to get him that was overcoming me as well. When we are overcome, we feel that we are alone, and that evil is winning over us. I wanted to pray for him but I was unable to do so. This force that was against me prevented me from praying. As it turns out, he was going to die.

Do you feel there was an ilisiq, a hex placed on him?

**Nutaraaluk:** I do think there was an ilisiq placed on him.
Did you find out later who had done this to him?

Nutaraaluk: I don’t want to say. I have a fairly good idea who the person was, but that person is also dead now.

Do you know if that person was an angakkuq?

Nutaraaluk: He never told anyone that he was an angakkuq. A lot of the angakkuit were very discreet. Some angakkuit who had the power to kill did not reveal they had this power. The man who I am named after did not let anyone know when he was going to kill someone, but he would suddenly end up on his stomach when he was sleeping when he was going to put a hex on someone.

Do you know if the angakkuq who hexed your son hexed anyone else?

Nutaraaluk: I’ve not heard this, but I believe he did.

Did you wonder why he did this to your son?

Nutaraaluk: My son was a very successful hunter. People who are successful hunters create a lot of jealousy, especially when they are exceptionally good. That always creates problems. I think that’s still the way it is today. I, myself used to run quickly, but I never used to let people see me run. I have run the length of the lake at Minguq which is bigger than Sylvia Grinnell.

Did some people hide their abilities so they wouldn’t be hexed by an angakkuq?

Nutaraaluk: Some of the great hunters hid their abilities. My older brother used to hide his ability to run fast because he feared other people might get jealous. In those days, dogs used to run free and when the dogs used to start chasing after caribou, he would leave the dogs behind and catch up to the caribou. I saw this myself when I was a child.

When your son was hexed, if you had prayed for him, would this have broken the hex?

Nutaraaluk: Probably, if I could have said the prayers, but I also was being dominated. I’m pretty sure that the angakkuq had control of me as well. Once he asked me if I could assist him with his shamanism. I didn’t want to because I believed in God and followed Christianity. After I told him that, he seemed to accept it. I think in the past he tried to get me. There was a time when I was down at the sarva when our qammarq burned. My family walked from the qammarq, as they didn’t want to run out of gas, to join me at the
sarva, where the water doesn’t freeze because of the current. At that time, I already knew someone was after me.

I had a dream in which it seemed that I was awake not asleep. I seemed to be seeing the form of a lion through the walls of an iglu. The lion was growling and started coming towards me. I thought to myself, the sword of God is my only weapon. When I thought that, it seemed that the Holy Spirit was with me as a sword and it seemed to be moving towards the lion. Then the lion seemed to disintegrate into dust. After that incident I knew that that angakkuq had tried to go after me. Later, he became so sick he had to go to the hospital down south. I think that image of the lion was the angakkuq’s tuurnigaq.

**Can people defeat an angakkuq?**

**Nutaraaluk:** Yes. A person can defeat an angakkuq as long as they have firm beliefs. We can use our Saviour to defeat them. Even though, I was defeated in regards to my son.

**Thank you. We have a much better understanding now.**

**Footnotes**

1 See chapter 10.

2 Qaumaniq, an angakkuq’s light, the capacity of the angakkuq to see what is hidden. It can be observed by other angakkuit.

3 Both words refer to the helping spirit of an angakkuq.

4 Departed souls either became aqsarniit or ullurmiut. Otherwise they went down to spend time with the inua of the sea.

5 Inugarulligait, human-like beings said to have lived near the shore.

6 A ritual performed by an angakkuq to attract wildlife.

7 Qilaniq, a divination ritual.

8 Sarva, a place in the winter where the ice does not form due to the current.
Ownership and Sharing

In addition to meaning person, the word Inuk also conveys the meaning owner, inhabitant, and for inanimate objects, spirit. Inuit are the inhabitants of the land they live on. But the notion of ownership of the land differs from a Western perspective. Other people have access to the land to hunt even though they may be strangers. In this chapter notions of naminiqarniq/piqarniq, ‘ownership’, katujjiqatigiirni, ‘sharing’ and, minararniq/ningiqtarniq, ‘distribution,’ are explained by the elders. The moral issues involved evoked other topics such as stealing, tiglingniq, lying, sagluniq, stingy people minnitujuq/tukkuittuq, and finally adoption, tiguarniq, and arranged marriages, piksariktuusimallutik. The elders discussed these themes with great openness, a point that was very much appreciated by the students. Bernice Kootoo, Myna Ishulutaq and Vera Arnatsiaq conclude in their essay, “We are happy that we had the chance to meet the elders and were able to ask questions. We feel good about the knowledge they were able to pass down to us. We also feel that the elders made us feel comfortable asking questions without belittling us and scolding us for not knowing the answer.”

How was a first catch distributed?
Imaruittuq: Up in our area, the meat would be given to the elders, first making sure that no elder was left out. In order for another seal to be caught soon after, every bit of the meat would have to be consumed. If it was the first ring seal, the whole seal needed to be consumed.

What did they do with the sealskin?
Imaruittuq: In our area we did not follow the arnaliaq, angusiaq practice. Either the grandfather or grandmother would be given the skin of a first catch for kamiik. Let’s say a grandson caught something for the first time. The grandmother would have the first chance to get the skin, or to state what would become of the skin. The grandfather could say, “My grandson caught this for the first time, and I would like this skin for my kamiik.” There was one incident where a grandson caught a walrus for the first time. Up until then, I never knew walrus hide could be used for kamiik soles. The grandfather said, “I would like the kauk, walrus hide, for the soles of my kamiik.” That old man said he wanted part of the kauk for his kamiik soles. That old man was Kuuttiq.
When a person wanted something would they ask for it?

**Imaruittuq:** When they really, really wanted something they would indicate their desire.

Regarding the meat, did they just take the meat without asking?

**Imaruittuq:** If the animal that was killed was small, the elders were given meat first.

Did they all gather in one iglu?

**Imaruittuq:** No, the meat was taken to people’s homes.

When there was a group that went out for walrus hunting, did the one who sighted the herd pick first?

**Imaruittuq:** I will tell you an excellent story. Let’s say there were several hunters that caught a walrus. The person that first hit it with a bullet or harpoon had the first pick. Then the second person, and anyone after that took meat back to their home depending on when they hit it. The first to harpoon or shoot it would take home the forearms. And the other people that hit it would take the middle section, the stomach and the chest. If there were a lot of people they would have to split this. The last part to be given away was around the flipper area.

Was the person who first hit the animal the first to take the part he wanted?

**Imaruittuq:** He got the left shoulder and the lower part of the backbone for the women to eat. He also got the head. It was the women who would eat the **kujapik**, the lower part of the back bone.

If the person who first hit the animal did not have a wife, would he still take the kujapik?

**Nutaraaluk:** Even though he did not have a wife, one of his relatives would look after this meat to be eaten by women. The women would be asked to come over and eat **kujapik**. Because I didn’t have a wife, either my daughter or someone else would take the **kujapik** and eat it with other women.

When a camp caught a caribou, did they have the same way of distributing the meat?

**Imaruittuq:** Where we are from, no. Bearded seal, walrus, and polar bear had an order for distribution. For ring seal, you did not have that system. And again, don’t forget that each camp had a different method of distribution.
How about the beluga?

**Imaruittuq:** Where I am from, the beluga is distributed the same way as a ring seal.

How about bearded seal?

**Imaruittuq:** The same way as a walrus.

Regarding ningirniq, the sharing of meat, **Imaruittuq** talked about walrus being shared. Was it different in South Baffin?

**Nutaraaluk:** Yes, it was different. It has always been the custom that hunters distribute and share the meat. The chest cavity area, the shoulders and the neck and also the back are shared. It was first come, first serve for the liver.

How about ring seal?

**Nutaraaluk:** **Alupajaaq** means to cut up a seal at home so you could have the blood. In Nunavik they distribute the ring seal. If they caught more than one seal and they thought there would be enough for everyone, they would distribute the meat.

Where did they hold the feast for a ring seal?

**Nutaraaluk:** They would hold the feast inside an iglu. The women would have their meal up on the bed platform. They would eat part of the ribs and also the back bone. The men would eat the hip area sitting on the floor. The shoulders were set aside for the person who caught the seal to eat as cooked meat when meat was not scarce.

They didn’t really distribute the left-over meat?

**Nutaraaluk:** Around the Kinngait area where I was born, they didn’t really distribute ring seal meat except for those caught by harpoon in the winter time. That’s when they used to distribute the meat. Around the Kinngait area we used to get a lot of meat so we had plenty of meat for the dogs.

What type of meat was preferred, the meat of seals caught through the aglu, meat caught by a net, or meat from seals that were shot or harpooned?

**Nutaraaluk:** In the Kinngait area we did not use nets in the winter. We hunted mainly at the pressure ridges.
You didn’t see people catching seals using nets?

Nutaraaluk: No. We didn’t use nets in the winter. It was only the year I moved here that I saw hunters catching seals with nets. We only caught fish in nets during the winter from lakes.

Do seals that have been caught in nets have more blood?

Nutaraaluk: They do have a lot more blood. They are much better eaten cooked; they are too squishy eaten raw.

When someone caught a ring seal, would they cache it?

Imaruittuq: Sometimes. Caching meat has always been part of our tradition.

When they brought the cached meat back did the whole community come and eat the meat?

Imaruittuq: Yes, especially in hard times when we went to get the cache. We would distribute it to the community, especially to those who needed it.

When did they cache meat?

Imaruittuq: During the spring and summer, because in our area the permafrost is always so close to the surface. It’s not like down here, where meat spoils easily. We always cached and buried walrus meat close to the permafrost, so that it fermented very well. Placing gravel around it is an excellent deflector of heat. The gravel should be placed so air can flow through it easily. When you are caching you shouldn’t put the meat on rocks, because they heat up and it spoils the meat.

Were there stingy people?

Imaruittuq: Yes, there are still stingy people today. As long as we have air to breathe, there will always be stingy people.

Were stingy people successful hunters?

Imaruittuq: I think they tended not to be as successful. Those who are helpful to other people tend to be more successful hunters. It is also noticeable that those who have a tendency to be stingy are less successful.
Were you reluctant to share with stingy people?

Imaruittuq: Because these people were stingy, people tended not to be as generous to them. If it were me, that’s what I would do.

Did you see this happen?

Imaruittuq: I have never known of someone being paid back for their stinginess, perhaps, because my ancestors were good hunters. If they saw someone who was hungry, they could help out. Ittukaatour, our grandfather, would get his sons to take meat to those in need. If there weren’t a whole lot of them, people would be brought in to eat. Another reason they were successful was because they had a boat with a sail. Because they were no longer using a qajaaq, they could carry a lot more meat.

What happened to stingy people when they tried to get a share of the meat?

Imaruittuq: It never bothered us. In Amitturmiut, people would catch a lot of walrus. It’s a huge animal and we gladly distributed it, even to stingy people. But it was not the same case with ring seal. We would take the ring seal home first. We would cut it up at home and distribute it to other people. That’s always been the practice with ring seal. With walrus, we would share with the whole community.

How were stingy people dealt with?

Nutaraaluk: People who are stingy about food are probably always hungry. If you are a sharing person, you know you are always going to get more meat. The meat is going to be replenished immediately. That’s what my father used to say. Stingy people think they are not going to get more meat, so they are always hungry, which makes them stingier. But people who are really sharing are more successful hunters and have more meat to share, because they know the meat is going to be replenished. I’m not a stingy person, but I don’t get animals anymore because I don’t go hunting.

Did anyone counsel the stingy people about their stinginess?

Nutaraaluk: No, I have never heard of anyone counselling stingy people. There have always been two types of people: those who share and those who are stingy. Anytime there is meat, you invite people to have some, because you know the meat is going to be replenished anyway. I am more stingy about sugar and flour. It’s not because I’m stingy, it is because I don’t have much money.
Was there supposed to be a difference between what men and women ate?

Nutaraaluk: I used to be very proud of my wife. She always offered meat and tea to the people that came to our house, and to my in-laws, and to my father before he passed away. Anytime you had meat in the house, especially when you had a wife, you would just sit back and let the wife deal with the meat. It was the wife’s role to make sure that people were being fed. I used to be very thankful to my wife for carrying out that role.

Could you talk more about stinginess?

Imaruittuq: Tukkuttuq is the Iglulik word for stingy. Some people are very stingy. If there is a big groove at the back of the neck people say those people are stingy. It’s just a saying.

In Greenland if a person has a groove at the back of the neck it is a sign that the person angers easily. Did you use to check how big the grooves were?

Imaruittuq: It’s just a saying. It is a way of teasing people. There are people who are very stingy. I’ve gone out hunting with various types of people. There was one individual I did not enjoy going out hunting with. He barely shared anything he brought with him to eat while out hunting. He was very stingy. Successful hunters were the ones that were always willing to share. I think it is like that everywhere. People who are very successful are the ones willing to help. The people who share know that after they share there will be more.

Did people steal food?

Imaruittuq: That has always been the case. Some people steal. Some people will take a cache, especially these days. Before we even get to our cache these days, it is gone. When people were caught stealing they were counselled by the elders. The elders always spoke to an individual who broke the rules. The elders were the ones who kept order in the camp.

Do these words have the same meaning, tiglingniq, stealing, and ivajarniq, eating or drinking something without asking first?

Imaruittuq: If I were to take a cigarette and smoke it while people weren’t looking that would be ivajarniq. If I went to a house and ate food without permission that would be ivajarniq. If I actually took an object to keep for myself, that would be tiglingniq. When I know there is a cache and I take the cache for myself, that’s tiglingniq.
How about just taking something with the intent to tell them later. Is that stealing?

Imaruituq: No, that’s not stealing. But if you don’t tell them, then it is considered stealing.

If I take something, and years and years passed before I saw this person and told him I had taken something would that be stealing?

Imaruituq: During the years that you didn’t tell him, it would be stealing. But as soon as you told him, it would no longer be stealing.

Were people hurt if they discovered their cache was missing?

Imaruituq: Of course, they were very hurt. Because the hunter who put that cache there did so in order to pick it up later. If it’s not there, it is very painful. Sometimes hunters who are hurt look at the bright side. Perhaps the person who took the cache really needed it so they don’t mope over it. Most people’s attitude is not to be upset over it.

What happened to people who stole?

Imaruituq: They hung them up by their ears! [joking] They would get counselling from the elders. Unacceptable behaviour will always be a part of our lives. Since the beginning of time, it has always happened. The way Inuit dealt with this type of problem was through counselling. During counselling no one was tied up. Nutaraaluk said that when an individual became too dangerous to society, when he became threatening to others they had to be tied up. That was the time when you had no choice but to tie them down and deal with them drastically, when they became ilimanaq.

What does ilimanarniq mean?

Imaruituq: When you believe that a person would carry out the same deed again.

Did you know who the thieves were?

Imaruituq: Yes, we always knew who the chronic thieves were. We used to be told that our nails would come off if we stole. Maybe it was not true, but it was a deterrent. I think it’s just a saying though.

I heard that if you had white patches on your nails it was a sign that you stole a lot. We were told if we stole our nails would come off. I don’t think it’s true.

Nutaraaluk: I’m checking to see if I’m a chronic thief or not. [laughter].

Ownership and Sharing
Did stingy people become iliranaqtuq, intimidating, when there was a shortage of food?

Imaruittuq: Very much. There is a story about a camp that was going through a period of hunger. There was this one person who had food but the other camp members became intimidated by him because he stopped opening the entrance to his iglu, as he didn’t want anyone to come in. The husband caught a seal and they weren’t sharing with anyone at all. That was one story that I heard. There are probably others like that.

Was there a rule against hunting on Sundays?

Nutaraaluk: I remember when we were not allowed to hunt on Sundays. Once when I was two years old, we were on the move on a Sunday. Namunai had a small boat. My father was singing while we were on the move.

Have you ever heard that hunters who hunted on Sunday had a shorter life?

Nutaraaluk: I haven’t heard whether they passed away early or not. But the hunters in the North really refrained from hunting on Sundays, even if they were hungry. When they did hunt, the whole animal had to be consumed right away. You had to finish it right away.

You mean an animal that was caught on a Sunday?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, an animal that was caught on a Sunday had to be consumed the same day. If there were leftovers, the leftovers had to be thrown to the dogs. Even the skin had to be cut up and fed to the dogs. The whole thing had to be consumed in one day. I have seen this myself.

I’d like to go back to the unikkaaqtauat, old stories. Have you ever counselled someone by using unikkaaqtauat?

Nutaraaluk: I’ve counselled and helped other people as I mentioned earlier. I’ve lectured on Christianity and leading a Christian life, as I really respected my father. Once I was able to calm a hunter who was all set to commit murder. I convinced him to save his bullets, so he would have ammunition to go hunting with. I was able to calm him down.

Did you tell him an unikkaaqtuaq?

Nutaraaluk: No, I did not tell him an unikkaaqtuaq. I counselled him, and asked him questions like, whether he wanted to live or not. I told him that people who commit
murder have a short life. Because he was able to calm down, he is still alive today. He is just stricken with sickness from old age, that’s all.

What is the best word in Inuktitut to use for ownership, nangminiqarniq or piqarniq?

Imaruittuq: Nangminiqarniq.

Can you tell me more about nangminiqarniq?

Imaruittuq: If you had your own house, that house would be nangminiq. If you made clothing for yourself, that would be nangminiq. In my younger days, I used to have store bought ammunition. We differentiated between store bought ammunition and the ones that you made yourself. The store bought ammunition was called nangminiq. The ammunition you made yourself was called aqqiqaq. Some people called them qarjuksuraq. Nangminiq means something that is your own.

What does piqarniq mean in relation to clothing?

Imaruittuq: Anything that is really yours is nangminiq. You also use nangminiq for your immediate relatives. For example, for your younger siblings you would say nangminikka ilakka.

Is this the same in South Baffin?

Nutaraaluk: Nangminiq means things are mine, nobody owns them but me. Guns, a canoe, an outboard are all things that are mine. Even a snowmobile, a qamutiik, or a harpoon are things that are mine.

Things that you have bought for yourself are your nangminiq?

Imaruittuq: Even my children are my nangminiq. Nangminiq is the word I would use with my children. People who are related to each other are nangminirii.

We can piqaq, have objects, such as brooms. Could we nangminirii or own them as well??

Imaruittuq: You would use piqaq for a broom rather than nangminirii.

When people were buried, would they also bury their personal effects?

Imaruittuq: They would include things that were dear to the person, their nangminillarik.
These were items that were dear to the person?

Imaruittuq: Yes, probably because the person treasured those things.

Yesterday, you said that you never wanted to borrow rifles. Why was that?

Nutaraaluk: I have never borrowed a rifle. I have always had my own, all these years, ever since I was seven. I used to use my older brother’s rifle at a very young age, to go ptarmigan or rabbit hunting. I myself lend out my rifles when someone doesn’t have one, because I want to help them get food. When my son died in the blizzard he had four of my rifles with him. Although he had never bought his own rifle, he had bought himself a shotgun.

In the old days, if someone borrowed something and didn’t return it, what would happen?

Nutaraaluk: In the old days, when people borrowed something they always returned what they borrowed. Nowadays, they don’t even bother. For instance, just recently somebody took off my spark plug cap without even asking me.

In the old days if you had borrowed a gun from your friend and your friend died, would you keep that gun?

Nutaraaluk: If I had borrowed it? I never borrowed a gun, but I do loan my guns to anyone who wants to use a gun when I know they are not a threat to anybody else. I lent Aukkaut my gun this past summer. But myself, I have never borrowed a gun.

I’m just using a gun as an example. It could be a bowl or anything they never bothered returning. What would happen to them? How were these people dealt with?

Nutaraaluk: In the old days, they always returned everything and I never saw people keeping things for themselves. But today, some people do keep things for themselves and don’t bother returning them.

Were there liars even back then?

Imaruittuq: Lying has always been a part of our lives. Even though I think people lied less in the old days. Today, lying occurs more than it used to. Some people are brought to court through the lying of others. The person who is telling the truth is not heard, but the one who is lying gets listened to. Today in our communities, people are lying a lot.
In the old days what would happen to liars?
Imaruittuq: I think they used to cut off the tip of their tongue! [joking] I don’t know, I’m just teasing you! Of course they used to be counselled not to lie. Myself, I was counselled not to lie to anyone.

Was it obvious who was lying and who wasn’t?
Imaruittuq: Someone would say that something happened a certain way and we would find out it wasn’t true afterwards.

How, could you tell they were lying? Was it through their eyes, by looking at their face, or through their body language?
Imaruittuq: There was one individual who was an obvious liar, giving himself away with his body language. It was always very obvious he was telling a lie. It was very obvious.

