BAIKI

THE INTERNATIONAL SAMI JOURNAL
ISSUE #37, AUTUMN 2013

Joyce Koskenmaki: "Birches and Sunset" oil on linen, 2013

RESTORING THE LAND WITH LANGUAGE AND ART

• The Critical Role of Indigenous Languages • Speaking with Corn •
• Art, Humor, and Images of Survival • Decolonizing the Wolves •
• Knitting Sami Mittens • and much, much, more

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Báiki: the International Sámi Journal

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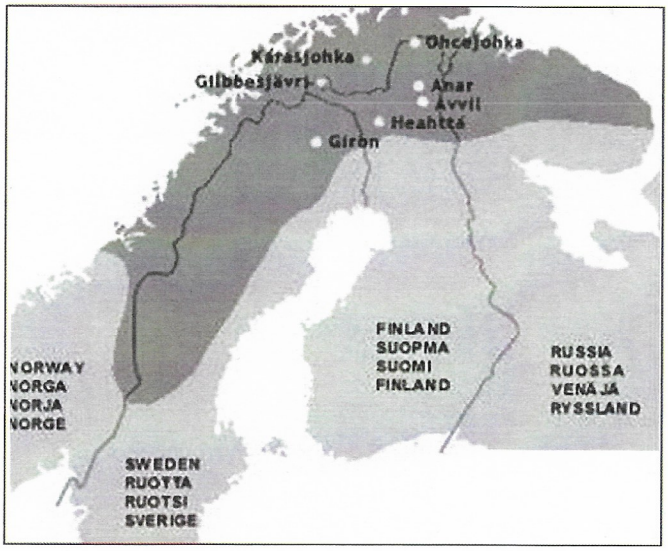
THE HOME THAT LIVES IN THE HEART



"Báiki" [bye-h'kee] is the nomadic reindeer-herding society's word for the cultural identity that survives when people move from one place to another. It is often referred to as "the home that lives in the heart." *Báiki: the International Sámi Journal* grew out of the search for Sámi connections world wide by people in North America. After its appearance in 1991 the Sámi presence in the United States and Canada was finally acknowledged. The *Báiki* logo was designed by faith fjeld, *Báiki* 's founding editor and publisher, using pictographs from Sámi Drums. The reindeer symbolizes subsistence, the *lavvus* [Sámi dwellings] symbolize the extended family, the mountain behind symbolizes the Mother Earth, and the *njalla* [storage shed] symbolizes traditional knowledge preserved for new generations.

The "Sámi" [sah-mee] — also spelled "Saami" or "Sami" — are the Indigenous People of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Kola Peninsula. The Sámi area in the North is called "Sápmi" [sahp-mee], and in the South "Åarjel Saemieh" [war-yel sah-mee-eh]. The nine Sámi languages are related to the Samoyedic, Uralic and Altaic language groups. There are about 80,000 Sámi People living in the Nordic countries. It is estimated that there may also be at least 30,000 people living in North America who have Sámi ancestry. Some are the descendants of the reindeer herders who came to Alaska and Canada in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and some are the descendants of Sámi immigrants who settled in the Midwest, the Upper Michigan Peninsula, the Pacific Northwest and parts of Canada during the same period.

The Sámi refer to their spiritual belief system as "the Nature Religion." Sámi society has traditionally been organized into *siidas* or *samebys* — semi-nomadic extended families who hunt, fish, farm and harvest together according to Nature's subsistence cycles. This worldview and way of life is still a part of Sámi society wherever possible.

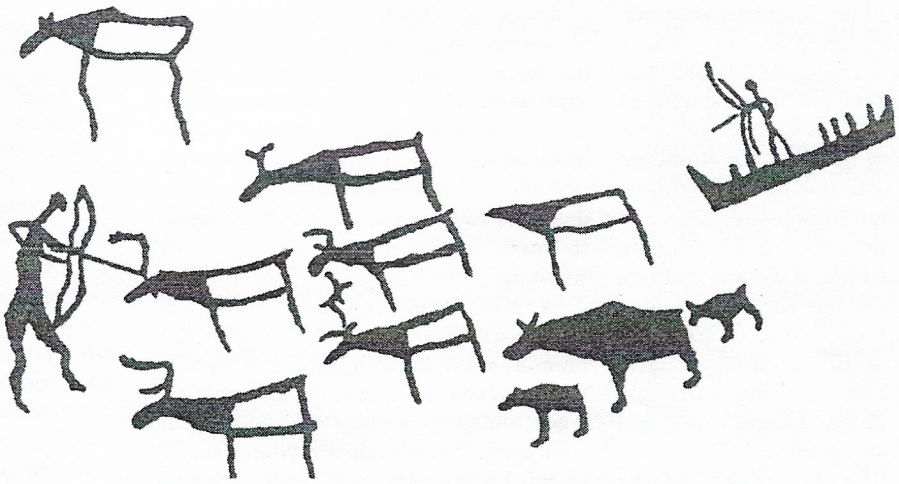
Sami history parallels that of the earth's other Indigenous Peoples. Colonization and genocide began in the Middle Ages after contact with European missionaries. Sami areas were divided by national borders, and Sámi children were removed from their families and placed in boarding schools where they were taught to think and act like the colonizers. Conversion by the church and assimilation by the state set the stage for the abuse of the Sami natural resources.

Today the Sámi are incorporating new technologies in the revival of their languages, the *yoik*, and other traditional arts, and the Sami are in the forefront of the worldwide post-colonial renaissance of Indigenous voice and vision.