How did you find out?
Imaruittuq: Through eye contact. Sometimes he would even give himself away while telling the lie by covering one side of his face. We knew that what he was telling us was not true. Children can easily become liars. If you praise a child, and continue to display love, even when they lie, it is not good for the child. You have to be very careful and very balanced. As a parent you cannot believe your child all the time. There was one child, saglutujuq, the chronic liar, was his nickname. I found out that the adoptive parents over-loved the child and because of it the child became a liar. Today, this child is still coping with the effects of being over-loved as the parents treated him as if he could do no wrong. There is another person who was named after the mother of one of the parents. Because of this they always believed what the child said. They believed this child never lied and always told the truth. It came to a point where the parents did not listen to anyone except the child. Pikkaqtitti is when a child blames someone else for something he has done. That’s what happens to children if you raise them like that.

Have you heard if you don’t cut the tail of a fish off immediately then you are a liar?
Imaruittuq: When you are chopping a fish, and you hit a joint every time then you are not a liar. But if you are trying to cut meat and you have difficulty finding the joints then you are a liar. This is just a saying. I think this was just a deterrent so nobody would lie. I don’t know if it’s really true.
In your camp, would people gossip?

Imaruittuq: Yes, this has always been the case. Gossip, gossip, gossip. It is always at work in our lives. When I was newly married I was told, “Please do not believe all the things that your wife tells you. Now you are going to start hearing a lot of things about other community members. Don’t believe everything your wife tells you.” I was also told, “Gossip can separate family members, and can create enemies.” This has always been so. Tivviaqtainiq is a term for maliciously gossiping about other people. We have an unikkauqtuaq from our area that was based on actual events concerning Atanaarjuat and Aamarjuat. Aamarjuat’s older brother had been murdered. Aamarjuat and Atanaarjuat had to flee during the night without any clothing to an island called Tasiuqqat as a result of Aamarjuat’s wife’s words.

I recall our grandmother, Ataguttaaluk, gathered her daughter-in-laws together and counselled them, that in order to be a united family, they were not to spread amongst themselves things that they heard about one another. From time immemorial gossip has always been at work breaking up families. It could separate community members. We men were also told not to gossip. I grew up being told never to say bad things about someone. We were told not to hang on to bad thoughts about other people.

Were you told not to make fun of people’s idiosyncrasies or your children would be like that?

Imaruittuq: We were told not to laugh at, or make fun of, other people. For example, we were not to make fun of someone with a limp. If you imitated that person your children could be like that.

Is that true?

Imaruittuq: Yes, it is probably true because this is not just a saying in our community.

Before Christianity came, did people ever talk about wrong-doing?

Imaruittuq: Ijurnaaqi is a term used for a person doing something that warranted others laughing at him. Today we say that they pirjak, commit a wrong-doing. In the old days, those who would ijurnaaqi would be counselled. There was an old man named Uuttukuttuk who said that in the past when people would ijurnaaqi others would always know about it, but nowadays you only hear about wrong-doings when young people aren’t hiding their actions. It is only the actions that are in the open you hear about, not the ones that are being hidden. You can’t criticize those who are hiding their actions. Most of us are not good all the time and people can see this. There are others that never seem to do anything wrong. But when they are sick and about to die they begin telling about all sorts of things they have done.
Was this like a confession?

Imaruittuq: Yes. People have always been told to confess. I told you before about the three women who did not confess, that put their whole camp through hunger. In our community we called confessing qaqialirniq, or anianniq.

If the person didn’t confess directly to the victim, but yet still confessed was that acceptable?

Imaruittuq: It is best to confess to the victim. It is also acceptable for the person to confess, even if it is not directly to the victim, as long as they let it out.

I want to ask you questions about adoption. Would you approach the family of the child or would they approach you?

Nutaraaluk: We were the ones who used to be approached. My wife and I weren’t able to bear our own children. Even though we had a good sex life, we still didn’t have any children. Because of that, people used to ask us if we wanted to adopt their child. This arrangement took place before the child was born.

You did not ask to adopt the child?

Nutaraaluk: No, we never asked first. My wife used to tell me that a family had asked if we were willing to adopt.

Were you obligated to say yes?

Nutaraaluk: We used to be very happy to be asked if we wanted to adopt a child.

Was it the man or the woman adopting the child who made the decision?

Nutaraaluk: I am not sure who was the one who decided. But people used to ask us if we wanted to adopt their child while it was still in the womb.

Were adopted children loved more than biological children?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, all our adopted children used to consider us as their parents, even though we used to let the children know about their birth parents. The children acted as though we were truly their mother and father.
Did you have to let these adopted children know who their birth parents were when they were young?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, we were very open about who their birth parents were. My only remaining son still calls his birth mother, “aunt,” because she was my wife’s cousin, but he knows that she is his birth mother. He considers me as his only father. We let the children know who their birth parents were. Anytime you have an adopted child, there comes a point where the child does not want to call his birth parents his mother and father, but his adoptive parents that instead.

I believe it has always like this. All the children that I have adopted have gone through this. I have never had children of my own but I love my adopted children and I discipline them. Even though they are adopted, we consider them as our own children because we have raised them as our own. As they have not been raised by their birth parents, we’ve taken the responsibility as parents. My qiturnqaqati, Inuapik, the birth mother, calls my son, “Nutaraalukkut irninga, Nutaraaluk’s son,” because she knows he is my son.

What does the term qiturnqaqati mean?

Nutaraaluk: When we say qiturnqaqati, it means we have the same child.

Do you have to pay attention to the people you have adopted from by giving them gifts?

Nutaraaluk: Anytime you catch wildlife, you always give them some. You share the meat. But I don’t do that anymore because I am old now and I don’t go hunting.

I would like to ask you questions about adoption. Since you yourself have adopted, could you tell us about how that came about?

Imaruittuq: He was thrown my way! Just kidding! I was working at the nursing station in Sanirajaq when my uncle arrived. He said that his son had just had a baby and that the older child was still very young. He told us if we wanted the baby we could go and get it and he would be grateful. My wife had been out at the hospital for three years. We had two children but we hadn’t had a new-born for a while. We had been wanting to have a baby again when we were told we could adopt this child. When we arrived there, we stayed at my uncle’s. We were told to go and get the baby but we were intimidated in case they had decided to keep the baby. After a while we made the decision to go and tell them that we wanted the baby. They gave us their approval. The baby was sick. When my wife put the baby on her back, alainait, we were so happy! Our adopted baby
was very skinny and sick. We slept there one more night and headed home. The baby
would start getting better and then become sick again. We were scared that if the baby
died we would be blamed. We would take the baby to the nursing station during the
night. The baby began to gain weight and began to get better. This was very joyous. I
loved that baby very much.

I had an adopted brother but I didn’t love him very much. In those days, bannock
seemed very tasty. There would be a small piece of bannock. The natural children
wouldn’t be allowed to have any because it was for the adopted child. I used to think,
“What’s the matter with them. They love this child who is not theirs and don’t love us
that are theirs.” I used to think if I had an adopted child I wouldn’t be able to love it. But
it turns out that they are very lovable.

How old was the child when you adopted it?

Imaruitutuq: It was a new-born that we adopted, less than a month old. The child was
sick when we adopted him. We went to a camp 10 to 15 miles away from Iglulik to get
the child. When the baby became healthy, I started loving him and now I love him the
most of all my children. He rarely, rarely cried. Every time he started to cry, it would
hurt me and I had to find out why the child was crying. If somebody hurt him, I would
defend him. I never used to believe it when parents said that adopted children were
more loved. I never used to believe it until I had my own. This love, this enormous love
can ruin a child as well. You can love a child too much. You have to give the right
amount of love to a child. My wife used to tell me that I loved this child too much and
that I was spoiling him. I used to say, “No I am not.” And I was wrong, I was wrong to
give him too much love. Grandparents that adopt their grandchildren do the same thing
as they have this enormous love for their grandchildren. In a way they ruin their
grandchildren. We can ruin their lives either by mistreating them or through loving
them too much. Defending them all the time ruins them. You have to balance your love
towards your children. Also, today we have children that don’t fear anyone, because
they are over-disciplined.

Who wanted the baby to be adopted? Was it the pregnant woman or her
husband?

Imaruitutuq: Some babies are adopted out right away because the pregnant woman
doesn’t want the child and starts looking for a family to adopt it. There are many reasons
this could happen. It could be because the next child is still young and she would not be
able to take care of it. If so, she would say, “I wonder who would want it if it was a boy?
I wonder who would want it if it was a girl?” She would say to a couple, “You can have
the baby if you want it.” Also a pregnant woman could be asked if she minded giving her child for adoption because the people making the request wanted a baby. If she agreed, the adoption was arranged. Sometimes babies were adopted only after they were born.

If a pregnant woman didn’t want to give the baby away anymore, after it was born would she keep it?

Imaruittuq: Yes, sometimes she’d say ‘yes’ to the adoption but after she had the baby she’d change her mind. That wasn’t a problem. I’ve seen some cases where the adoption actually went through, and shortly after the birth mother would take her child back.

That must have been painful.

Imaruittuq: Yes it was. There is bad feeling when a child is obviously being loved and is not being mistreated and it gets taken back.

What happens to a child that is returned to its birth parents? Does it have a short life?

Imaruittuq: I don’t know. There is a saying that a child should not be fought over or a child will have a short life. My present wife and I adopted a child. It turned out there had been a pre-arranged adoption. We weren’t aware that there had already been a pre-arranged adoption, and that another couple wanted to adopt that child. In the spring we adopted the child and the following fall it died. I suspect the death was from the intravenous medication and not from fighting over the child. We have always been told that children should not be fought over, and this is true. It was only after we adopted the child, we found out there had been another pre-arranged adoption. We did not intentionally do this. It was because we didn’t know.

When a couple are not happy with each other and they have a child, does the child tend to be sickly?

Imaruittuq: I have never heard about that. But if people believe that’s the way it is, that’s probably the way it is.

In the old days, which ones were adopted more, males or females?

Imaruittuq: I think females were adopted more. Sons were very valuable because they were going to be hunters. Female babies were adopted more frequently than male babies.
Did the adopted child know both its birth parents?

Imaruittuq: Yes. You could tell the adopted child who their birth parents were, but when you did they rarely believed you. They considered the parents that were raising them their real mother and father. When they say they didn’t believe you, your love grew even stronger.

In the old days, did the birth parents spend time with the child?

Imaruittuq: We used to live very close to our child’s birth parents. He used to see his natural brothers playing around stark naked and he used to make comments about that. He used to throw rocks at them because they were naked. And of course, we used to tell him not to do that to his natural brothers.

Were adopted children ever mistreated by the adoptive parents?

Imaruittuq: Yes, there was mistreatment. I know of a case where the adoptive parents wanted to return a child but the birth parents turned them down, and they started mistreating the child. I didn’t see this myself I only heard about it.

Did you have to be married before you adopted a child?

Nutaraaluk: Qallunaat weren’t involved when we adopted our children. There wasn’t any kind of child protection agency back then.

What did you do if your wife only gave birth to girls?

Nutaraaluk: It used to happen. Some couples had nothing but daughters, even though they wanted sons. Other couples had nothing but sons. My youngest wanted to have a daughter but all she had were sons.

If a couple was having nothing but daughters, would the wife sleep with another man in order to have a son?

Nutaraaluk: Yes. That happened before Reverend Peck introduced Christianity. The one I was named after had four wives.

If the adoptive parents died, did the child go back to the birth parents?

Imaruittuq: Yes. If the birth parents were still alive, the child was returned to them if the adoptive parents died. I saw that quite often. Sometimes the child went to the adoptive mother’s sister, but more often they went back to their birth parents.
Have you ever heard about women sleeping with whalers when a ship came, in order to obtain tobacco?

Nutaraaluk: Aligiuq, my step-mother, my father’s second wife, used to sleep with the whalers. When the husbands were working during the night, the whalers used to sleep with their wives and give them tobacco and other things. I think that the Americans were the worst in this respect.

Did the husbands mind or not?
Nutaraaluk: I don’t think they minded as long as they had tobacco.

Was this considered asinniarniq, adultery?
Nutaraaluk: Yes. Any married couple knew that adultery was wrong. It has been this way since Christianity.

Even though they didn’t believe in it?
Nutaraaluk: In the old days they used to exchange wives, and this was called aippaarjugiit.

Did women ever get pregnant from men that weren’t their husbands?
Nutaraaluk: Yes, they used to get pregnant from men that weren’t their husbands. Sometimes the husband was sterile so the wife would sleep with another man and get pregnant that way.

When the woman got pregnant from a qallunaaq what happened?
Nutaraaluk: The child was accepted.

Did they keep the child?
Nutaraaluk: Yes, because it was a person.

Was there jealousy in some relationships?
Nutaraaluk: There was probably jealousy.

If the community found out a person committed adultery what was done to him or her?
Nutaraaluk: The community never really did anything, but there was displeasure shown towards the person who committed adultery. If the wife committed adultery too often, the husband would beat her up. I think that is the root of family violence.

How about a man who was committing adultery? Was the wife told?
Nutaraaluk: Of course the wife would get jealous if she found out. If the husband was going with another woman, the wife used to get jealous. My wife used to accuse me of committing adultery, but I never did. The only time I thought of another woman was after she passed away.

What happens to adulterers nowadays?
Nutaraaluk: People have never been happy with those who have committed adultery, either when it was the man cheating on his wife or the wife cheating on her husband.

What should the wife of an adulterer be told?
Nutaraaluk: I have never heard that the spouse had to be told anything. I have heard of adulterers being counselled about their actions. As parents, we talk to our own children and tell them not to commit adultery.

Did some men have more than one wife?
Imaruittuq: Yes.

Did some women have more than one husband?
Imaruittuq: I think so. Some women had two husbands, especially when there were fewer women than men.

Is abortion considered to be murder?
Imaruittuq: It seems to be that way. We don’t have a word for it, but it seems that way, because the foetus is going to be a person.

Have you ever heard whether female babies used to be killed?
Imaruittuq: I heard a long time ago, about a couple from Kivalliq that had a daughter living in Iglulik who had done that. After Christianity arrived, no one ever practised that again.
Can you tell us more about people swapping spouses in the old days.

Imaruittuq: Aippaarjugit is the proper term to use for swapping spouses. The wife goes to another husband and the husband goes to another wife. Before Christianity this was widely practised. Sometimes what started out as wife swapping became a permanent relationship. I knew of people who had swapped spouses. They used to do this before the advent of Christianity because bestiality was discouraged and sometimes they were not able to take their spouses out hunting. We were told not to have sex with the animals that we caught because it would shorten our lives.

It seems today, we are more encouraged to have sex with dogs rather than women. If we have sex with women we end up in jail. There is a maligaq not to have sex with non-humans. My mother used to tell me when I was out hunting not to have sex with anything I caught because it would shorten my life.

So no one did this?

Imaruittuq: No. It has always been done. That’s why we were told not to do it. We were told to have sex with women, not with the animals we killed.

Did people who had relatives that followed this practice also have sex with animals they killed?

Nutaraaluk: Some people used to have sex with dogs. Back then, when sex with women was acceptable, some men didn’t seem to chase women at all. When they were about to die their appearance degenerated and it turned out that they had had sex with the animals they had killed. It was only when they were about to die they would talk about it. During their lives it seemed that they had been very good people. Other people who were known not to be very good didn’t have hidden wrong-doings. That’s why we were told to tell about our wrong-doings right away.

Did some of the dogs get pregnant?

Imaruittuq: Yes. Some of the dogs would have offspring that were half-human. The dogs would eat the newborns right away because the dogs were very, very embarrassed about them.

Has anyone actually seen this?

Imaruittuq: I have heard of someone actually seeing a half-human being. Yes, this used to happen.
What did it look like?

Imaruittuq: It looked like a human being.

Nutaraaluk: There are some people who have had spouses that were non-human entities such as tarriassuit. Women having a non-human as a spouse were said to have uiksaliit; men were said to have nuliaksaliit. They weren’t squeamish of them or scared of them.

In the old days, were women physically abused by their husbands?

Imaruittuq: Yes. This has happened ever since couples started living together.

How would they try to correct the problem?

Imaruittuq: Some listened to counselling, some never changed. There is a story about a woman who was beaten up all the time by her husband, who was fetched by the moon. The moon came into the camp by dogteam to get the woman who was being beaten all the time.

Nutaraaluk: There is also another story about a woman who was being beaten up all the time by her husband. She had black and blue spots all over her body. She went up on top of a cliff and her husband said, “I won’t do that to you anymore, come down.” While up on the cliff, she took her long hair and twisted it in front of her. Her hair turned into an ivory tusk. Her husband tried the same thing, but he went over the cliff and died. She became a narwhal. The narwhal’s spots represent the bruises of the woman.

Were the men counselled about beating up their wives?

Nutaraaluk: They would be counselled. I think what should happen is that those who make their wives feel pain should be made to feel pain too.

Children shouldn’t be exposed to family violence, should they?

Imaruittuq: They shouldn’t, but this sort of thing has always been happening.

What happens to children who hear this sort of thing going on?

Imaruittuq: They tend to take the side of the parent who is being abused. If we know that our mother is being abused, we tend to take her side; if the father is being abused, we tend to take his side. As the children of these parents, we tend to do that. Everyone is like this. Sometimes we hear of a boy beating up his father because he has seen his mother abused so often. Even today, this sort of thing happens, and it will probably continue to happen in the future.
When these abusers become elderly are they said to be suungujuvinaaluit, people who were bullies?

Imaruittuq: They tend to become very sickly. People who at one time picked on others would end up in poor health.

What happened to the abusers?

Imaruittuq: They were counselled not to beat their wives up. Some of the abusers would be aggressive types and people would be afraid to talk to them. We used to really feel for the woman who was being beaten up. Often, we knew the abuser came from an abusive family himself. Women who came from abusive homes, were more inclined to marry abusive husbands.

Nutaraaluk: People who used to beat up others quite often seemed to end up in pain themselves. Sometimes there didn’t seem to be a reason for their pain but they would be in pain when they became old. Those who are abusive will suffer in the end.

End Notes

Arnaq Ningarjauvaktuq
The Woman Who was Physically Abused

[From the recollections of Alexina Kublu of this unikkaaqtuaq which she was told as a child by her father Michel Kupaaq Piugaattuk]

There was a woman who was constantly abused by her husband because she was unable to conceive. She got so fed up that, one day while everyone was playing kickball, she went out, to an area of fresh snow that did not have any footprints on it, when the moon was full. She was kneeling down on her feet with her head bowed over so that the hood of her amauti was on the ground in front of her. She started shouting, “Taqqiq up there, come and get me. Taqqiq up there, come and get me.” Then she just waited for the moon to come down and get her. A little while later there was a sound like wind followed by the sound of dogs walking. This was followed by the sound of a qamutiik and the sound of someone getting off and telling his dogs to stop, “Whoa Pualukittuq, whoa Tiriattiaq, whoa Sakita.”

The driver went over to the woman who remained kneeling with her amauti hood slung in front of her. He told her to go and get on the qamutiik. He instructed her to keep her eyes closed and not to open them until she was told to. When they started moving, the sound of the dogs feet was the first to disappear. The qamutiik went up on a slant and the sound of the runners on the snow also disappeared. Being very curious she opened
her eyes slightly and almost fell off and dropped one of her mittens. One of the ball
players could be heard to shout, “A star has shat.” She didn’t dare open her eyes again
after that.

Once again the sound of the dogs walking could be heard, followed by the sound
of the runners of the qamutiik on the snow. The inua of the moon told his dogs to stop
and he told the woman that she could open her eyes now. They were greeted by people
with tiny ruffs around their parka hoods. It turned out, they were stars. When Taqqiq
was bringing the woman to his iglu, he told her that she was not to glance at the person
on the qariaq, the guest platform, but to look directly at her. As she was entering, she was
just about to glance at the person on the qariaq who then looked directly at her. Because
she had only started to glance at the woman, rather than look directly at her, only her
eyelashes were singed. It was an old, old woman with a heavily tattooed face. It was
Siqiniq, the sun. There were also two women at the back of the bed platform who were
constantly giggling. They appeared to have their knees tucked into the front of their
parkas, yet they didn’t seem to have much of a stomach.

When the woman was comfortably settled in, the inua of the moon told her that
they were going to be visited by a woman with a lot of tattoos. The woman would also
be carrying a huge ulu and a bag. He cautioned her not to laugh at the antics of the
woman. If she felt the need to laugh, she was to put her hand under her kini, her parka
flap, in the shape of a bear and blow into the front of her parka. As predicted, a woman
came in. She had her large ulu and her bag with her. She started to dance around
singing, “Ululijarnaat (the one wielding an ulu) ihi i’hii, qaurarjuakka (the numerous
tattoos) ihi i’hii.” She danced around and sang and performed all sorts of silly antics.
When the woman started to feel the need to laugh, she didn’t break the instructions she
had been given because the other times she hadn’t listened had been very dangerous.
So, as soon as she felt the need to laugh, she placed her hands under her kini in the
shape of a bear and blew into the front of her parka, as she had been instructed to do.
As soon as she did this, Ululijarnaat started going out. The two gigglers told her that
because they had not followed the instructions regarding refraining from laughing,
Ululijarnaat cut their stomachs open and put all their entrails into her bag which was why
their stomachs didn’t stick out, even though they had their knees in front of their parkas.

The woman moved in with Taqqiq. Beside her gulliq was a caribou shoulder blade
placed upside down. Taqqiq told her not to throw it out with the garbage. The woman
remained on the moon for sometime. After a while, she started feeling pangs of
homesickness. Because she was becoming homesick, Taqqiq lifted the caribou shoulder
blade and showed her the home she had left. Upon seeing her husband, all feelings of
homesickness left. After some time the woman became pregnant and she had a son.
However, when she became too homesick she would lift the caribou shoulder blade, and
for a while she would feel better. But her homesickness was increasing.
When winter came she looked down at her home and watched as they played kickball. She saw her husband looking sad and not participating in the game and she felt sorry for him. When she kept insisting on going home, the inua of the moon brought her back to her husband. He told her not to eat any meat caught by humans and not to fill her qulliq with oil from blubber, until a year had passed. When she became hungry, she was to tip her cooking pot and it would become filled with meat. If she needed oil for her qulliq, she was to tip it and when it became full she was to cut off the flow with her wick trimmer.

Her husband was overjoyed to have her back and didn’t get angry with her for a long time. But before a year passed, he started resenting her never eating anything that he killed or filling her qulliq from the blubber of animals that he killed and he began to beat her again. Since the woman remembered that every time she didn’t follow Taqqiq’s instructions something happened to her, she did her best to ignore her husband. One day, when she got tired of being beaten, she took a tiny bite of meat from an animal that her husband had killed. She was still nursing her son. He died when she gave him her breast milk, after she had eaten the meat. Later on, when she became hungry, she tipped her cooking pot but it remained empty. She tipped her qulliq but it did not fill up. Ahtua, how sad.

Footnotes

1 Arnaliaq/angusiaq, a term used by a midwife to address a female/male child she helped deliver.

2 See the story Arnaq ningarjauvaktuq, The Woman Who was Physically Abused, at the end of this chapter.
Chapter 9

Murder

Canadian law views murder primarily as a crime that should be punished. Inuit used to view murder as a tragedy and tried to redress its consequences. Communities were usually based on kinship ties, and that made it even harder to deal with murder. Nutaraaluk relates how one of his older brothers was shot because he heard voices and people feared he would start killing, just as the murderer Miqqualaaq had done. His other brother suffered deeply because he knew in advance that his brother was going to be killed. According to Nutaraaluk, “One of the people that killed my older brother went into the ministry, but lost his mind, literally lost his mind. It was too hard to live on after committing that kind of violent act. The stress he felt was so unbearable, it made him lose his mind.” Although revenge was often considered, it was rare (see Van den Steenhoven 1962). In their essay, Matthew Boki, Nancy Kisa and Julia Shaimaiyuk discussed the case of the famous murderer Iksivalitaq who killed the brother of Kappianaq. Invited by the father of the murderer to take his revenge, Kappianaq answered, “No, I am not going to murder anyone; if I kill a human being I am not going to use him for clothes or for food, nor dog food. I am not going to kill a human being. He [Amarualik] is dead and will not come back…” (Rasing 1994: 130).

Do you mind if we ask questions about murder in the old days?

Nutaraaluk: Not at all. These days, there are a lot fewer murders. There would have been a lot more people if they hadn’t died, not only from blood feuds, but also from lack of provisions and hunger. Our ancestors were very capable. They survived using only bows and arrows and harpoons. They didn’t have any rifles.

Were you ever exposed to an incident of someone committing a murder?

Nutaraaluk: I remember when Miqqualaaq committed murder. In those days, even though some people were not intoxicated, they tried to be aggressive.

Were you related to Miqqualaaq?

Nutaraaluk: My father’s mother and Miqqualaaq’s father’s mother were sisters. I don’t know which one was older. Miqqualaaq committed three murders; he killed both his parents and my aana, my paternal grandmother. He’d run back and forth from the tents shooting at them. He was obeying the voices he was hearing.
He was obeying the voices he was hearing?

**Nutaraaluk:** He started to believe the voices that he was hearing and as a result he started killing people. They say that people do things like that when they are hearing voices. Even today, there are people like that, who hear voices.

**Was he a young person?**

**Nutaraaluk:** Yes, he was young. He wasn’t married yet. He was a young person.

**What happened to him after he committed the murders?**

**Nutaraaluk:** Less than a month after he committed the murders, he started living with us again. My older brother wanted Miqqualaaq to join the relatives he had murdered. My father said to him, “Irniq, don’t talk like that, because he is our relative.” Because my father said that, Miqqualaaq wasn’t killed right away. My older brother wanted to take revenge immediately. My uncle, Miqqualaaq’s father, used to be very open about his love for us. He would talk to my brothers, my sister and I, in turn about how much he loved us. This was shortly before he was killed.

**In those days, was the person who committed the murder made to join the ones he had killed right away?**

**Nutaraaluk:** Some murderers were made to join the ones he had killed right away. We were living up at Nattilik where there were no other people. Therefore, we didn’t want to kill Miqqualaaq right away.

**Was that the practice that was followed if someone committed a murder? Was that the only solution?**

**Nutaraaluk:** Yes. I believe so. More than once I went to the house of a person who was quite irate and tried to calm the person down with words. I would be very blunt and ask the person if he wanted to take a life. First, that would agitate the person but it would also make him withdraw and think about what he was doing, what he was going through. As soon as I started being very blunt and asking focused questions, the person started responding to me. You knew right away that the person was going to calm down, as soon as he started answering your questions. It made him rational, made him calm down and think about what he was doing. Another time, when we were hauling up a boat, someone made a comment to this person and he became angry and went home and began counting his bullets because he didn’t have that many. Again, I went to see him and I was able to calm him down. I bluntly asked him if he planned on killing someone and made him think about what he was doing. That is how I kept order in the camp.
Were you asked to do that?

Nutaraaluk: Even when I was very young, I was able to calm people down. When I was young, I was able to out-wrestle other adult males. When I realized I was able to beat them, I was more interested in calming them down than in making the situation worse. When I realized that I was much stronger than they were, I was no longer afraid of being wrestled down. When I was younger I was very agile and strong.

Was this your initiative, or did someone ask you to calm people down?

Nutaraaluk: I was not always asked to go and calm them down, sometimes I went on my own initiative. I used to think that people shouldn’t have thoughts about killing each other. I always thought that it was a great tragedy, whenever there was a loss of life.

Can you tell us more about Miqqualaaq?

Nutaraaluk: Miqqualaaq was taken to a place where the water didn’t freeze because of the current. As they were about to push him, he jumped in. He disappeared under the water and bobbed up right away. Even though the current was very strong he wasn’t moving with it. His hands had been tied behind his back with rope but when he came back up his hands were untied and he had his hands up in the air.

Was he thrown into the water because of the murder he committed?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, when he started to hear voices again. My older brother had tried to take him down to the coast, but they had had to return. My older brother said to my father, “Father you are older than me, talk to him” But my father would only say, “If you let him live, I’m not going to regain my strength.” Because they thought Miqqualaaq would murder again, he was killed.

Were you a teenager when this happened?

Nutaraaluk: No, I was a child, I was seven years old.

If you had a relative in your family who committed a murder, would that make you more likely to commit murder?

Nutaraaluk: No, that is not the case. Anytime an individual becomes aggressive, they lose sight of reality. It happened to me. Once, I was in a state of rage because my wife had been beaten with a rifle. I started to think that I would give that person a rifle so I would have a better reason to kill him. I wanted to kill him with my bare hands. What stopped me was that, I didn’t want my nephew to witness such an awful incident.
Did murderers always need to be killed?

Nutaraaluk: No, but if you thought they were going to do it again, that person could be killed. If the person was remorseful of his act and wished to be part of the community, then you could let him live and be a part of the camp again. This is a case where our systems collide. Qallunaat treat a person that has committed a murder the same way, whether they are remorseful for their actions or whether they will probably commit another murder.

Did the community meet and decide what to do about Miqqualaaq?

Nutaraaluk: The only thing we had to fall back on was prayer. There was just our family in the Nattilik area. We had never gone through this before. There was hardly anybody around. Most people were living around the coast. He was dealt with in this manner, even though there were no people to witness it, because it was believed that he was about to murder again.

Did you discuss this before he was taken to the place where there was open water?

Nutaraaluk: He was counselled so we could help him find a way that he could live. He was even shouted at but he would not reply. In the extreme cold you can hear sounds very far away. We heard my brother’s voice, while he was talking to Miqqualaaq, telling him not to murder again so he could once again see his sister living on the coast. My brother went to get some rope to tie his hands behind his back and tried to talk to him one more time before they took him to the place where there was open water.

If there was a rivalry between camps, and a person killed someone from another camp, how was he dealt with?

Nutaraaluk: The incident with Miqqualaaq happened after there were no longer any feuds. This happened because he was sick and started hearing evil things. Today, we know that believing in Christ can calm your mind. Miqqualaaq was killed by the camp members because they knew he was a threat to them. Everyone was relieved that he didn’t kill again, even the traders and the police.

What do you think of the meaning of inuaqsiniq, murder? Is it bad?

Imaruittuq: Yes, it’s very bad. I know for a fact it is bad. I don’t only think it is bad. If someone was attacking you, trying to kill you, you would be justified in defending yourself. If you killed the person before he killed you, that would be justified. But if a killing was committed without a provocation, that was terrible. We are on this Earth to try
to live. We have to protect ourselves, if someone is trying to kill us, with all our ability. We have to try and survive. We also cannot commit suicide.

Is there a difference between inuaqsiniq, murder, and tuquttiniq, killing?

Nutaraaluk: They seem different but they mean the same thing; to murder or kill someone.

Can people use the word inuaqsiniq for wildlife?

Nutaraaluk: Human beings are the only ones that can be inuaqtaujuq, murdered. You cannot use the word for wildlife.

Tuquttiniq and inuaqsiniq both mean killing?

Imaruittuq: I can explain that to you. Inuarniq is the word used for killing a human being. For killing an animal we use anngutaujuq. These are the definitions of these words. If you kill another human it is inuarniq, murder, but if you kill an animal it is anngutaujuq.

Why is it inuarniq?

Imaruittuq: Because it is killing, it is inuarniq. An inuarniq is a tuquttiniq. Killing wildlife is anngutagarniq. It is not inuaqsiniq because you are going to consume the meat for food. A person is not killed for food, therefore, it is inuaqsiniq. We have always depended on wildlife for food.

I would like you to explain the word inuaqsiniq?

Nutaraaluk: Inuaqsiniq means the killing of one human being by another.

What does the root inuaq mean?

Nutaraaluk: If a person takes the life of another, he would be said to inuaq. Some people seem to get addicted to murder. They can repeat again and again. A lot of murderers are no longer aliasuqtuq, afraid of a dead body.

Is there any other word to say that a person is terrible?

Nutaraaluk: In the old days, before the missionaries came up here, people used to do really bad things. After Christianity arrived, we didn’t live as we did before anymore. There is an unikkaaqtauq where a child was badly mistreated, and the child cried out, “Arnakkalii,” and just killed people with his voice.
The child wasn’t an angakkut?  
**Nutaraaluk:** No. They say when a child is too badly mistreated the child can cry out *arnakkalii* and kill people. They say that this has happened.

*If you were an orphan who was badly mistreated and said that word, could someone have died as a result?*

**Nutaraaluk:** If a child was too badly mistreated and had lost both parents, that was the power they were given to revenge themselves on people.

**What was the most difficult type of misbehaviour to deal with that effected the whole community?**

**Imaruittuq:** I think murder was the worst. I think that was the most difficult. It had the most severe effect on the whole community. Sometimes two men wanted the same woman. One man would kill the other one so he would have the woman for himself. The belief was that once an individual has killed someone, the desire to kill again would return.

*Would that effect the community?*

**Imaruittuq:** Oh yes, people used to be effected. In those days, sorrow was much more deeply felt than it is today. I think they felt the consequences of their actions more, because everyone depended on each other.

**How did the relatives of the murderer feel?**

**Imaruittuq:** Some of the victim’s relatives used to try and kill the murderer because of the anger and resentment they were feeling. For instance, in the Kivalliq area, this woman’s husband was killed because another man wanted to have her. The victim’s relatives wanted to take revenge because he had killed their relative. The murderer had no parents and had been raised by his maternal uncle. He was in hiding. Because the victim’s relatives were waiting for him to reappear, his uncle said, “You have to go out and face the relatives of the man you murdered.” That’s how it used to be in the old days. This man had no choice but to go out and present himself to the victim’s relatives.

There were also two young boys whose father was murdered while the men were out hunting on the ice. The younger one used to ask his mother, “When is my father coming back?” She would say, “When he gets thirsty he will come back.” Well, no wonder, the young child kept waiting for his father to come back. Over time, these two children became young adults. The murderer would go to check up these boys from time to time. He would say, “I’m going to check up on the children I made into orphans, because when they get older they are going to be a problem for me.” I think he was
scared that the children would take revenge when they reached maturity. When he arrived where they were staying, the older one was making a sled and the younger one was digging a hole on the land and playing around as though it were a seal hole. He was running and jumping. With a shout, he tied up the man who had killed his father and shoved him into the hole. He killed him in the same manner his father had been killed, even though he himself never saw the murderer. He avenged his father. Killing out of revenge was no longer practiced after the arrival of Christianity.

There was also a woman who took revenge on the murderer of her husband, with qajuq, seal broth. The murderer came to visit this woman’s house, and she gave him some qajuq. She said, “Here is some qajuq, but it happens to be cold.” Before he took a sip, she said “Qaaq.” She also yelled out to no one in particular, “Suvaguuq, what do you want?” The man who was going to drink the broth didn’t see it steaming because there was a piece of blubber floating on top so he took a sip and scalded his throat so severely that his throat blistered over completely. He died shortly after he went outside. These are the kinds of things that would happen. It must be hard when you are forced to go through the loss of a loved one. People who had fathers or husbands murdered must have had many thoughts of revenge.

Have you heard stories about elders who wanted to die? Did they ask their relatives to help them kill themselves?

Imaruittuq: I have never heard a story like that. But I’ve heard a story about a woman who wanted to commit suicide. This was after we had rifles. She tied the rifle up on the support that holds a drying rack up and tied the string to the trigger and pulled the trigger through the string to shoot herself.

Was this woman an elder?

Imaruittuq: Maybe. Because she was tired of being made to feel ilirasuk, intimidated, she felt tired of living.

How about Qulittalik?

Imaruittuq: I believe he was assisted in his suicide. People were intimidated by him so people gave him a rifle. Because he was an old man, people listened to what he wanted. That’s what they did for him.

Elders no longer request assistance to commit suicide, do they?

Imaruittuq: I don’t think so. If we don’t want them to commit suicide, we won’t assist. I would not give a rifle to someone who wanted to kill himself.
In the old days, did the people of the camp sometimes just leave or abandon murderers without their knowledge?

Nutaraaluk: Murderers used to be killed in the old days. If they were difficult to deal with and there was no longer any hope of integrating the murderer back into the community, they would be killed. But some of them were spared, if they showed they were willing to change.

Some murderers used to flee the camp. There is a true story about Sakiatsiaq who fled after killing someone. This incident happened before I was born.

Was the murderer buried after he was killed?

Nutaraaluk: When Sakiatsiaq was trying to run away, his hand was wounded so he built a shelter. He booby-trapped his own grave. That was the kind of person he was. A caribou hunting party found the stone shelter which he had made. When they found his body they didn’t see his rifle at first because it had been hidden under some heather. The caribou hunting party checked everything carefully to make sure the gun was not loaded, and that’s how they found out he had set a booby-trap. They investigated it thoroughly, being very cautious. The booby-trap was all set to go off. It was still armed. It was an old fashioned gun, the kind you had to pour the gun powder in through the muzzle. You would put a piece of cloth in first, then gun powder, and then the bullet would be jammed in through the barrel. That’s the type of gun I am talking about. It was a really old fashioned gun. He booby-trapped it in such a way that if anyone touched it, the gun would go off.

Can you talk about how offenders were dealt with before there were jails and how they are dealt with now?

Nutaraaluk: Back then, there weren’t as many crimes committed. It is only now that there are a lot of people living together that they think they won’t get caught and so commit more crimes. When I moved here in 1951, I didn’t hear of many crimes being committed because there weren’t many people living here then. When I came here, the American soldiers who were here were being replaced by Canadians.

What were the reasons people used to commit murder?

Nutaraaluk: I think a lot of it had to do with women. Both men and women would try to steal another person’s spouse. They used to say that a woman’s words could lead to destruction. They used to say that a woman would tell untruths about others to her husband. We all know today that this destruction can be caused by both males and females. In the old days, women were usually considered to be the cause.
In the old days did they have rules about how murderers were to be dealt with?

Nutaraaluk: In the old days, yes. Some murderers were shunned by their relatives.

Did people know beforehand what would happen to them if they committed a murder?

Nutaraaluk: Murders did not occur very often, except for murders committed by angakkuit who used their powers to kill rather than to help others.

Would a person be delegated to keep an eye on someone who had previously committed murder?

Nutaraaluk: Yes. They used to designate a person to watch over the murderer. Aukkaut was a perfect example. He had killed different people in the community, including his wife. When he expressed a desire to re-marry again, the community felt he might again be getting the urge to kill. He was counselled, and watched over, and then he was killed because the camp came to the conclusion that he was a threat to them. Even though some people feel true remorse, they are kept in jail today as if they were going to commit a murder again.

Were murderers killed right away?

Nutaraaluk: No, they would not be killed immediately. But in Nunavik, they followed a different practice. If a person was hearing voices, they would kill that person, even before the murder occurred. The angakkuit were able to find out who the murderer was. I don’t know how they used to find out. Even though the murderer was very discreet and thought he was successful, the angakkuq would find out who had committed the murder.

When the angakkuq found out about a murder, did he tell the other members of the camp?

Nutaraaluk: A long time before the offender confessed or showed any inkling that he committed murder, the angakkuq would know that person had committed murder.

What happened to the murderer if the victim had been a woman who was a very good seamstress, and very valuable to the camp, or if it had been a man who was a very successful and capable hunter?
Nutaraaluk: If the victims were valuable people the murderer was not forgiven right away by the relatives. Often people who were physically strong or good hunters were targeted out of jealousy.

Did there come a point where the community had no choice but to kill the murderer?

Nutaraaluk: Yes. The whole camp would come to the conclusion that there was no other way of dealing with the situation except to kill the person.

When a person who had committed murder wanted to kill again and had to be put to death, who did this, the relatives?

Nutaraaluk: In the old days, people who were not related to the murderer would turn against him and he would be killed. Some people heard bad voices. One of my older brothers was hearing voices, and because he didn't want to commit murder he left his wife and his rifle behind and was living alone. He had gone to visit a minister. People became frightened of him and he was repeatedly shot because people thought he was going to commit murder. I never felt a need to take revenge for him; I thought about him as being with our Saviour. I was just a pre-teen when this occurred. He was a very strong person and a fast runner so people didn't think they would beat him. Those people [in Nunavik] were very quick to kill. My brother went to my older brother and to people who were gathered in prayer and told them he thought he would get better if he stayed amongst them. He was killed because people thought he might try to kill his brother and his nephew. He was repeatedly shot. I think people over there [in Nunavik] were very scared of people hearing voices. I think they should have tried to look after and protect a person who was hearing voices before they killed him. I am not putting the Nunavik people down, but I think they used to kill people too quickly.

When the person who committed the murder was going to be put to death, did he know in advance?

Nutaraaluk: No. They never let the murderer know that he was going to be killed. He was never told this in advance. My two older brothers were very close to each other. It was very painful for my oldest brother to know that his brother was to be killed. I am often glad that I never tried to avenge my brother because I know there will be a time when everything will be revealed. After my oldest brother killed Miqqualaaq because he was hearing voices, my brother had a lot on his mind. He had been out hunting walrus and was returning on a boat which was heavily laden with meat that was to be used for dog food. The boat capsized during a storm and all the people on board drowned.
When the community decided to kill a murderer, did the leader of the camp delegate someone to do it?

Nutaraaluk: One of the people that killed my older brother went into the ministry, but lost his mind, literally lost his mind. It was too hard to live on after committing that kind of violent act. The stress he felt was so unbearable, it made him lose his mind.

He was no longer aware of what he was doing, is that what you mean when you say he lost his mind?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, exactly. He was no longer aware of what he was doing or aware of his appearance. My brother was visiting the minister and while he was there, he was shot. The people had told the minister of their intentions of killing him and he tried to dissuade them, but he was unable to stop them. I heard this from the minister when he was explaining it to my father. My father and I never tried to avenge my brother, even though he was shot repeatedly. I have always felt relieved that he never killed anyone.

What methods were most often used to kill murderers in those days?

Imaruittuq: Some of the murderers would be killed by their victim’s relatives out of sheer revenge.

Did they kill them differently?

Imaruittuq: The victim’s relatives would kill the murderer out of revenge. If the victim didn’t have anyone to avenge their murder then the murderer continued to live. I told you the story about the woman whose husband had been murdered and how she got her revenge on the murderer, simply by feeding him seal broth that scalded his throat. I also told you the story about those two young boys whose father was murdered. Again, when the boys grew up they took revenge on the murderer.

Did the other members of the camp watch?

Imaruittuq: Oh yes. I heard one story about an Igloolik man who was killed by some people from Naujaat. One of the victim’s relatives was planning to take revenge on the Naujaat people who had killed his relative. He had puppies he hardly fed, that lived on garbage so they would be used to being hungry, travelling long distances. Towards the end of winter, in early spring, he used these puppies to take his family to Naujaat by dogteam. He also took a teenage boy with him who wasn’t yet married. After they arrived in Naujaat, they found the people they were looking for living on an island. They built themselves an iglu. He had two bows. The first one was very light. He hid the stronger, sturdier one under his bedding. In the early morning, while he was still
sleeping, his wife went out. He asked, “Is the weather good enough to be successful?” She said it was a very beautiful day. He said, “Then it’s not a good day to be successful,” and he stayed in bed. People who came to visit found his weaker bow and checked it out. On the third day, he again asked his wife, “Is the weather good enough to be successful?” She said there was blowing snow along the ground and he said, “Then it is a good day to be successful,” and he got up and got dressed. The Naujaat people knew that he might take revenge and they had made a shield out of bearded seal skin, knowing that his arrows wouldn’t be able to pierce it. He told them to go out of their iglu. First one person went out, then another and then there were a whole group of them. The person who wanted to take revenge was alone and outnumbered. He walked so they could shoot their arrows at him into a cross wind. He would move away from their arrows and then shoot. He was using the bow that he had hidden under his bed that was really strong. His arrows would go right through their shield. The people realized that they were going to be wiped out by this person, and wanted to stop fighting. So the young man who had come with him was given a newly-widowed woman as a wife. They started going back to the Iglulik area when they noticed that someone was following them on foot, so they waited. It was an old woman from Naujaat who wanted to give the avenger a knife. That was her way of saying thank you to him because she too had lost a relative to them and his revenge was hers also. This is one story I heard personally.

Did the people who he took revenge upon take revenge on him?

Imaruittuq: I don’t think there was a challenge. He was too powerful and too wise so the people from Naujaat felt helpless to try anything against him.

You used the term surjuk. What does it mean?

Imaruittuq: If someone has made me angry and I go over to their house to express this anger and displeasure and want to fight, that is surjuk.

Have you ever heard of murderers who would uqumangiq, have nightmares where they thought they were awake but couldn’t move?

Imaruittuq: I have never heard of that.

You have never heard of that?

Imaruittuq: I have only heard that people who were going to commit murder had to take off their piniraak, their slippers, such as the ones that Aaju is making.
Why did they have to take off their piniraak?

Imaruittuq: That was a piusiq. There probably was a reason for this. It was a maligaq. They had to remove their piniraak if they were planning to kill someone. I heard a story about this. There was a man who used to commit a lot of murders. Whenever he wanted to kill someone, he would say he wanted to borrow their dogs. One day he said, “I think one of these days I’ll borrow Itajaq’s dogteam and then have them as my own.” That’s what he’d say when he was planning to kill someone. They went out seal hunting together. While he was travelling with Itajaq, and it was beginning to get dark, Itajaq asked him for his knife to take off the outer sole of his kamiik because it had a hole in it. He stared at him a long time before giving him the knife. Itajaq sat down on the ground and pretended to be taking the sole off but he was actually taking off his piniraak. After he had taken off his piniraak the other man tried to leave him behind. I don’t know how Itajaq managed to get on his dogteam while they were moving. When Itajaq caught up to him, he started stabbing him, but he couldn’t kill him right away because he had a heart the size of a bird’s so he couldn’t find where to stab him.

Was the murderer’s name Ukpigajaq?

Imaruittuq: I don’t know. I didn’t hear the murderer’s name but he had a heart the size of a bird’s.

He couldn’t kill him right away?

Imaruittuq: Itajaq couldn’t locate the heart. Perhaps because he had committed so many murders his heart was the size of a snow bunting’s. Maybe this is not a true story.

What did they do to forgive murderers?

Imaruittuq: I have never heard about that. In the old days it was feared that murderers might do the same thing again. There is a saying, that once murderers have killed, they think nothing of killing again. That is the reason why a lot of the murderers were killed.

Have you ever heard a story about a child committing a murder?

Imaruittuq: No. I have never heard that. There have been accidental deaths caused by small children playing with guns. When I was a small child my mother told us there had been a shooting incident and she wanted me to come along with her to see the family but I didn’t want to go because I was scared. I refused but she dragged me. What she wanted me to see was the danger of a high powered rifle, that it was not a toy. I was struggling with all my might, but still she took me and we went into that house and I saw the people who were mourning. We went into the iglu and the victim’s mother was
there. Their adopted child was the one who had been killed. I clearly saw the little boy with my own eyes. He was wearing caribou skin pants with a sealskin parka. The adopted father was sitting silently on a little box of wood. I don’t know if the child was still alive or dead but I clearly recall this accidental shooting.

*When a child accidentally killed someone, were their growing up years different from that of other children?*

**Imaruittuq:** I think they did change, even their appearance changed.

*If a child killed someone accidentally did they pick up the name inuktalik?*

**Imaruittuq:** In Iqaluktuutiak [Cambridge Bay] people could give the child that name if they wanted to. For some children it started out as a nickname but became their name. I think that has always been the custom.

*Was anything done to the child if it was an accidental shooting?*

**Imaruittuq:** No. There was no reason to deal with it.

*Would it also be considered as inuaqsiniq even though it was accidental?*

**Imaruittuq:** Yes. If it was accidental it was still *inuaqsiniq*. The word *tuquttiniq* can also be used.

*What was the reaction of the people in the camp when they heard of a murder?*

**Imaruittuq:** I wasn’t born early enough to experience traditional camp life. I came into this world after Christianity had been introduced. In the old days, after there was a murder, people weren’t allowed to do anything for three days. They would become disgruntled even over the simplest noise. They would not be allowed to go hunting for three days straight. Today, there is only one day where we are not allowed to do anything at all, after someone has died. In those days it used to be three days that they could not do anything after there was a murder or a death in the family.

*Have you ever heard a story where it was difficult to kill the murderer?*

**Imaruittuq:** Yes. It was very difficult to kill a murderer. But what could you do? You knew they were a threat to the rest of the community. If you let them live, you were always going to have to be very cautious, so it was better to kill them. As I said, once a person has committed murder, they want to kill again and again. People do know that. It’s the same feeling as when I am catching a seal; you want to go out again and catch more seals.
Did some murderers regret their actions. Did some who felt remorse leave the community?

Imaruittuq: I am not sure. There was a murder committed, after they had rifles, where the man fled on foot from the Aivilik area, to Arviligjuaq [Pelly Bay]. He was the last murderer of that generation who killed because he wanted the wife of another man. This was not that long ago. It was after Inuit had rifles. From what I know, he was not killed after.

Did he take the woman for a wife?

Imaruittuq: No, he never ended up having this woman as his wife. The man who committed this murder passed away recently. His name was Iksivalitaq.

After the man you were talking about ran away to Arviligjuaq, did anyone do anything to him?

Imaruittuq: No. People didn't do anything to him. The victim only had one older brother and because he was alone he didn't go after him. I think the murderer was preparing himself in case he was attacked by the victim’s brother. I have heard that he shot a loon in flight and shot it again before it hit the ground. He was trying to find out how capable a marksman he was. But the victim’s brother never followed through with his revenge.

Did this man ever commit another murder?

Imaruittuq: No. I never heard of him committing another murder. I think Christianity changed our lives completely.

Were the murderers who fled ever forgiven?

Imaruittuq: They were always feared. They were never completely forgiven. There was always a fear that they would murder again. People were always watchful of the murderer’s behaviour. If he tried anything again the camp would take action. The murderers that escaped were feared. I don't think anyone forgot about the experience. I think people always had a fear of the murderer. They were afraid to make him angry, or irritate him.

Have you ever heard why he wanted to take the other man’s wife?

Imaruittuq: He shot the husband because he had no wife. In those days, there were fewer females than males. They used to commit murder to get the women that they wanted.
When you commit abortion, is that murder?

Imaruittuq: We don’t actually have a word for abortion, but it seems that it is murder. We think of the foetus as a human-to-be. In those days, there were a lot fewer women than men. Sometimes newborn females were abandoned. I have heard of this.

Were they left outside in the winter to freeze?

Imaruittuq: I don’t know.

Did they do this secretly?

Imaruittuq: I’m not sure. They probably did it secretly.

You talked about hunger. Have you ever heard of a child being killed?

Imaruittuq: Do you mean for food? Are you asking if babies were killed during times of hunger for food?

No, when there were too many females, did they kill them?

Imaruittuq: In Kivalliq they practiced this when they had too many female children. A woman would abandon a baby if she already had too many daughters. In Kivalliq they used to do this a lot. I never heard of this being done in our area.

Did you ever hear of a person asking another person to kill someone?

Nutaraaluk: I have never heard of that.

Have you ever heard of delegating someone else to commit a murder?

Imaruittuq: I have never actually heard of someone delegating the killing of someone they wanted dead. I’ve heard of a man who wanted to kill a close relative, his maternal cousin. This man started to think that his cousin intended to kill him, and so he asked another man Siarnaq, who is now dead, to help him kill his cousin. He did not want to kill his cousin himself because they were too closely related. He didn’t want to kill his cousin himself so he asked Siarnaq to stab him after he had immobilized him.

What happened to the person who did the stabbing?

Imaruittuq: The man who had helped in the murder was crying because he was scared. When the people requested him to come, he had no choice but to go, and he was crying because he was scared. When he entered, his sleeve was frozen to his hood because he...
had been crying with his arm raised. When he came in he said, “Last night I tried to prove myself to be a real man, but I was refused. I have been crying ever since.” He tried to make people believe he had been refused by a woman and that was the reason he was crying but that was not true. I don’t know what was done to him. The cousin who committed the murder said, “This man who is crying, this man who didn’t want to commit murder, I made him do it. I am now going to die with him.” The cousin told people if anyone went after the man who had helped him, he would try to defend him.

Was the man who was crying lying?

Imaruittuq: He was trying to evade the truth. The real reason he was crying was that he helped to kill another man. That was why he was crying. He was trying to make them think he was crying because he was rejected by a woman.

Was he trying to get people to feel sorry for him?

Imaruittuq: He was very scared. It was from fear that he was crying. He knew that someone might try to kill him, and he really wanted to live.

Did they find out his involvement after?

Imaruittuq: Yes. They found out that he had been involved in the killing, and that he was not refused by a woman at all.

Why were some people who wanted to commit a murder not killed right away?

Nutaraaluk: Perhaps they felt if they killed them right away, their immediate family would take revenge. This is what I think, but I don’t really know.

How were people who were made to assist in a killing dealt with?

Nutaraaluk: Even though someone helped in a killing, his relatives would defend him because they did not consider him dangerous, even though he had committed a murder.

Have you ever heard of a woman committing murder?

Nutaraaluk: I am going to tell you a story about a man who murdered his brother-in-law. The victim’s name was Tuukkaq Akianut. He was also called Pinirallugaapik. This murder was witnessed by the murderer’s son. The child tried to tell his mother that his father had harpooned his uncle. The woman whose brother was killed kept on saying, “There is a person out there that I should kill.” Her husband said, “What makes you say that?” She replied, “I am unable to complete this task right now.” When the man went

Murder
to sleep, she stabbed him and he said, “Who stabbed me?” She replied, “The sister of the man who was, murdered Pinirallugaapik, has stabbed you.” This is an example of a woman killing her husband. I have not heard of many murders being committed before there was alcohol. Now that there is alcohol, there seems to be more murders.

Did men commit more murders than women?
Nutaraaluk: Yes. Men used to be rivals in the old days. A lot of the rivalry was over women. Men used to fight over women. Also, there was a lot of jealousy between hunters. A lot of men wanted wives and rivalries would arise. It was harder to get a wife in those days. An incapable hunter would have a hard time finding a wife as most potential wives were looking for a good supporter. There were some moderately good hunters who were successful in finding a wife. I label myself as a moderately successful hunter. When the parents were sure of their son’s capabilities they would want him to get married.

Would there be rivalries within a camp?
Nutaraaluk: Sometimes there were rivalries between camps. Sometimes these rivalries arose from hearsay, from second hand information. That’s how it used to be in the old days. As Imaruittuq said earlier, lying is not something new. Gossip from either camp could cause rivalries as people would start believing what they had heard.

Did this cause a rift in the community?
Nutaraaluk: It didn’t cause a rift in the community, but created animosity towards the other camp.

Did it come to a point where they used to feud with one another?
Nutaraaluk: Yes, the camps had feuds against each other. If they hadn’t fought against each other, there would probably be a lot more people now. In the old days, they did not have very good hunting implements. They didn’t have steel until the qallunaat came. They used stone as cutting blades.

Were the people who committed murder forgiven right away?
Nutaraaluk: No, the victim’s relatives never forgave them. Murderers avoided being in contact with the victim’s relatives. And of course, the murderers lived with their immediate families. Ittuluk who was my son through my name, told me he was glad he never came in contact with the people who had killed my brother.
When a man who was very good at hunting committed murder, would they forgive him right away?

Nutaraaluk: A very capable hunter used to be challenged by the less capable hunters and it is still like that today to some extent. Jealousy towards successful hunters still occurs. A lot of hunters get jealous when they see a hunter bringing something back all the time. I think that was the case with my own son. When he was a young man, he was already a very capable hunter. I think there was jealousy over my son’s abilities and I think that was the motive for killing him. I believe there are still people around who have the ability to kill.

I do not understand, why do you think your son was killed?

Nutaraaluk: I think that an angakkuaq killed my son because he demonstrated strong hunting abilities at a very young age. An angakkuaq saw this potential and because of it, he put a hex on him. I know this angakkuaq, because I’ve felt him myself. My son went out hunting and that was the last time I ever saw him. He never came back. While they were out searching for him, I tried to pray but found myself unable to do so. I myself was under the influence of this angakkuaq. We had been out riding around, and he gave me a hint of what he was expecting. He said, “Father, even in a blizzard when you can’t see and there seems to be no possible way to get home, people still arrive home.” That was how he lost his life, in a blizzard. Sometimes, people do know their fate before it actually happens. I suspect it was an angakkuaq that took his life.

What time of year did the angakkuit kill people most often? Was it during a full moon? Was it in the winter time?

Nutaraaluk: In the old days they used to ilisiiq, hex people. They didn’t often use their powers to kill unless it was through hexing. Sometimes, they used their powers to kill during a feud. It could happen at any time of the year. There were three kinds of angakkuit; those who went after people to kill them; those who were healers and those that lured wildlife to the camp.

If a person were to kill someone who was a rival, were people happy about this?

Nutaraaluk: They probably were happy when an opponent was defeated. I believe we are disciplined for our actions through the weather. Ottawa and Montreal are perfect examples [the interviews were conducted right after the ice storm of ‘97]. I believe a lot of people just see that as an act of nature or a scientifically explainable act, but to my mind, it is a way of being disciplined for what we have done. Anytime there is too much
wrong-doing being committed, we get disciplined in various ways, such as earthquakes. Even here in Iqaluit, if we start fighting too much, there could be an earthquake or really bad weather could come upon us.

Were there traditional songs made about murders?

Nutaraaluk: I am pretty sure the murderers used to make songs about their murders but I have never heard a song myself.

You never heard any?

Nutaraaluk: I've only heard a song about a murder which took place in the Kivalliq area that was sung on C.B.C. radio.

Did people used to celebrate when one rival murdered another?

Imaruittuq: They weren't happy about it.

Was it different when a person murdered someone from the same community or a person from another camp?

Imaruittuq: I don't know if they were treated any differently. But if there was someone to take revenge, then revenge had to be taken. I already told you about the man who killed because he wanted another man’s wife. The victim’s relatives came and told the young man to go out. His maternal uncle went into the iglu where the young man was and told his nephew he had to go out and face the consequences. I guess, after he left the iglu he was killed. After he was told to go out, he had no choice but to go out.

Do you mean the one that took the victim’s wife?

Imaruittuq: Yes. He did take the wife after he killed the husband. He was with this woman when his uncle told him to go out. He had chosen not to listen to his uncle when his uncle warned him about his behaviour. He chose to follow his own mind and had to face the consequences.

Have you ever heard of a murderer being left behind by a camp?

Imaruittuq: No. I have never heard of a murderer being left behind, but I have heard of a murderer being killed by the victim’s relatives. They used to tell the murderer to go out of their tent or their iglu but I have never heard of a murderer being left behind. People know that once a person has killed, they become a threat to everyone else and the only way to stop that is to kill them.
Was the murderer always challenged to come out?

**Imaruittuq**: Yes, if the victim had someone to avenge them. I think I told you the story about the woman who paid back the man that killed her husband by giving him *qajuq* that scalded his throat. Because there was no one to avenge her husband’s murder, she took revenge by giving him this scalding hot seal broth.

Did people take revenge on the ones who had taken revenge?

**Imaruittuq**: I don’t know. I told you the story about the man who travelled from Iglulik to Naujaat to take revenge but I never heard of Naujaat people coming back to take revenge on him.

You said people who kill get obsessed. Do the people who kill the murderer also get obsessed?

**Imaruittuq**: No, because they are not killing because they want to kill. In the cases that we talked about, the murder was pre-meditated. For the people that are killing the murderer, it is not pre-meditated. It was done to protect themselves. I have not heard of people becoming obsessed with killing, if they killed to protect themselves. Like everyone else, people who murdered were warned of the consequences. Because they were not killing for food, they were not to do this. They would not be using the body for food. Because some people didn’t listen to what they were told, they had to face the consequences.

Did you ever hear that murders happened at certain times of the year?

**Imaruittuq**: I have never heard that. They happened at anytime of the year, winter and summer. Quliigaujaq was pushed into the water, near Iglulik at Aqpaktuuq, in the summer. We always had a dominant and successful hunter. Each camp was always arranged like that. Quliigaujaq was always good at hunting bowhead whales. When they were out on a floating ice pan, a man pushed him off the edge. He tried to get back on the ice but the other man prevented him from doing so. In our land, you can die of hypothermia, even in the summer, and that’s how he died.

Footnotes

1 See also Kappianaq’s song in chapter 11.

2 The name of the murderer was Ukpigjuaraarjuk. It was said that he became so good at looking behind him that he could turn his head around like an *ukpik*, an owl (told to Alexina Kublu by her uncle Hervé Paniaq).
Unikkaat and Unikkaaqtuat

Unikkaat are stories of recent origin. Unikkaaqtuat are stories passed from generation to generation. The stories convey ideas and values embedded in Inuit culture. Susan Enuaraq states in her essay, “The use of unikkaat, unikkaaqtuat and pisit, songs, has continued from the past to the present day and will continue into the future.” In Inuit culture, we find a vast treasure of stories. Stories are told and retold as they are transmitted from one generation to the other. Some of them are very old, but they never remain completely the same as they are always adapted to a particular context. The elders usually commented on the stories and were quite willing to expound their meaning. With respect to the famous Kaugjagjuk story, Imaruittuq explains, “I think the meaning of that story is that you have to love orphans at all times. People were being shown that you cannot abuse an orphan and treat them terribly. You have to treat everyone respectfully.” With respect to the stories, Susan Enuaraq states in her essay, “Some argue that the Inuit had no legal system, but I think that the Inuit had their own ways of preventing wrong-doings. Unikkaaqtuat were part of that”. As Imaruittuq said, “They made each one of us think, made us think hard.”

were unikkaaqtuat beneficial to people’s lives? Did they help them live better lives?

Imaruittuq: No, they didn’t necessarily make someone live a better life. They made each one of us think, made us think hard. For example, the story of Kaugjagjuk tries to make you think. The mistreated child would make you think, as would the story of the grizzly bear.

were there stories to scare adults or children?

Imaruittuq: Scary stories were only geared towards children. The unikkaaqtuaq of the ptarmigan myth made children squeamish about baby lemmings. It was for pure entertainment. It didn’t have a deeper meaning. We call those old stories unikkaaqtuat. For example, Kiviuq used to be an unikkaaq but since it is so old we call it an unikkaaqtuaq today. We don’t call modern stories unikkaaqtuat.

these unikkaat, can they benefit our lives?

Imaruittuq: Yes, storytelling can be very beneficial. For example, hunters will exchange stories about where the dangerous parts of the ice are, how they survived a blizzard, et cetera. These stories are very useful in our lives.
Were they used to prevent mishaps?

Imaruittuq: Yes, storytelling was used to prevent mishaps. For example, in Amitturmiut we have always hunted on moving ice. We go down to the floe edge and hunt walrus on the moving ice in the winter. All the stories are useful because this knowledge about what we should do while hunting is being passed on, and through that one gets to understand the dangers. We used to be told, for example, as part of our tradition we would be hunting walrus and when we were hunting walrus on moving ice, there would be times when the solid ice would break away and qaajjujau1. We should, if at all possible, stay on the edge of the ice pan closest to Sanirajaq rather than the opposite direction. This type of story is extremely helpful, because the ice going in the direction of Sanirajaq tends to rejoin the solid ice more often. This is really true. We would also be told whenever a person is qaajjujaujuq that they were never to sleep close to the edge of an ice pan if they had to overnight on it. If need be, even if it meant moving away from solid ice, at night we were told to move to the middle of the ice pan away from the edges which are breaking up. These were the stories we were told. The ice is always moving and it never stops unless the tide is turning.

I went through an experience with others when the ice we were on had broken up until we were on a piece the size of an islet. When the water around us froze, we were unable to rejoin with the solid ice. In a situation like this, when you end up stranded on an ice pan, you are in a difficult situation. The ice pan that we were on couldn’t seem to pile onto fresh ice. After a long while, after two pieces of ice gradually rejoined, we were able to get back on solid ice. So, to answer your question, story telling is very useful in one’s life.

Did they also use storytelling as a way to teach respect for the Inuit way of doing things?

Imaruittuq: Yes. In the old days a maligaq was not allowed to be broken. Nobody was arrested, but it was scary. Even though you knew you were not going to be incarcerated, the consequences might be that the camp could be wiped out through starvation, if they had difficulty getting food. When someone broke a maligaq it could cause hunger. Even though people weren’t incarcerated, this could cause difficulty getting food.

Could you tell us a story about this occurring?

Imaruittuq: Yes. Susan Enuaraq’s ancestor, Quamaaq’s father, was Uttuttiak. Iglulik is a place that rarely went through starvation. Aivilik is the same, although periodically they would run out of game. The area around Naujaat is known as Aivilik. They say that, although Pituqqiq is an area that has an abundance of wildlife, it is scary, for when
the wildlife is gone, it is absolutely gone. One can go through hunger there. Aggu also has an abundance of wildlife but is also scary. There are these sayings about these places.

This family [of Uttuttiak] were hungry. Uttuttiak, his brothers and his brother-in-law Niviattiat were living together in one area. They say that Niviattiat was an extremely powerful angakkug. They were at Agiuppiniq, which is the ice area past Iglulik. They would go hunting but would not catch anything. When they started to be unable to do things due to hunger, it was a tradition that men would get into bed and not get out again, as they would sapiliq, just give up. They continued to try to hunt for quite some time but Uttuttiak and his brothers finally went to their beds and wouldn’t get up again. Their brother-in-law was the only one still hunting. Niviattiat once more went hunting alone.

In those days, when we lived in igluit we could hear the sound of people walking outside. We could also hear the sounds of qamutiit, sleds, arriving. So they heard the sounds of someone arriving and then walking. It turned out to be Niviattiat, who had brought back three crying babies from the aglu, seal breathing hole. He brought in the three of them and put them on the bed. He told the people there that these babies were the cause of them being unable to catch game. He also said that three women who had broken pittailiniq were the cause of their hunger. He made the cause visible to their eyes, for it was against these babies that the pittailiniq had been broken. He told the women to come. He was trying to get the women to admit to their wrong-doing, and because the situation was such that they couldn’t be silent anymore, two of them confessed. The third one didn’t want to say anything. Perhaps, because she had had sex with someone she wasn’t supposed to, she did not want to say anything at all.

Niviattiat then said they would now be able to catch game. He also said that the woman who would not admit to her wrong-doing was the only one whom they would lose to death. He brought the babies back. The next day when he went down to the floe edge alone he killed a walrus. He brought back only what he was able to drag. When he got back he gave his brothers-in-law little bits of meat. By giving them little bits he began to revive them. When a person is near starvation, you can not give them too much to eat. It is fine to give them only a single bite at first, because you can kill them by putting too much in their shrunken stomachs right away. He enabled them to survive. This story I have heard personally.

Did the third woman die?

Imaruittuq: Yes. She was eating walrus meat. She ate it, but she kept throwing it up. She kept trying to eat but she kept throwing up. And of course, eventually she died of starvation. Niviattiat had said she would be the only one to die and she was.
I did not understand qanungasaq.

Imaruittuq: It’s a bad deed, doing something you are not supposed to, or breaking a maligaq. Because they had broken a maligaq pertaining to their pittailiniq, those women were the cause of hunger.

What maligaq did those three women break?

Imaruittuq: I think they were sleeping with members of their immediate families. They also didn’t confess other deeds.

Were these babies given birth to and then hidden?

Imaruittuq: No. Niviattiat made these babies visible by using his powers. They were not real. But because he had such great powers, he could do that.

Did the angakkuq make the babies appear because the women hadn’t confessed?

Imaruittuq: They were considered to be the ones in the wrong because they hadn’t confessed. Breaking a maligaq and having to confess to it is as scary as being incarcerated. Maybe it is even scarier because it can cause death. The three women didn’t say anything to the camp when they had committed a wrong-doing. That’s the reason they were going through starvation. The consequences in those days were more serious and scarier than being incarcerated.

Have you heard of an unikkaaqtaq where hunger was caused through the breaking of a maligaq? I think Paniaq was the one who told this story where hunger was caused?

Imaruittuq: An unikkaaqtaq in which hunger was caused?

It is about a woman who had a miscarriage and she hid it.

Imaruittuq: You mean she hid her dead foetus. No, I have not heard that story.

Which one do you like the best?

Nutaraaluk: I like them all. I like all the stories I have listened to.

Which one would you choose if you had to choose one to tell?
Nutaraaluk: The story about the man who tried to go around the world is the one I would choose. I think he was trying to go around the whole world. I think it would take a number of years by dogteam and walking. Iluilik is the word for the mainland.

Can you tell the story?

Nutaraaluk: I can tell you the story as I heard it. Even though he had a wife, Atungaq searched for the fastest woman to take along as a wife. The reason why he searched for her was because he wanted her to go around the world with him. From what I have heard, they started out at Nuvuk which is near the Ivujivik and Isuaqtuq area. I know the names in the area very well as I lived in Ivujivik for three years. Their footprints and those of their dogs are still visible in the bed rock at the place where they started. I regret that I had not been told about these footprints while I was in Ivujivik, otherwise I would have gone to see them. Atungaq and his dogs climbed the hills at Arvaajuk. Atungaq was leading his dogs. Even though there were cliffs at Arvaajuk he called to his dog, “Atungaq, Atungaq,” for he had named one of his dogs after himself.

People used to give their name to their favorite dog. I used to have a puppy that was called Nutaraaluk. The people that lived together in an iglu would each have a dog that was named after them. That’s what they used to do.

When they were trying to go around the world they went through both scary and enjoyable experiences. They came across tamatujuut. The tamatujuut fed on dead people and dead animals. I think they were dead wolves that took on human form. In those days, different animals used to take on human form. When they were on their return trip, Atungaq gathered wood along the way to make a qajaq for his son Aitsaijaalijjualik. This son had died of old age before they returned. The term for dying from old age is ilittuq. Because his son stayed in one place and did not move around he had become old, but Atungaq and his new wife did not grow old because they kept on moving. Those that keep on moving do not grow old as fast as those who stay in one place. In those days, men were able to keep active longer than women, before the use of alcohol. They had a good life, a good long life because their diet consisted mostly of meat. They had the blood of these animals in their blood which made them strong. When Atungaq said this wood was to be used for Aitsaijaalijjualik’s qajaq, he was told that his son had died of old age. He second wife gave her aged daughter beads. Her daughter said to her, “Why are you giving me beads? I am an old woman and have no need for beads anymore.” That’s the end of the story of Atungaq that was told to me.

Did they use legends and stories to scare or deter people?

Nutaraaluk: The story of the qallupilluk, which we call qalupalik, is a perfect example of a story used to scare and deter young people. I’ve heard it a number of ways. When I
was a small boy people used to tell me stories. This story is known all over. It too has been told to me, even though I have never experienced a qalupalik myself. I used to be told unikkaaqtauq when I was a child. They were thinking of my atiq when they were telling me these stories. He had been an old man who helped people to survive even though he was an angakkuaq. He used to suddenly palluq, lie on his stomach, when he was going to ilisiiq, hex, someone. He would be asleep and whenever he was going to ilisiiq someone he would suddenly lie on his stomach. This would happen when he was going to kill someone. The angakkuit had different ways of killing a person. My brother used to tell me that my atiq, Inugjuaraarjuk’s older brother, said that if he and his brothers had lived with Inugjuaraarjuk they would not have been allowed to live. My atiq had two older brothers living in Nunavik. He used to go back and forth between Nunavik and the Sikusiiq area.

**Is it well known, that people who commit murder have a short life?**

**Nutaraaluk:** Today it’s not like that.

**But in the old days, was it like that?**

**Nutaraaluk:** Yes, people who committed murder were told that they would lead a short life. In the old days there used to be feuds between different camps. Aattatsialuk is a perfect example. He was involved in a feud.

**Can you talk about this story of the feud?**

**Nutaraaluk:** Aattatsialuk had an enemy in Kangiqsuq in Nunavik. He had had a feud with another family. Aattatsialuk would make predictions. For example, he would say that if he caught a nunniq, a female seal, they would lose. One day when he was hunting at a seal hole he said, “If we are going to lose, I will catch a nunniq.” The seal he harpooned was a nunniq, a female, but when he pulled it out it became a tiggak, a bull.

He also climbed a cliff. Since he was a big man, he was known as Aattatsialuk. When he climbed the cliff, he said that if he was going to lose he would fall off the cliff.

He and his brothers were on their way to Kuujjuaq to go trading and their enemies were waiting for them along their path. The oldest brother said, “If we are meant to lose, then we will lose.” When the two parties met they started fighting. Aattatsialuk’s enemies were all shot dead, including the women and children, except for the oldest who was the only one left. He said, “I would like to be allowed to smell gunpowder as we were on our way to buy rifles before this incident.” After he said that he was given a rifle and a cap. He put the cap in the gun and shot one of Aattatsialuk’s men. After he did that he was beaten to death with this rifle. He had wanted to get back at least one of them.
Aattatsialuk and Qaggialuk were brothers. They were Indians. Qaggialuk was older than Aattatsialuk. Qaggialuk made an **inuksuk** at Qikiqtaarjuk to commemorate this event. It was more rectangular than circular. He carried the rocks on his shoulders from the tidal flats. The **inuksuk** was huge and in the shape of a person. You could see it when you got near Qikiqtaarjuk.

**Were they very strong?**

**Nutaraaluk:** Yes, those two brothers were very strong. People used to be strong long ago. Nowadays, people think that the **iglurjuaviniq**, the old houses, were made only by **tuniit**, but this is not so. Some of them were made by Inuit. They were made by using big rocks.

**Where?**

**Nutaraaluk:** You can find them here and there. There are huge rocks that have been placed for sod houses.

**You mentioned that you had heard of an akitsirarvik. What did one do on such a place?**

**Nutaraaluk:** I’ve only heard about it.

**Can you tell us what you have heard?**

**Nutaraaluk:** Nobody ever really told me the full story so I can’t pass it on to you. I don’t want to guess, since nobody has ever really told me the whole story. I never want to tell stories that are second hand, that I haven’t heard right from the mouth of the person. I long for my uncle Paujungi because he used to be an excellent story teller and had a lot of knowledge. Even though I probably misbehaved, he never reprimanded me once. Being a child, I probably wasn’t always good, but he never changed towards me and always loved me. He lost his first wife, and his son was adopted by another family. I think my uncle really loved me because he missed his son. He used to tell excellent stories.

He erected some **inuksuit** at Kuuvik. I have seen them myself. There are a number of them. He would **naliqqi** drill a little hole in the forehead as they are replicas of the people he had killed. A number of the **inuksuit** still stand.

**Can you tell us the story of Kaugjagjuk?**
Imaruittuq: I can tell you the story of Kaugjagjuk but I am not a very good story teller. I can sing, but because I’m not a very good story teller I will probably only tell you part of it. I never tried to remember stories I heard but I tried to remember songs. There are variations of this story depending on the region you are from. Our area has probably altered it a little as well. Kaugjagjuk was a mistreated orphan. He lived with two unmarried women. They made him sleep in the porch. He would sleep amongst the dogs so he could keep warm. He had dogs at his feet, dogs at his hands, and dogs to keep his legs warm. He called the dogs by the place where they lay around him. The dog at his head was his *akisiarjualuk*, his pillow. The dog that lay over him was his *qipiarjualuk* his blanket. The dog at his feet was his *isigailisarjualuk*, his foot warmer, and so on.

There was a *manuaq*, a cold air trap in the entrance. Because Kaugjagjuk was so small he had difficulty pulling himself out of the *manuaq*. These two women would pull him out by lifting him up by his nostrils with the canine teeth on a polar bear jaw. Another way they mistreated him was by feeding him nothing but *kauk*, walrus hide. This is probably where his name came from. There was a little old woman who more than once gave him a small blade to cut the walrus hide with. Whenever he finished the *kauk* too quickly, they would start searching him to see if he had a blade on him. No matter where he would hide it they would find it, even when he tried to hide it between his teeth. They even found it when it was hidden in the foreskin of his penis. One night, he was told to come out of the *iglu*. At first, he sent the dogs out one by one, instead of going out himself. When there were no dogs left he went out.

The moon had arrived in the shape of a large man. He was carrying a short whip. He started whipping the orphan with his whip. He would tell the boy to try to lift stones that were frozen into the ground and when he tried to do so he would whip him some more. After a while, the boy was able to pick up huge stones. The man also told the boy that the next day or the day after, a bear was going to come into their camp. A bear did come into their camp and the men of the camp started to look for Kaugjagjuk because they wanted to use him as bait. While they were searching for him, he came out of the *iglu* singing and when the people finally saw him he had become a large adult man. He started flinging those who had mistreated him the most at the bear and the bear would rip off their heads. He also saw the little old woman trying to flee. He told her that nothing would happen to her because he was thankful to her for helping him.

He took the two women who used to pull him up by his nostrils as his wives. One lost an eye and one had a dislocated shoulder. *Tavva isua*, that’s the end.
What’s the meaning of that unikkaaqtuat?

Imaruittuq: I think the meaning of that story is that you have to love orphans at all times. People were being shown that you cannot abuse an orphan and treat them terribly. You have to treat everyone respectfully.

In those days was that more common?

Imaruittuq: Yes. I think it was more common to have orphans that were mistreated.

Could you tell us what you know about Kaugjagjuk?

Nutaraaluk: The story of Kaugjagjuk varies depending on which community you go to. I think I will tell you about when Taqqiq, the moon, started whipping Kaugjagjuk. When the moon requested Kaugjagjuk to come out, Kaugjagjuk sent the dogs he used for his pillow and blanket and his foot warmer out first. He was the last one to come out. The moon started whipping him, and started to sing. Kaugjagjuk was pulling at a big huge rock that was frozen to the ground. The moon was checking to make sure that he had given him strength. Kaugjagjuk became a really strong man. The moon told him that there would be a polar bear coming into the camp. Kaugjagjuk hid behind a big huge iglu when the bear came into the camp. Then he took hold of the bears and killed them. The people who used to abuse him started running away from him because they knew he was very strong. Kaugjagjuk’s grandparents asked him, “Are you going to take our lives?” Kaugjagjuk replied, “Certainly I am going to take your lives.” He threw them on the ground and pulled them apart. Then he whipped the ones that were pregnant so hard that their foetuses came out. He killed all the people that had abused him. There was an old woman that used to make him slippers, kamiik and jackets. He really regretted killing her.

Have you heard about Ailaq and Papik?

Imaruittuq: I’ve heard about them, but I’m a very bad story teller. As I keep telling you, I’m terrible at telling stories.

The reason that we are asking specifically about them is because it is a story with a message for people’s lives. Is this story used to deter some people’s behaviour?

Imaruittuq: Yes. Even though stories were never written, they still exist today. For example, the Kaugjagjuk story is a story with a message. He went through a hard time. Because he went through that, look at what happened to the abusers. The story of Ailaq and Papik has the same message.
If you can’t tell us the story, could you sing the song that’s in the story?

Imaruittuq:

Ailaaq qailirit, ailaq tikilirit
Ailaaq come here now, Ailaaq arrive now

niqialungnit imma pijauvaliqpunga
I am haunted now by a big chunk of meat

Ailaaq qailirit, ailaq tikilirit
Ailaaq come here now, Ailaaq arrive now.

I’ve forgotten the rest.

Were they brothers?

Imaruittuq: No. They were brothers-in-law. Papik tied his brother-in-law to a bearded seal and then sank the seal. His mother-in-law asked him if he had killed her son but he denied this. The grieving old woman started to carry a bear skull around in her amauti hood. She would show her son-in-law her teeth and would threaten him by saying, “If you killed him I’m going to come back as a bear with my own teeth and eat you after I die.” Papik just laughed at his mother-in-law as a way of showing that he was not guilty. After a while, his mother-in-law died. In the old days, when they were hunting at a seal hole they would stand with their feet tied together. This was to help them keep still while they were waiting for a seal to come. While Papik was at a seal hole he started hearing footsteps and a bear poked its head over his windbreak. Because he was tied up he couldn’t run away, so he started trying to jump away. But he tired himself out and because his mother-in-law had said she was going to come back as a bear and eat him, he got eaten.

Could you tell us the story about the one that didn’t want to get married at all, Sedna, the one that was always visited by the angakkuit?

Nutaraaluk: I’ll tell you the story as I heard it. I think our stories vary from community to community even though they are the same unikkaqtuat. I want you to know there are variations. Sedna was a woman who didn’t want to get married to a human being. She took a dog for a husband. Her father was very displeased about this arrangement. He also didn’t like having to provide meat for his daughter and for his son-in-law. He took them to an island. The dog would go and get meat from his in-laws wearing a pack on its back. One day the father-in-law decided to put rocks and a small amount of meat in the pack, with the intention of drowning the dog. The dog sank because the pack had rocks in it. The old man was returning from the island with his daughter, when a gale
force wind came up. He threw her overboard and when she grabbed the side of the boat
he cut off her fingers. Her fingers became sea mammals. Whenever someone broke a
pittailiniq or caused grief to an animal it made the animals difficult to get and an
angakkuaq would have to go down and visit Sedna. My father used to do this. There was
a dog, who probably had been her husband, which guarded the door. There was also a
big piece of ice at the door which would revolve outwards if stepped upon. Sedna’s ears
would become full of caribou hair when a pittailiniq was broken. Those who stole meat
or broke other pittailiniq would cause caribou hair to fall in the water and it would
collect in her ears. It was only after removing this hair and by shouting in her ear that
she could hear and the angakkuaq could tell her that he had come to get animals. Even
though it seemed at first that she would not be moved at all, she would eventually
respond. Sedna’s house mate, who looked like a child, would remain under the blanket
and wreathe and writhe.

After Sedna’s father had tossed her in the water, he took some of the puppies [her
children] and set them afloat in an old kamik. After they had gone some distance they
sounded quite busy, like qallunaat, and he regretted he did not get on the boat with them.
Perhaps they became the Dene. I do believe that the Dene are descended from dogs. My
mother told me some people thought they became the qallunaat, but she herself thought
they became the Dene. When they reached land some of them became wolves. They
looked as if they had been dogs but became fierce wolves.

When a pittailiniq was broken did Sedna have caribou hair in her ears?

Nutaraaluk: When her ears became full of caribou hair she couldn’t hear anymore when
people were trying to talk to her. So the hair had to be removed before she could hear
requests for the animals to return. When a pittailiniq was broken or meat was stolen, it
caused her ears to become full of caribou hair. This was known by the angakkuit.

Did the angakkuit go there because people had been keeping things secret?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, or for example because they were sneaking food.

Where did the one that looked like a child come from?

Nutaraaluk: I don’t know where that child came from. My father said that the face was
never visible. It didn’t show its face but my father could see it wreatheing and writhing.

Your father used to visit Sedna. Was she intimidating?

Nutaraaluk: She was not intimidating. Maybe the tarniq of the angakkuaq’s tarniq went
down there and stood at the revolving ice and shouted at her.
Was the tarniq big?

**Nutaraaluk:** They say that our tarniq, our soul, has a tarniq that the angakkuit knew about. This spirit of the spirit could be held in the palm of one’s hand.

Was Sedna displeased when a pittailiniq was broken?

**Nutaraaluk:** If a pittailiniq was broken or something was stolen, her ears would become plugged with caribou hair.

Was Sedna like a judge?

**Nutaraaluk:** Yes.

Why did Sedna have caribou hair in her ears?

**Nutaraaluk:** Caribou hair was caused to fall into the water by people breaking a pittailiniq and it would plug up Sedna’s ears. Anyone breaking a pittailiniq, such as a woman not following the rules relating to kiniqtuq, or someone stealing things would result in Sedna’s ears being plugged. In the days of tirigusunniq, those could be the cause for Sedna’s ears plugging up. Whenever she was shouted at she couldn’t hear until the caribou hair was removed and then she was able to reply.

Why would the animals disappear?

**Nutaraaluk:** When the people in the camp were unhappy or abusive towards wildlife, the wildlife used to move away from the camp. When the wildlife felt they were not welcome, they felt useless to the camp. The animals would flee to Sedna’s shed where they were so numerous they seemed like maggots. It was because they had gone there that the hunters couldn’t catch them anymore. That was when the angakkuit had to go and get them.

Have you heard something different from that?

**Imaruittuq:** No.

Did her hair have to be combed?

**Nutaraaluk:** No. I never heard of her hair being combed.

How was it that when Sedna was in the water her ears were plugged with caribou hair?

**Nutaraaluk:** I don’t really know. There is a reason for everything.
Does it have anything to do with not putting marine mammal parts and land animal parts together?

Nutaraaluk: I don’t know. I don’t look at it that way. Even though caribou had antlers they were not as dangerous as walrus. The walrus were cast into the ocean and the caribou were sent to the land. Once I tied up the front legs of a caribou. I got hold of an antler and got my pocket knife out to stab it through the back of the neck and the caribou tried to strike at me because its hind legs were still free. I became afraid of it because it attacked me. I was away from my qamutiik. I had gone with just my snowmobile and had left my puukammaluk, my knapsack, behind at the qamutiik. I had pinned the caribou down and it attacked me. The reason I was trying to stab it was because I ran out of bullets. After what I went through, I went to get my other gun. My grandson through my name, Pullat, also tried to stab a caribou in the back of the neck. The caribou got up and took off with him on its back. He was riding on the caribou for a while. Some of the caribou are dangerous, especially the ones with antlers during the rutting season. They are very dangerous at this time.

Imaruittuq: In the fall, the caribou’s neck muscles become really strong also.

Nutaraaluk: The rib muscles of the bearded seal also become very muscular.

What do you mean by niqqaktualuk?

Nutaraaluk: In the fall, the neck is really much bigger than at any other time of the year because the caribou are in rut.

Was that due to fighting?

Imaruittuq: That’s to battle with other males fighting for dominance during the rutting season.

Nutaraaluk: During the rutting season the bull caribou will charge at anything, including calves.

Imaruittuq: As soon as a big bull looks at a young bull, it takes off immediately. You can tell who the dominant one is right away. During the rutting season the word for a bull caribou is angusalluq.

Nutaraaluk: We call them angusaaruit. The ones with the big antlers are not even afraid of humans when they are in rut.

Can you tell us the story of Kiviuq?

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Nutaraaluk: I can tell you the story as I know it well. I have also heard it on the radio. I’ll tell you one that was told to me which is a little bit different from the other stories. Kiviuq was a young boy. There was a young girl whose grandmother had made a parka for her with a pointed hood. While they were playing kickball the point of the hood would get lobbed off. Because the grandmother had to keep making new points for the hood, she sewed the face of a silver seal on in place of the point. Kiviuq gave it instructions to bob up and down in the water as if it were a live seal. He told it to make the people in the qajait go far out from shore. When the hunters saw this seal in the water they all started getting their qajait ready and they started chasing after it. The seal would pop up out of the water on the side of the boat where it was awkward for them to harpoon it, as Kiviuq had instructed it to do. Even though the hunters were trying to get it, they were unable to do so. While trying to get it they went further and further from shore. Kiviuq started shouting, “Silaga nauk? Where is my weather?” When he said this, a gale force wind came up. Many of the qajait were swamped. Kiviuq rescued one of the hunters who was a relative of his but when he got tired he let him go. Kiviuq was able to stay on top of the water and was the only one to remain alive. He too would have become swamped but he was able to survive because he was wearing his akulitaq, a waterproof skirt around the opening. This prevented his qajaq from sinking.

His akulitaq was sewn from bearded seal intestines. When it was put around the opening it would protect the qajaq. What they called akulitaq in the old days is what we would call irraq today. They also made windows for a qammaq out of the intestines of the bearded seal. They would remove the inner layer and use the outer layer for this. My mother used to make these. One of my uncles told me that my father had a parka made of bearded seal intestines that he wore when he was working with meat. He would carry walrus meat on his shoulder wearing this parka and when he would take it off there would be no blood at all. When bearded seal intestines are well sewn and have no holes in them they are very waterproof.

This was made out of bearded seal intestines?

Nutaraaluk: Yes, in those days they used to make full use of bearded seal intestines. They would remove the outer layer of the skin of the intestine by tying it with a braided sinew or rope. We chewed the inner layer by mixing it with blubber and it was delicious. Whale skin could also be used to make rope called sugiktaaq. The top layer which is called maajjak was also delicious when you ate it with blubber. When you used this as rope it never froze, even in the winter. When we went out walrus hunting on moving ice we would use this rope to tie up the walrus carcass. Even though the carcass froze, you were able to easily pull out this rope. If it were regular rope made out of bearded seal skin it would not have been possible to pull out. This didn’t freeze. We also used it for whip handles. I am able to make a whip handle without making holes and looping it through. The term for this is sakamana.
Was Kiviuq an orphan?

Nutaraaluk: He was not an orphan. He travelled to many places by qajaq. He came upon various beings. He came upon worms that had become humans. He also encountered a mother and daughter who lived alone. When they found a piece of wood it became the daughter’s husband. She had a piece of wood as a husband. Kiviuq also became the daughter’s husband for a while. The other husband, who was the piece of wood, was very jealous. The way that the mother and daughter would get the piece of wood to go hunting for them was to set it afloat. One day when Kiviuq was out hunting the mother became envious of her daughter having a human for a husband, so she killed her daughter and put on her daughter’s face. She killed her daughter by telling her to put her head on her lap so she could take the lice out of her hair. Instead she stabbed her three times through the ear with a pauktuut, a drying peg. When Kiviuq returned and found out what the woman had done, he once again left in his qajaq.

There was a lemming that was having difficulty escaping from the incoming tide. Kiviuq heard a voice yelling, “Akkiriaqtulaunnga! Come and lift me up!” He looked around and since there was nothing but the lemming he lifted it up. He started travelling again.

There was a qimminnguaq on the shore. The hole which is called the ijinguaq, eye, was plugged with dirt. He heard a voice saying “Ijjiiriaqtulaunnga! Come and take this piece out of my eye!” Since there was nothing but this bone to be seen, he removed the piece of dirt from the ijinguaq. Then he went travelling again.

He continued his travels and arrived at the home of Ululijarnaat. He walked up to her qammaq and peaked in through the window. She was scraping a human skin the same way one would scrape a sealskin. She looked up and wondered what was blocking the light. She cut off her own eye lid and popped it in her mouth. Kiviuq stayed with her in her qammaq. His kamiik, were hung to dry on the drying rack. As she was placing his footwear up to dry she would remark, “What nice kamiik, ananananana! What nice slippers, ananananana! What nice socks, ananananana!” When she went out to collect heather for fuel, one of the human skulls that was in the porch said to Kiviuq, “Go out and find a flat stone and place it on your chest under your coat and come back in.” He did as he was told and lay down on the bed and pretended to sleep. When she came back and thought that he was asleep, she placed herself on top of him in order to stab him with her tailbone, but her tailbone broke. So she said, “Oh, my tailbone, ananananana, ananananana.” When Kiviuq asked her to give him his footwear she would tell him, “I hung them up, you go and take them down.” But every time he would reach for them the drying rack would move away, at which point Kiviuq shouted for his polar bear tuurngaq, “Bear, come and eat this thing.” At this point she gave him his kamiik. He fled in his qajaq but Ululijarnaat came chasing after him. She yelled to him, “I would have skinned you with this ulu.” Then she threw the ulu in front of him forming a sheet
of ice so he couldn’t move anymore. He caused a boulder to rise up and break the ice and he got through and was able to reach home. When he was approaching home he sang, “Aasigisigisigi, Aasigisigisigi.” His wife sang out, “It is only Kiviuq who sings Aasigisigisigi.” She then said, “Utsukkatagataga, my vagina is eagerly awaiting your return.” There are many variations to this story. This is the version I know.

Imaruittuq, can you tell us the story of Kiviuq? Does this story have a message?

Imaruittuq: My version is a little bit different from the one that Nutaraaluq was telling. As we keep saying, the stories vary from one community to another. There is a little bit of variation depending on the area. Kiviuq is a very long story. You can almost break it down into three parts. Maybe I will start. Kiviuq had two wives. He went out caribou hunting. During the day his wives would be asleep every time he came back to the camp, so he decided to investigate this. There was a lake not very far from their camp and he went up there. There he found that his wives had a husband. There was this penis that would come up from the lake that was the husband. Of course, he was very angry about this. When he went out caribou hunting, he would tell his wives he was losing his mitts and his slippers. What he was doing was filling his mitts up with worms. When they became full he took a caribou skin that was drying and emptied the worms onto the skin. His wives were there watching and he asked one of them, “Which is scarier, worms or a harpoon head?” One of the wives replied, “Since you can squish worms they are not as scary.” He told his wives to sit down on the skin that was covered with worms, after removing their pants. When they tried to sit on the tail flap of their parkas, he cut the flaps off. The worms started crawling inside them. Lemmings started coming out of their mouths. After he became a widower, he went out caribou hunting again.

Every time he came back to his camp, he would find meat but there was no one in the camp. The meat would be hot every time he came back from hunting, but there was no one in the camp. And so he hid and waited. There was a fox approaching his tent. It turned into a human being by removing its skin and hanging it up outside the tent. He snuck up on her and took the skin that she had hung up. Of course, when she found out that Kiviuq had taken the skin she asked him for it. “Give it back to me,” she said. Kiviuq asked her if she would be his wife. He said, “I will give it to you, only if you will be my wife.” Finally she said, “Yes”. So Kiviuq had a person who used to be a fox as a wife.

In the fall, a qavvigaarjuk, a wolverine in human form came into their camp. This male really liked Kiviuq’s wife and he became envious of Kiviuq. He defecated and said, “My excrement will turn into a red headed woman wearing a top knot.” She became his wife. He wanted to have a wife exchange. Kiviuq used to say no to the wolverine in human form who really liked the fox. But he kept on persisting, so Kiviuq finally said
‘yes,’ but with one condition. He was not to refer to her urine because she was embarrassed about its strong smell. Of course the wolverine agreed. They both had separate igluit and so they exchanged wives. The wolverine in human form kept being refused by the fox and he started getting really angry. The wolverine said, “Why is there a strong smell of urine around me.” The entrance had a tiny opening and the woman turned into a fox and escaped. Kiviuq shouted, “Oh no, there goes my wife.” And of course, Kiviuq was not happy about this. To get back at the wolverine in human form, he said, “Aaq, where is that smell of excrement coming from?” This caused the wolverine’s wife to turn back into a piece of excrement. The following day he started to look for the fox’s tracks. When he found her tracks, one foot would be that of a human, and the other foot would be that of a fox. He was tracking her for a while when he found a den. He asked her to come out, as the entrance was too small for him to go in. She started sending out other things instead but he would refuse them. A caterpillar would come out but he would say, “No, I don’t want you.” Then a lemming would come out but he would say, “No, I don’t want you.” The fox asked him to come in so he was able to enter. When he went in he tried to sit beside her but she would move away. Eventually she gave in and was once again his wife.

Did Kiviuq have a father?

Imaruittuq: I think he had a father.

Nutaraaluk: I have never heard whether he had a father or a mother. He was an angakkuaq. He always had the skin of a saarraq, a phalarope, on his qajaq. No matter what the weather conditions were, he was always out there in the water, and even in gale force winds he always stayed upright. That’s why he had that little seabird skin on his qajaq, so his qajaq would always stay upright, no matter what the weather.

Imaruittuq: That bird is called a saarraq in the Iglulik dialect.

Nutaraaluk: I think it was because he was an angakkuaq that he went through these various experiences.

Have you told these stories to others?

Imaruittuq: Probably not.

Nutaraaluk: I don’t tell these stories unless I’m asked. I had stories told to me. My uncle was not reluctant at all to tell me these stories, especially when we were out hunting and sleeping overnight on the land. He would tell a lot of these stories to me because I was a child. I was a small boy, and to pass time he used to tell me a lot of stories. I am really glad that my uncle used to tell me stories.

Unikkaat and Unikkaaqtuat

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How about you, Imaruittuq? Did people tell stories to you?

Imaruittuq: Yes. I used to spend a lot of time with my grandmother, especially after her husband passed away. I actually used to live with her. My grandmother, Ataguttaaluk, always told me stories at bed time. I don’t remember a lot of the stories she told me. I certainly do remember the songs and I think that was because I really like pisiit. I have a hard time remembering stories.

These pisiit, did you learn them right away?

Imaruittuq: Yes, because I was very interested in them. I started learning them at a very young age. I think I was very quick at learning them too.

How about you, Nutaraaluk? Did you learn the unikkaaqtuat right away?

Nutaraaluk: I learned the unikkaaqtuat that were told to me right away. I was quick to pick up anything; just by watching someone carving or making something, I could duplicate it. I used to take all my father’s tools. If I were him I would have been angry with me, but he never said anything. He would be looking for a certain tool and I would say, “Is it this one?” That was the way I was as a young boy. That’s how I learned how to make things. He would look for his tools because he knew he put them down somewhere, and I would say, “Are you looking for this?” Although I knew he was angry with me, he never said anything. I think he was more interested in me learning things. After watching him, I succeeded in making a qajaq, but I needed assistance in making the hole where one sits. He told me I needed to make the joints more square. I’ve never forgotten that.

Since bestiality was very discouraged, why did animals turn into humans and Inuit have them for spouses in the unikkaaqtuag?

Imaruittuq: A long time ago, we heard that they turned into humans. This no longer happens in this day and age.

Were the stories about animals turning into humans true?

Imaruittuq: They were probably true. That’s why there are stories about this.

Nutaraaluk: They have to be true. All animals could turn into people, according to what we were told. They turned into people a long time ago before there was Christianity. In fact, some of the animals that were in human form were able to talk.
Imaruittuq: One story that I have heard was that there was a couple living alone. While the husband was out hunting a family arrived. When they came into the iglu they indicated that they were extremely thirsty. Because they were thirsty the woman offered them water, but they refused. It turns out they were polar bears in human form. They drank the oil from the qulliq instead.

Nutaraaluk: I heard a story about some hunters who were following walrus in their qajait. A walrus said, “I am thirsty, harpoon me.” The walrus was told, “Your tusks are too small so we are not going to harpoon you.” The walrus then said to each other, “Since they don’t want us, let’s flee further away.” Because of that the walrus now stay far out in the deep. This too became a piusiq, the way things are, according to what I have heard.

Why is it that seals need to be given a drink of fresh water after they have been killed?

Imaruittuq: Because they did not want to end up with an ajuruti, a sanction, and have difficulty catching other seals, they had to follow exactly what they were told. By following exactly what you were told, it was easier to catch animals. They didn’t have modern tools such as rifles to rely on and had to get animals in whatever way they could.

Did they give land animals and fish water as well?

Imaruittuq: I have not heard of land animals or fish being given water.

You talked about animals taking on human form. Can insects do this as well?

Imaruittuq: I have never heard of insects taking on human form, but only being used as tuurngait by the angakkuit. That’s when they take on human form.

End Notes
Nutarakittuq, E. 1990. Ailaq and Papik. Inuktitut (69). Nunavut Arctic College would like to thank Inuktitut magazine for permission to republish this story.

There was once an old woman named Amauq. One spring day her son Ailaq and her son-in-law Papik went seal hunting together. Papik killed his sakiaq (brother-in-law). When Papik got home, his saki (mother-in-law) said to him, “I wonder if you killed Ailaq.” Papik replied that he had not killed his sakiaq and then lay down on the bed platform. Anana kept on asking him the same question and after a while Papik didn’t reply.
The old woman continued to wait for her son to return, but, as her ningau (son-in-law) would not speak to her, her health began to deteriorate. After some time, she started to carry a polar bear skull in her anauti. She would still ask her ningau, “Papik, have you killed Ailaq?” As her son-in-law was making fun of her, he would merely lie down without replying.

The old woman still expected her son to return and whenever she asked her son-in-law about him, she gave him a push. “Papik, maybe you killed Ailaq? If it turns out that you have indeed killed him, I’m going to eat you with my own teeth,” she cried. She opened her mouth and showed him her few remaining teeth. Being a very old woman, she had lost most of her teeth. She said that she was going to search for Ailaq, and if she found out that Papik had killed him, she was going to eat Papik. If she found Ailaq quickly, she would come back and eat Papik right away. If it took her longer to find him, it would take her longer to return. The old woman, who was carrying the polar bear skull in her anauti, eventually died pining for her son.

Winter passed, and the men would hunt at the seal holes, shielded from the wind with a uquutaq. Papik was out seal hunting with a man who had a dislocated hip. A huge polar bear approached from the direction of the sea. This bear was so yellowed that it looked as though it had been a bed rug. Papik was waiting at the seal hole, with his legs tied together, and he was bored. He was braiding and rebraiding his hair. The man with the dislocated hip shouted at him, “Papik, a huge bear!” Papik finally noticed it, when it was quite close. As his legs were tied together, he leapt over his uquutaq. The bear started to toy with Papik, while it was mauling him. Papik kept on leaping out of the way. The old woman had said that she was going to come back and eat him. The bear continued to push him and when it knocked Papik down, it started to eat him.

The man with the dislocated hip ran home. When he told everyone what had happened, Papik’s wife, immediately thought that the bear must be her mother. When the bear, which was covered in blood, got close, she said to Papik’s dogs, “Run ahead to confuse your illuq.” In those days, dogs and bears were considered to be cousins. The dogs went down to the bear. Some of the dogs and people fled.

The man with the dislocated hip had an arrow in his possession, that he had taken from a grave. Knowing that the bear was not going to die by an ordinary arrow, he shot it with the arrow he had taken from the grave. He hit it in the lower part of the foreleg and it died right away. As they suspected that it had been a human that turned itself to a bear, they cut up all the bones when they butchered it. They cut apart the vertebrae, and the ribs, as well as the joints in the feet.

During the night the dogs started to bark. The man with the dislocated hip got up and got dressed in the dark and went to check up on the bones. They had forgotten to separate one tiny little joint. The bear had started to come back to life. They killed the bear again, and once more cut up all the joints, and this time placed them far apart. The dogs did not bark again after that.
The son-in-law never told the old woman that he had killed her son and because of this she remained on Earth, searching for her son. When she did find her son, she used the polar bear head, which she carried in her amauti, to transform herself into a bear. She said that she would come back and eat her son-in-law using her own teeth, so she did.

**Aakulugjuusi and Uumaarniittuq**  
[From the recollections of Alexina Kublu of this unikkaaqtaaq, which she was told as a child by her father Michel Kupaaq Piugaattuk].

They say that Aakulugjuusi and Uumaarniittuq were the first humans. One day, they just started to grow and come up out of a niaquttuk, a clump of soil and moss. They were both male. As they were the only beings, they took soil from the clump from which they came, and created other creatures. Of course, not all the things that they created were perfect. For example, the caribou had tusks and the walrus had antlers. They created all sorts of creatures and the ones that they didn’t notice needing fixing remained as they were.

As they were the first humans, they were extremely powerful angakkuit. Since they were beginning to feel that they were all alone, they decided to create another being like themselves but who was to grow from babyhood. They decided, between the two of them, that it was to be Uumaarniittuq who would carry the child. As they were angakkuuk, whatever they even thought would come about. As the child grew, they started contemplating how it would come out, for of course, they were both males with penises. They thought and thought about how the child would come out and they came up with a plan. Uumaarniittuq acquired a vagina and a canal was formed through which the child would come out from where it was growing. Based on their own experience, they changed all the animals they had created, so they too were now able to have young.

More and more, people and animals began to populate the land. As Aakulugjuusi and Uumaarniittuq were powerful angakkuuk, they instructed both the humans and the animals on how to survive. They taught the humans how to use animals for food and warmth. They also taught some of the animals to graze and others to hunt their food.

After the people had become numerous, they noticed that the caribou and the walrus required fixing, as they were killing a lot of humans. Whenever the caribou was hunted, the caribou being a fast runner, would quickly catch up to a hunter and gore him with its tusks, while the walrus would lift a hunter in his qajaq with its antlers and capsize him. Because this did not seem right to Aakulugjuusi and Uumaarniittuq, and as they had been the ones to create them, they fixed them, so that the caribou now had antlers and the walrus had tusks.

Those animals, that they didn’t fix, remain to this day as they were. They say that Aakulugjuusi and Uumaarniittuq did not die, they just returned to the soil from which they had come into being.
Footnotes

1 Qaajjiujau, when a piece of solid ice breaks away.

2 Qalupilluk [North Baffin / Keewatin], human-like creatures that live in the sea. They wear a large amautit and take children playing near the shore who are left unattended. They indicate their presence by thumping on the bottom of the ice. [South Baffin] qalupalik.

3 Naligqi, to replicate a person who was murdered by building an inuksuk with a hole drilled in the forehead. It was built by the murderer to show how many people he had killed.

4 Inuksuk, a stone structure which had many functions, such as serving as a beacon for travellers. It was also used when hunting caribou.

5 A more complete version of this story can be found at the end of this chapter.

6 Kiniqtaq, a woman who is bleeding, either after giving birth, or during menstrual periods.

7 The creation myth of Aakulugjuusi and Uumaarniittuq can be found at the end of this chapter.

8 Qimminnguaq, a seal humerus used as a toy dog in the children’s game qimmiqsimnguaq.
Pisiit, Songs

The pisiit, express feelings. In Inuit culture, there has always been a tradition that thoughts and feelings, of anger or regret, should be expressed, so that they do not turn against oneself or others. Songs were a means to do this. Thus, Kappianaq expressed his sorrow, about the murder of his brother, in a song. That may have helped him to refrain from revenge when the opportunity presented itself. Imaruittuq turned out to be a passionate singer and everybody enjoyed his songs, during the course. He collects traditional songs in his songbook. According to Imaruittuq, “There are three types of traditional songs, pisiit, or qilaujarusiit, which are pisiit sung with a drum, and iviutit, which were used to embarrass people, to make fun of them, to make fun of their weaknesses. They created songs to make fun of others. There are also sakausiit, songs used by angakkuit.” This chapter deals, predominantly, with the first category. They constitute a living tradition, as singers adapted songs that appealed to them. Imaruittuq states, “Ikiaqtaaq means, it’s another person’s song I am using but I am creating my own words”. The tradition is kept alive, and it is always dynamic.

Can you sing your favourite song?

Imaruittuq: I have a lot of favourites. It is very hard to decide which one to sing. I like this song.

aijaa niqiksaqsiuqtunut ajjumi&&aqpakpunga
Aijaa, as one of those hunting for food I envision myself

aa ungagiinnarjaka nunagilliukua aijakulugliuna iijajaa
Aa, those that remain dear to me this is their land, how wonderful this looks, iijajaa

aijaa aijaa aijaa aijaaajaaajaa

aijaa tupiksaqsiuqtunut ajjumi&&aqpakpunga
Aijaa, as one of those searching for a tent I envision myself

aa ungagiinnarjaka nunagilliukua aijakulugliuna iijajaa
Aa, those that remain dear to me, this is their land, how wonderful this looks, iijajaa

aijaa aijaa aijaa aijaaajaaajaaajaa
aijaa nannugaksaqtaligjuaq ijjuri&&aqpakpunga
Aijaa, that there are many polar bears to catch, I consider myself dirty

aa qimaktiginnarijakka nannugaksaqtaligjuaq ajjakulugliuna
ijjaa
Aa, to be left behind, that there are many polar bears to catch, how wonderful this looks, ijjaa

aijaa aijaa aijaa aijaa aijaa

aijaa uqukssaqsiuqtunut aijumi&&aqpakpunga
Aijaa, as one of those searching for warmth I envision myself

aa ungaginariga tupirliuna auijaqsu&&alirmat aijakulugliuna
ijjaa
Aa, that I continue to hold dear, that this tent is now experiencing summer, how wonderful this looks ijjaa

Was that to your liking? That is my favourite song. [Applause]

Why is that your favourite song?
Imaruittuq: I really like the tune, and it is very comfortable for my voice. That’s why it is my favourite song.

These traditional songs, were they used to deter bad behaviour in the old days?
Imaruittuq: There are three types of traditional songs; pisiit, or qilaujarusiit, which are pisiit sung with a drum; and iviutiit, which were songs used to embarrass people, to make fun of them, to make fun of their weaknesses. They created songs to make fun of others. There are also sakausiit, songs used by angakkuit. Those are the three different types of songs that I know.

Iviutiit, the type that you just mentioned, why did they sing them?
Imaruittuq: It was to make fun of other people and how they used to be. They would try to embarrass people and sing about their weaknesses. That’s the purpose of those songs.
But we have been told not to make fun of other people.

Imaruittuq: It was not like that. You could make fun of other people in the old days, the very old days. We tend to think that Christianity has always been a part of our lives, but things were different before Christianity came. For example, today, school kids think that the school has always been up here but it hasn’t. Though we think that Christianity has always been a part of our lives, there was life before Christianity came.

Were sakausiit only used by angakkuit?

Imaruittuq: Absolutely. They were definitely their songs, and they used them in their shamanism.

We would like to ask more about songs.

Imaruittuq: Would you like me to sing first? Our ancestors used to create songs. Sometimes the people who put the words to the song would like the tune. Sometimes they would make alterations to make the song suit themselves. This song was changed by one of my relatives, Maniq was her name. She made changes to this song that I am going to sing. This is Maniq’s song. Because there were changes made to this pisiq, it is an ikiaqtagaaq.

Maniup pisivininga ikiaqtaliavininga

Maniq’s song, with her changes

aijaa ijajaajaajaa inngirajaalirlanga

Aiijaajaa ajajaajaajaa, let me sing slowly

inngirajaalirlanga pisiksaksiurlungalu

Let me sing slowly and search for a song

ijajaajaajaa

aijaa ijajaajaajaa pisiksaniingiliqpuunga

Aiijaajaa ajajaajaajaa, I have not acquired a song

pisiksaniingiliqpuunga nunguusimangmatigut

I have not acquired a song because they have finished them on us

ijajaajaajaa

aijaa ijajaajaajaa nunguusimavatigut

Aiijaajaa ajajaajaajaa, they have finished them on us
nunguusimavatigut sivullitta pisiksamik
They have finished them on us, our ancestors of any song

ijajaajaaajaa

aiajaa ijajaajaaajaa maliktarigaluaqpit
Aijaa ijajaajaaajaa removing incoming snow

maliktarigaluaqpit apivalliajuq manna
Are you removing incoming snow from this that is becoming snow covered

ijajaajaaajaa

aiajaa ijajaajaaajaa iqqaqtulirivara
Aijaa ijajaajaaajaa, I remember

iqqaqtulirivarali ijjannguqtumirina inna
I remember my difficulty in breathing

ijajaajaaajaa

aiajaa ijajaajaaajaa nunguusimavatigut
Aijaa ijajaajaaajaa, they have finished them on us

nunguusimavatigut sivullilita pisiksamik
They have finished them on us, our ancestors of any song

ijajaajaaajaa

aiajaa ijajaajaaajaa nungugiaqsinnarivuq
Aijaa ijajaajaaajaa, it is about to come to an end

nungugiaqsinnarivuq tainiksaqanngimmata
It is about to come to an end because they have no title

ijajaajaaajaa

I'm just singing part of the song. There is a lot more to it. This is an ikiaqtagaq.

Were songs just stories?

Imaruittuq: A lot of songs were stories. In this song, she said she was searching and searching for a song. She finally found a song which she made changes to. Because she
wanted to make changes to the song, she asked the person who owned the song. He agreed. When she started to sing it, it had no title, for our ancestors had used up all the titles. The part about having difficulty breathing has a lot of meaning to it. At that time, there had been people buried in a blizzard. If they camped where snowdrifts tended to form, then they would be buried. So, they were cautioned to be aware of what would be covered in a blizzard. They were also told not to build an iglu under an aluiqaníaq, snow overhang. I have been told not to camp under an aluiqaníaq because it could collapse and bury the iglu. Then it becomes very difficult to breathe. My father too was buried in his iglu and it is very difficult to breathe. The air hole gets covered and you can’t breathe. In the song, the word malíktarigualuqpit refers to keeping the air hole free of snow by removing the snow. In the song because she had difficulty removing the snow from the air hole she had difficulty breathing. That’s the meaning of the song.

Were songs one of the ways to pass on knowledge about dangers?

Imaruittuq: Yes, some of the songs just seem like songs, but they have definite messages and meanings, telling us what dangers to be aware of, about the scarcity of animals, making us think at all times. That is one of the purposes of these songs.

Can you tell us a little bit about how the pisíit were used, either for passing on valuable knowledge or to mark an event or for laughing at someone?

Imaruittuq: Remember I told you there were three different types. The pisíit, or qilaqjarusíit, are the ones you dance the drum with. They are not used for making fun of other people. They tell about hunting experiences, such as the song I have just sung about being buried in snow. Some songs are about animals. The ivivutíit are the ones that are terrible. They try to embarrass other people.

Did women ever make songs?

Women also made songs. I really learned one song that a woman had created. I really wanted to obtain a recording of it from Inummarríkkut [the Inuit Cultural Institute]. It was Ikualaaq’s pisíq. A lot of women were very creative in making songs. This next song was created to pass on a message about experiencing something dangerous.

aïjaa qaujaraangatta anijaraangama natiruviaq takuvara
aïjaaqaaqaaqaaqaaqaa
Aïja, when we get into a new day, when I go out, I see the ground blowing snow
Aijaa, when we get into a new day, when I go out, I pick up this stick

Aijaa, when we get into a new day, when I go out, I see these pieces of blubber

Aijaa, they say if I talk too much without going out, I’m unable to do it

I’m just singing part of the song that was created by this woman. In those days women used to make up songs.

Was this song created to show that there was danger?

Was the song concerning an Inuit piqujaq about have to go out first thing in the morning?

Imaruittuq: Yes, it is a piqujaq. The piqujait that were passed on to us in terms of hunting, were about dangerous areas, such as being on the ice. If we went down to the ice, we were always to bring our harpoon. That has always been a piqujaq told to us males. You can never tell the solidity of the ice just by looking. You actually have to poke at the sea ice. We have always been told that, ever since Inuit started using harpoons. Maybe our ancestors before that used their feet. That’s another one of the messages of the song.

Are these songs telling stories as well?

Imaruittuq: Yes. Songs tell stories.

When the person who made the song died, did the song disappear?

Imaruittuq: No. I think you have all heard of Piugaattuk from Iglulik. Once he told a story. He said he had a step-father after his father died. His step-father was very good to his step-sons. He would tell all of his sons and step-sons that he enjoyed activities such as feasting, drumming and games that went on in the qaggiq. Piugattuk’s step-father told his sons and step-sons to sing his pisiq when they were looking for tracks, so it would be easy for them to get an animal. The one named after Qaunnaq, the one who passed away, used to go out caribou hunting and he started trying to sing his step-father’s song. He would practice this song when he was relaxing and he noticed it made a difference to his hunting.
Do these stories and songs bring out issues that we don’t deal with every day?

Imaruittuq: When our parents were talking about things they didn’t want us to hear, we were told to go out. Therefore, there are a lot of things we don’t know about.

Were you too young to listen?

Imaruittuq: In those days, we were not allowed to listen to songs or adult discussions. We were always told to go out and play. We could listen in when they were talking about wildlife and hunting.

I would like you to sing something. What would you like to sing?

Imaruittuq: I am going to sing my great-grandfather’s song. Uuttuvaarjuk was my great-grandfather. He was Ittuksaarjuk’s father. Our ancestors used to experience great hardships. I think he created this song after going through a difficult experience.

    aijaa ijajaajaaajaa ijajaajaaajaa ijajaajaaajaa
    aijaa aniqattaqpit, pingigijainnama ijajaajaa

Aijaa, do you go outside, I tend to be one to not be worried about, ijajaajaa

    aijaa ijajaajaaajaa ijajaajaaajaa ijajaajaaajaa
    aijaa aniqattaqpit pijaksaqsiurama ijajaajaa

Aijaa, do you go outside, in seeking something to do, ijajaajaa

    aijaa ijajaajaaajaa ijajaajaaajaa ijajaajaaajaa
    aijaa aniqattaqpit unnuarjuarmilu ijajaajaa

Aijaa, do you go outside, during the late night, ijajaajaa

    aijaa ijajaajaaajaa ijajaajaaajaa ijajaajaaajaa
    aijaa aniqattaqpit isumagilirakkku ijajaajaa

Aijaa, do you go outside, when I think about it, ijajaajaa

This song was created by my great-grandfather. It was probably created around the beginning of the nineteenth century. Our grandfather, Ittuksaarjuaq, was born in the mid-nineteenth century. He passed away in 1944 or 1945. He remembered when Qikiqtarjuk was still an island. It is no longer an island. It’s just a point of land on the island of Iglulik. He said when the high tide came in the island would re-form.
Why is that place called Qikiqtaarjuk?
It has had that name for a long time. This was the island that Uinigumasittuq was taken to.

Were there songs about pittailiniq or tirigusuusiit?
Imaruittuq: No. I haven't heard of those. There are three types of songs, iviutiit, sakausiit, and pisiit.

Have you ever heard an iviusiq?
Imaruittuq: Yes. Shall I iviq you?

No I am too easily embarrassed. What does iviq mean?
Imaruittuq: It is singing about another person in an attempt to embarrass them. They would sing about a person's life and use that to ridicule them. Basically, making fun of a person, trying to embarrass them.

Please sing us one.
Imaruittuq: There's one song I haven't sung for a long time, but it sounds like this.

Puupupuuq Nilaulaaq ivirungi iviutingni tusaq&iqtailivagliuk
anga ajaijaija
ajangaijajangajajaa aa
aijaa arviligjuup sukattaqtuq sukakkuni qaaqtittailivagliuk
manna

What does the song mean? I didn't understand it at all.
Imaruittuq: Probably because you were not meant to understand it. That's the way these songs were, these iviutiit. The song says, “If he becomes too horny for the women of Arviligjuaq, may his penis not explode.” That's what the song says. These songs were meant to embarrass others.

Did the person singing the song want to have sex with a woman from Arviligjuaq?
Imaruittuq: The people from Naujaat found the people from Arviligjuaq attractive.

*Was this song referring to someone else’s wife?*

Imaruittuq: I’m not exactly sure, I have not really heard much about it. I’ve only heard a bit of this song.

*Was this strictly for adults?*

Imaruittuq: Yes, not at all for children. Some of them are really explicit.

*When someone was singing an iviusiq, were children strictly excluded?*

Imaruittuq: I don’t really know about that, but certainly they were not for children’s ears.

*Were they sung in front of other people?*

Imaruittuq: I don’t know. Maybe they sang them when there were just males around, while they were seal hunting.

*How about the songs of the angakkuit, have you heard any?*

Imaruittuq: I have never really heard songs used by angakkuit. I knew one but I forget how it goes. It’s a very old song, I’ve forgotten it. I think I forgot it because I don’t use it.

*Is it scary to sing the songs of the angakkuit?*

Imaruittuq: If you don’t mean them when you sing them, they are not scary.

*Were angakkuit secretive about their songs?*

Imaruittuq: Yes, as the songs were part of their shamanic practice.

*Can you sing the song of Amarualik’s older brother Kappianaq?*

Imaruittuq: I certainly can. I can sing one of his songs.

```
aijaa ijajaajaa ujjiqpannginnivunga ujjiqpannginnivunga
Aijaa ijajaajaa. I am always unaware, I am always unaware

pijaksanut maunga ijajaajaa
Of things to be done around here, ijajaajaa
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Pisiit, Songs
aijaa ijajaajaa ujjiqpannginnivungua ujjiqpannginnivungua
Aijaa ijajaajaa. I am always unaware, I am always unaware

aqittungarlamulli ijajaajaa
Because I don’t have much sense, ijajaajaa

aijaa ijajaajaa naalakpaksinnaqpit naalakpaksinnaqpit
Aijaa ijajaajaa. Do you tend to listen, do you tend to listen

silainnarmut maunga ijajaajaa
To nothing but the thin air, ijajaajaa

aijaa ijajaajaa tusalirunnanggippit tusalirunnanggippit
Aijaa ijajaajaa. Are you unable to hear, are you unable to hear

silainnarmit maangat ijajaajaa
Anything from the thin air, ijajaajaa

aijaa ijajaajaa ujjiqpannginnivungua ujjiqpannginnivungua
Aijaa ijajaajaa. I am always unaware, I am always unaware

aqittungarlamulli ijajaajaa
Because I don’t have much sense, ijajaajaa

aijaa ijajaajaa naalakpaksinnaqpit naalakpaksinnaqpit
Aijaa ijajaajaa. Do you tend to listen, do you tend to listen

silainnarmut maunga ijajaajaa
To nothing but the thin air, ijajaajaa

aijaa ijajaajaa tusalirunnanggippit tusalirunnanggippit
Aijaa ijajaajaa. Are you unable to hear, are you unable to hear

silainnarmit maangat ijajaajaa
Anything from the thin air, ijajaajaa

aijaa ijajaajaa ujjiqpannginnivungua ujjiqpannginnivungua
Aijaa ijajaajaa. I am always unaware, I am always unaware

aqittungarlamulli ijajaajaa
Because I don’t have much sense, ijajaajaa

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Imaruittuq: Shall I also tell you the story contained in this song? After his younger brother was killed, Kappianaq created his song *Aqittungajajiq*. He was calling himself a man without much sense. He was not a stupid man. Even though he labelled himself as such, he was not really a man without much sense. He called himself this because even though he knew his brother was dead, he could not help himself from searching for him or constantly listening for his return. He would search for him without finding him. He would listen for his return but it would never happen. That’s why he composed this song.

*Did the people that committed murder used to create songs?*

Imaruittuq: No. The only song I know that relates to murder is Kappianaq’s song. Other than that, I don’t know of any.

*Who killed his younger brother?*

Imaruittuq: Iksivalitaq, from Naujaat, is the one that killed him while they were in the Naujaat area.

*Why was he killed?*

Imaruittuq: Iksivalitaq wanted his wife because he didn’t have a spouse. The murderer fled to Arviligjuaq on foot, without even taking the woman, as he had no dogs.

*Do you have a pisiq of your own?*

Imaruittuq: I have an *ikiaqtagag*. I can certainly sing part of it. It’s quite long. I’m probably not going to remember how it all goes.

```
aajaa samaajaajaaajaaajaa inngiqtalaurlanga
Aajaa samaajaajaaajaaajaa let me sing

inngiqtalaurlanga pisiksaqsiurlungalu
Let me sing and search for a song to be mine

samaajaajaaajaaajaa aajaa

aajaa samaajaajaaajaaajaa nagvaa&&arniarnangaa
Aajaa samaajaajaaajaaajaa, searching but not finding

nagvaa&&arniarnangaa qimiksamik nakiqtumik
Searching but not finding a tune which has accurate speed

samaajaajaaajaaajaa aajaa
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Pisiit, Songs
I have found one though to probably put my words to it

I sit doing nothing in probably numerous houses

The only thing that I do now is wait for the arrival of someone
aajaa samaajaajaajaajaa inngiqtalaurlanga
Aajaa samaajaajaajaajaa let me sing
inqiqtalaurlanga pisiksaqiurlungalu
Let me sing and search for a song to be mine
samaajaajaajaajaa aajaa

aajaa samaajaajaajaajaajaa nirittauja&aqtnqa
Aajaa samaajaajaajaajaajaa I await the arrival of someone
nirittauja&aqtnqa tikitaar&arniaanianga
I await the arrival of someone despite no one coming home to me
samaajaajaajaajaa aajaa

aajaa samaajaajaajaajaajaa qinuisaaruauqiipit
Aajaa samaajaajaajaajaa I am being patient
qinuisaaruauqiipit ajurnaqsiavkkillunu
I am being patient though at times it becomes hard to do
samaajaajaajaajaa aajaa

aajaa samaajaajaajaajaajaa siaqqalau&aqtnqa
Aajaa samaajaajaajaajaajaa the times that I have been without
siaqqalau&aqtnqa kiiuajaqanngimut
The times that I have been without for the lack of money
samaajaajaajaajaa aajaa

aajaa samaajaajaajaajaajaa unangmijiyaavnungilakka
Aajaa samaajaajaajaajaajaa I have no desire to emulate
unangmijiyaavnungilakka angutilliplarnajuktut
I have no desire to emulate men who are getting ready
samaajaajaajaajaa aajaa
Imaruittuq: I used to sing to basking seals while I was approaching them. Some of the seals seemed to dance.

Nutaraaluk to Imaruittuq: You could really get close to the seals by singing to them.

Imaruittuq to Nutaraaluk: Sometimes the seal flippers seemed to flip back and forth as if they were dancing.

Nutaraaluk to Imaruittuq: If that’s the case, then they really like music. When someone was playing an accordion in a boat, they would come close. Animals like the sound of music.

Imaruittuq to Nutaraaluk: When you are at the floe edge, you can play your harmonica and seals will come right up to you.

Nutaraaluk: Once, I was spending time in a camp on an island and I got very close to a seal. I didn’t even bother using my seal blind. When you chant to a bearded seal, especially when you are in a qajaq, they can really come up to you. My father would say,
“Avaa, avaa,” before he shot a bearded seal. When we were in the boat we said, “Avaa, avaa,” to young bearded seals. We got so close we harpooned three of them.

Imaruittuq: I know a variety of Natsilik songs. I really appreciate the Natsilik pisit. I know a few songs from that region, I will be singing Utakuttuk’s song first.

aija isuma&&aliqpunga tariumulli
Aija, my thoughts are turned to going toward the sea
jaajajajajaa jaajajajajaa jaajajajajajajaa jaajajajajajajaa
jaal kalijjaqtu&&aqtunga ataggamulli
Jaa, I am trying hard at pulling because of having difficulty going down to the sea
jaajajajajaa jaajajajajaa jaajajajajajajaa

jaq qarrulaa&&aqtunga tariumulli
Jaa, I am screeching for wanting to go toward the sea
jaajajajajaa jaajajajajaa jaajajajajajajaa jaajajajajajajaa
jaal aksuruuja&&aqpit ataggamulli
Jaa, are you trying quite hard because of having difficulty going down to the sea
jaajajajajaa jaajajajajaa jaajajajajajajaa

jaal ajurnaqsi&&armalli tariumulli
Jaa, it has become no longer possible to go toward the sea
jaajajajajaa jaajajajajaa jaajajajajajajaa jaajajajajajajaa
jaal sapirngua&&aqpit ataggamulli
Jaa, are you feeling helpless because of having difficulty going down to the sea
jaajajajajaa jaajajajajaa jaajajajajajajaa

jaal isuma&&alirama ataggamulli
Jaa, my thoughts are turned because of having difficulty going down to the sea
jaajajajajaa jaajajajajaa jaajajajajajajaa

That’s the end of the song.
This is a song about being on the mainland. They were longing to go to the ocean and they had to go through deep snow. He was towing some meat and he was having a difficult time. Qarrulaaq is the term used when a dog is yelping because it wants to pull but is not able to do so. He uses this word to describe that he was struggling immensly to pull the meat, using all his strength.

This is a Natsilik song that I am going sing:

**aijaa kakivangmut paunga tunngaliqtunga jajaa**

*Ai jaa with a fish spear I am firmly footed there jajaa*

**aang ajajaa jajaang ajajaaajaa**

**aijaa qanurla imanna sivikinaaqxingajaa**

*Ai jaa how am I going to find the trip short jajaa*

**aang ajajaa jajaang ajajaaajaa**

**aijaa qirniqtuarjungmut turaaliqtunga ajajaa**

*Ai jaa to a little black spot I am heading toward ajajaa*

**aang ajajaa jajaang ajajaaajaa**

**aijaa pivallijjanagit iqqaqsinnaqpakka ajajaa**

*Ai jaa without going to be getting them, I remember them ajajaa*

**aang ajajaa jajaang ajajaaajaa**

**aijaa iqqaqsinnaqpakka amuarjuranit ajajaa**

*Ai jaa I remember the many hand over hand pulls ajajaa*

**aang ajajaa jajaang ajajaaajaa**

**aijaa atijumajaq una pijuminangilaq ajajaa**

*Ai jaa what is desired to be done, is it not very enticing ajajaa*

**aang ajajaa jajaang ajajaaajaa**
aijaa qirniqtuarjugal qimaginnarivara ajajaa
Aijaa the little black spot, I have left it behind ajajaa

aang ajajaa jajaang ajajaajaa

aijaa illaulik ingna qimaginnaqtara ajajaa
Aijaa the one with a foetus, I have left it behind ajajaa

aang ajajaa jajaang ajajaajaa

aijaa asilijjaanngittuq iqqaqsinnaqpara ajajaa
Aijaa that which is not going to be changed, I remember the ajajaa

aang ajajaa jajaang ajajaajaa

That’s the end of the song.

What was it about?
Imaruittuq: It’s a Natsilik song about a person who was longing to go to Kivalliq. He found his travel across the land quite short. Even though it was quite a distance, he didn’t find that it took much time at all. He was walking towards a black spot which turned out to be an illaulik, a pregnant seal. He began to remember the times he had gone hunting. They used to put themselves down in the songs even though they were very capable.

Were people advised not to boast or show off their abilities?
Imaruittuq: Yes, because either an angakkuq or another hunter might kill you, so you always had to be modest about everything. When I was a small boy, I was fast enough to keep up with weasels. That’s what I did during the summers. One summer, my bones started to feel uncomfortable. Ever since then, I have never been able to run that fast. Would you like me to sing more songs?

Sing them all!
Imaruittuq: I don’t know some of the tunes for these songs. I don’t often sing the ones I don’t find too appealing. The ones I really like, I do sing, and try to learn them very well. There was this woman, what was her name? This is Qaaqiuq’s song.
Who was Qaaqiuk?

Imaruittuq: Qaaqiuk was a woman who lived in the Iglulik, Mittimatalik area. She went through a period of hunger and she made this song about those days of hunger, especially about lacking the seal blubber for the qulliq.

igluuna taggajaarmutukiurlit taggajaarmat
This dwelling is quite dark. The winter is quite dark.

jająajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaa ajajajajaa

aijaa taimatuq sanaksarlanga nirjutit nungu&armata
Aijaa I wish to be butchering. The animals have all disappeared.

jająajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaa ajajajajaa

aijaa taimatuq sanaksarlanga sikumi sanaksarlanga
Aijaa I wish to be butchering on the ice. Let me be butchering.

jająajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaa ajajajajaa

aijaa taimatuq sanaksarlanga ullumi sanaksarlanga
Aijaa I wish to be butchering during the day. Let me be butchering.

j際にajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaa ajajajajaa

aijaa taimatuq sanaksarlanga uqsulingmik sanaksarlanga
Aijaa I wish to be butchering one with blubber. Let me be butchering.

j際にajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaa ajajajajaa

aijaa taimatuq sanaksarlanga nunami sanaksarlanga
Aijaa I wish to be butchering on land. Let me be butchering.

j際にajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaa ajajajajaa

aijaa taimatuq sanaksarlanga nagjulingmik sanaksarlanga
Aijaa I wish to be butchering one with antlers. Let me be butchering.

j際にajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaajaa ajajajajaa
aijaa taimatuq sanaksarlanga nirjutit nungul&armata

Aijaa I wish to be butchering. The animals have all disappeared.

jajajaajaaja jaajajaajaajaajaa aajajaajaaja

This is a long song. Do you understand the word Sanaksarlanga? She is singing about cutting up wildlife, either with blubber or with antlers. It could be a bearded seal, or a ring seal with blubber. Nagjulik refers to caribou. That’s how the pisit are usually worded. In this song she says taggaarmat. It means the qarmaq is dark because of lack of oil for the qulliq. That is what she is singing about. She wishes she could have blubber and an antlered one.

What does the word ajaajaa mean?

It is a way of expressing one’s feelings and one’s experiences. In the old days, if they were longing to do something, they would express themselves through ajaajaa songs, about wildlife or about their experiences.

Tainarmit, what does it mean?

Tainiq means the title of a song. The tune is qinik.

Footnotes

1 Pisiit, traditional songs, sometimes called ajaajaa which were usually owned by a specific person. Sung by someone else, verbal credit was given to the owner. Now also used for hymns.

2 Ikiaqtagaq, a pisiiq which had had changes made to it.

3 Puupuupuuq - person’s name; Nilaulaaq - person’s name; ivirungni – if you iviuq her; iviutingni – of your iviusiq; tusaq & tuq - may (he) not let her hear about it; angna – that other person; arviligjuup – arviligjuaq’s; miksaanut – in the direction of; sukattaqtuq – that which tightens; sukakkuni – when it tightens; qaaqtittailivagliuk – may he not burst it; manna – this thing here.

4 Aqittungajuq, someone who does not have much sense.

5 Ataggamuli means “not having difficulty hanging on.” The actual words should be: ataggamuli “because of having difficulty going down to the sea”. The former is used to fit the tune of the song.

6 Sanaksaq, to butcher an animal.

7 Nagjulik, the antlered one. Caribou were not referred to directly out of respect, when a hunter was trying to catch one.
**Aagjuk**
Beings that lived on the moon who would try to make an *angakkuq* laugh, so they could cut out his insides. Also, the name of two stars.

**aanatsiaq**
[Kinngait] Paternal grandmother.

**aaq**
Yuck, stinky.

**aaqqigaq**
Store bought bullets. Also called *qarjuksuraq*.

**aarnguaq**
Amulet.

**aattaujaq**
A game, where one would catch a ball and pass it to team members. It could be played by any number of teams with any number of players.

**aggiq**
Old squaw duck. Also, *aggiarjuk, aanngiq*.

**aglu**
A seal breathing hole.

**aippaarugiiit**
Married couples, who by agreement have exchanged partners with each other. This is a temporary situation.

**aivviq**
Walrus.

**aivvaktuq**
The hunter whose bullet or harpoon first hit the walrus.

**ajagaq**
A game played with either a rabbit skull, a caribou vertebra or a square flipper humerus, in which you try to pop a stick into a hole.

**ajaraaq**
A game where string or braided sinew was used to make figures.

**ajuqituiji**
Anglican missionary or minister.

**ajuruti**
Something that makes one incapable of action.

**akisiarjualuk**
Dog used as a pillow by Kaugjagjuk.

**akuilitaq**

**aliasuktuq**
To be scared of something spooky.

**aliq**
A harpoon line that was longer and thicker than a regular harpoon line.

**alivik**
A harpoon line that was longer and thicker than a regular *aliq*. 
allait
Indians.

aluiqqaniq
A snow overhang on a hill.

alupajaaq
A gathering to eat seal meat and blood.

aluq
[Kivalliq] Bottom of lake or sea bed. [Iglulik] iqqaq.

amaannguaq
When young girls pretend to carry a baby in their amauni. Sometimes they would carry puppies.

amaunti
A parka with a large hood with a pouch for carrying babies.

anaanattiaq/anaanatsiaq
Maternal grandmother.

anauligaaq
Inuit baseball.

angajuaktaq
The much older spouse of a woman, or the older spouse of a man.

angajukuluk
Dear older brother.

angajuqqaq

angajuruluk
My poor older brother.
angajuviniruluk
My late dear brother.

angak
Mother’s brother.

angakkuiqsajau-
Having the powers of the angakkuq removed.

angakkuq
A shaman.

angusiaq/armiaq
A term used by a midwife to address a male/female child she helped to deliver.

anguvigaq
A spear used to kill large sea mammals.

ani
[North Baffin/Kivalliq] Sister’s brother or male cousin. [South Baffin] anik.

anianniq
Archaic form of qaqlirniq to confess a wrong-doing.

anijaaqtuq
To go out first thing in the morning after waking up.

annaumsij
[South Baffin] An angakkuq who was a healer. [Kivalliq] lēruaqsaij.

anngiaq
A wrong-doing that has not been disclosed.

anggutaajuq
An animal that was killed.
annuaqqut
Property of a hard object that could cause sickness and death.

annuraavik
A pant and jacket set.

apiqsaq
The helping spirit of an angakkuq; see also tuurngaq.

aqiggiq
Ptarmigan.

aqittungajuq
Someone who does not have much sense.

aqsalijaat

aqsaq
Ball used to play kickball.

aqsaqniit
The ‘people of the day’ who play kickball with a walrus head in the sky. Also known as the Northern Lights, the Aurora Borealis.

arnaliaq/angusiaq
A term used by a midwife to address a female/male child she helped to deliver.

arnaquti
[Kinngait] the midwife at the birth of a male child.

Asinniarniq
Adultery.

asivaqtuq
[South Baffin, Archaic] hunting at the floe edge. [Contemporary] To go hunting generally.

ataaq
[Iglulik] Going down to the sea from inland. [Kinngait] ataujua.

ataatatsiaq
[Kinngait] Paternal grandfather.

ataatatiaq/ataatsiaq
Maternal grandfather.

ataujiuq
[Kinngait] going down to the sea from inland. [Iglulik] ataaq.

atiq
The person you are named after.

atiqaqati
[South Baffin] One who shares the same name. [North Baffin] avvaq.

atiqqajariik
[Kinngait] Two people whose names are almost the same e.g., Iqaluk, Iqalugjuaq. [Iglulik] avvakasagiik.

atuagaq
Minor rule or maligeralaaq.

aujaliqaq
Caribou meat cached over the summer.

aulaniqsuqtuq
aviuji

avvaq
[Iglulik] One who shares the same name. [South Baffin] atiqapati.

I&uaqsaiji

iglu
Snow house.

iglurjuaviniq
[Inngait] Old house made of stone.

igluvigaq
[Archaic] An iglu that was no longer occupied. [Contemporary] used to denote an iglu.

igunaq
Fermented meat, usually walrus.

ijiraaq
A game similar to hide and seek.

ijiraq
Human-like beings who show themselves as caribou.

ijuqtuq
[North Baffin/Kivalliq] To laugh at someone to correct their behaviour.

ijurnaaqi
To do something that warrants others laughing at you.
ikiaqtagaq
A *pisig* that had had changes made to it.

iksinnai
To abandon someone or something.

iksrarjuaq
Catholic missionary or priest.

ila
A person’s relative.

ilimanaqtuq
To become a threat.

iliqqusiq
[Iglulik] custom, manner, habit. [South Baffin] *piqqusiq*.

iliranaqtuq
To be intimidating.

ilirasuktuq
To be intimidated.

ilisiq
To hex someone.

ilittuq
To die from old age.

illaulik
A pregnant animal.

illuq
Cousin. [Dogs also used to have bears as their cousins.]

iluiliq
Mainland.

innatuqaq
Elder, also *inutuqaq*.

inua
Spirit of a natural object.

inuaqsiniq
To murder someone.

inuqtaujuq
A person who was murdered.

inuarniq
Murder.

inuag
A game played with seal flippers bones.

inugarulligait
Small human-like beings said to have lived near the shore. If you looked at them from their feet up they would look very large. They are very strong. They suffocate people with their groins.

inuksuk
A stone structure with many functions, such as serving as a beacon for travellers. It was also used when hunting caribou.

inummarikkut
Inuit Culture Institute [ICI].

inuujaq
A game played with homemade dolls, formerly made of antlers, now made of wood. They were usually quite small.

inunniuti
The power of an *angkuq* to kill.
iqqaq
[Iglulik] Bottom of a lake or sea bed.
[Kivalliq] aluq.

iqqaqtui
To help someone recall past events. Today, the word is often used as a translation for 'judge'.

irnilaaraapik
My dear youngest son.

irniq
Son.

irraq
A waterproof coat to keep the water out of the opening of a qajaq. [Archaic] akuilitaq.

isigailisarjuarluk
Dog used by Kaugjagjuk to keep his feet warm.

isiriniq
The sinew from the pelvic area of a whale.

isumataq

itigauqqajuq
Someone who has been revived by an angakkuq when about to die.

itsarunnguniq

ittuq
Grandfather, or old man.

itumi

ivajarniq
To eat or drink something without asking first. Also used for taking cigarettes without permission.

iviutiit
A song to embarrass a person.

Kamiik
A pair of sealskin boots.

kanaaviniq
The upper part of an old kamik.

kanngunaqituq
Someone or something embarrassing.

kauk
Walrus hide or the inner layer of the whale skin.

killiqsiut
Material used to heal cuts.

kiniq
Front flap of a parka.

kiniqtuq
A woman who is bleeding either after giving birth, or during menstrual periods.

kujapigaaq
The pelvis area.

kujapik
Lower ribs.
kukuttugu
Making fresh water from sea ice by burning seal blubber with ice above it. The water that dripped from the ice would not be salty any more.

Maajjak
The top layer of the whale skin.

magguiji
A way of hunting caribou by dog team.

mahaha
[Arviat] Beings that lived on the moon that tried to make people laugh so they could cut out their insides. [Iglulik] ululijarnaat. See also Aaqjuq.

maligaq
Accepted guidelines for doing things that needed to be followed. Today the word is often used as a translation for ‘Canadian Law’.

maligaralaaq
A small maligaq.

manilirusiq
[South Baffin] A ritual performed by an angakkuq to attract wildlife.

manuaq
A cold air trap at the entrance of an iglu.

misiaqtuq
To deny something completely.

misiqqaq
Someone who is denying something, even though all the facts indicate otherwise.
Naalagaq

nagjulik
The antlered one. Caribou.

naglikti
A protective force of parental love.

najak
Brother’s sister or female cousin.

najakuluapik
My dear sister.

najakuluk
Dear sister.

naliqqi
Inuksuk representing the victim of a murder built by the murderer.

nangminiq
Something that is one’s own. Also used to refer to one’s close relatives.

nangminiqarniq
The act of owning something.

niaquttak
A clump of soil and moss.

nikanaqtuq
To treat someone as fragile.

ningau
A male married into the family.

ningirniq
The customary sharing of meat.
nipinnganiq
The marbled meat and blubber near the
walrus’s head, considered to be the best
meat.

nukaaktaq
The spouse of a man who was much
younger than he, or the spouse of a woman
who was younger than she.

nuliaksaliit
Men who have non-human beings as
spouses.

nuliaqtaaq
Second wife after re-marriage.

nuliarainnuk
A way of addressing one’s wife; also
nuliarikinuk, nuliaralluk.

nuliiriit
Relationship between parents-in-law.

nuluraqtuq
To wave vertically to tell someone to come.

nuniq
A seal with pups.

nunujuq
Holding back from doing something.

Palluq
[South Baffin] Rolling over to lie on one’s
stomach. [North Baffin] puamvak.

panik
Daughter.

pauktuut A drying peg.
pittailiniq
Refraining from doing something that was forbidden. Breaking a **pittailiniq** would result in serious consequences to the individual or to the camp.

pitungniaqtuq
When one end of the harpoon line is tied to a rock and the other end is connected to a harpoon.

piusiq
The way things are.

piusugijuq
To be vain.

pujuq/pujuaaluk
A plant with powder in it used to heal cuts [puffball mushroom].

puukammaluk
A knapsack.

Qajjujjauniq
Being on a piece of solid ice when it breaks away.

qaggiq
Large iglu used when people gather together; feast-house.

qairningajuq
Anything made from old qajaq skin.

qajaq
Man’s hunting boat.

qajuq
Broth.
qallunaat
White people.

qallunajjiaq
[North Baffin] To travel to where there are qallunaat for trading. [South Baffin] qallunnaq.

qallupilluk

qamutiik
Sled.

qamutinnguaq
Toy sled.

qangiakuluq
Nephew.

qanungasaq
Doing something you are not supposed to, breaking a maligaq relating to a pittaliniq intentionally. Nowadays it is used when someone is not being good to someone else.

qaqialiqtuq
[South Baffin] To repent and turn to Christianity. [North Baffin] siqqitirniq.

qaqialirniq
To feel remorse and confess a wrong-doing. This used to be called anianniq.

qariq
Bed platform for guests.

qarjusuraq
Store bought bullets. Also called aapqigaq.
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