BÁIKI EDITORIAL PAGE

"The figures in rock carvings may be seen as symbols, as separate "words" or several symbols forming a unity. Words are often ambiguous. When put into sentences, they attain meaning and become clearer. The words as such are interpreted and their meaning determined. Correspondingly, the figures might have had various meanings according to the context in which they appear. The interrelationship between the figures, the symbols or the "words" become more important than each symbol individually. Perhaps the whole, or parts of a panel constitute words, sentences, or a whole text or story."

— Arvid Sveen, *Rock Carvings,Jiepmaluokta, Hjemmeluft, Alta*



THE CRITICAL ROLE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

by Inger Marie Eira, Ph.D

This is a continuation of our editorial page series of teachings by Indigenous scholars. The following paper was presented at the Arctic Indigenous Languages Symposium: Protecting Culture and Transferring Traditional Knowledge, University of Tromsø, October 20, 2008. It is reprinted here with the author's permission. The illustration and the opening quote are from Arvid Sveen, Rock Carvings as Symbol and Text. *"They are reprinted here with his permission.*

I am a Sami reindeer herder living in *Guovdageaidnu*/Kautokeino. Sami reindeer herding represents roughly one third of the world's reindeer herding population, one of the largest reindeer herding areas in the world. More than twenty indigenous peoples have their main income from reindeer husbandry in nine other national states.

I am also a linguist. I have a Ph.D in linguistics and Sami language. My first language is Sami, I write my research in Sami language and I speak Sami with my informants.

Long before the development of modern science, arctic indigenous Peoples like the Sami developed their ways of knowing how to survive. Indigenous knowledge, or traditional knowledge, is passed between generations through oral history, stories and lessons, and more recently, in written form. Indigenous knowledge is dynamic; it is modified by its holders to reflect changes in the environment. Each new generation incorporates its own empirical knowledge. It is through language that traditional knowledge is available. Aspects of cultural values and worldview are often encoded in the language, observations and stories that are being communicated.

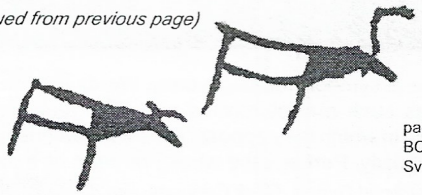
Communication is defined as a process by which we assign and convey meaning in an attempt to create a shared understanding. Using consistent, clear and relevant language in a subject is needed for communication between reindeer herders and state authorities, however many terms cannot easily be translated into other languages. In Norway overgrazing of reindeer pastures has been a topic of discussion, and also an example of showing the lack of communication between herders and authorities. The Norwegian authorities do not use the unique language of reindeer herding when management procedures are developed. Documents are translated from Norwegian to Sami without including the herders' expert language.

Reindeer herders use a rich vocabulary in their everyday work. For example, one term they use in the winter is *guohtun*. On snow-covered land *guohtun* simply means "the possibility of reindeer to find lichen through the snow" but when herders talk about "bad *guohtun*" Norwegian authorities believe the herders are talking about overgrazing, when actually they are trying to communicate their understanding of snow quality. For this reason it is necessary to use the reindeer herders' terminology.

Indigenous Peoples' languages should always be used in communication where indigenous peoples are involved. I believe that if reindeer herders' unique language is neglected, the language will disappear and the herders will lose their right to conduct herding and traditional use of land. The Sami culture bears evidence of a long intimate relationship with the Arctic environment. In my dialect of *Guovdageaidnu* there are over 1000 individual terms related to reindeer regarding individual colors and antlers. The Sami language mirrors the knowledge of the Sami about nature and the landscape. In this way the language shows the ability of the Sami to know how to manage the landscape they live in.

(**EIRA** *continued overleaf*)

(**EIRA** *continued from previous page*)



Alta petroglyphs on this and the previous page are from Bergbukten site 4 B, 4200-3600 BC. Source: Arvid Sveen, *Rock Carvings*. Arvid Sveen, Tromsø, Norway: 2001.

The subject of my linguistic research is Sami reindeer herders' snow terminology in a changing climate. The title of my project is: "The Secrets of Snow, a Linguistic Analysis of Snow and the Meaning of Snow for Reindeer Pasturage." It is to document linguistic knowledge about snow conditions and how reindeer herders are adapting to changing conditions. Reindeer herders and their reindeer live for eight to nine months a year on snow, in extreme environments with variable climatic conditions. Reindeer herding is strongly influenced by climatic conditions, and most of all, snow conditions.

For the indigenous people of the Arctic, the understanding of snow and ice has always been necessary for survival. Sami reindeer herders use some 200-300 different analytical terms for snow in relation to reindeer herding. This shows the importance which snow has had and has for reindeer herding and for the livelihood of the reindeer herders. The richness in snow terminology makes it possible to give detailed information about snow conditions. One can categorize the snow conditions according to a number of different factors, such as the amount of snow, the consistency of the snow, the bearing conditions of the snow, traces present in the snow, and the grazing conditions for reindeer.

Reindeer herding terminology and phraseology has a strong foothold in the Sami language. This knowledge has been accumulated through many generations of reindeer herders. It is an integrated part of their language. This knowledge is part of the way of life of Sami reindeer herders and it is a part of the individual herder's actions and decisions. This knowledge has not been developed by accident, but because it has been necessary to survive under extremely challenging and constantly changing climatic conditions. The quality of snow can be assessed along several dimensions. Here are some of them: Consistency, thickness, layers, hardness, water content, and processes.

One word in Sami can explain one exact phenomenon that needs many words when translated into English. For example, the one Sami word "*skdva*" is translated into thirty seven English words. *Skdva* means "a crust of ice on snow that is formed in the evening after the sun has thawed the top of the snow during the day — the thin crust which begins to form on snow, following mild weather."

Arctic Indigenous people's languages must always be used in the management of indigenous people's natural resources and in communication where indigenous peoples are involved. Competence building for young arctic indigenous students related to documentation of indigenous language and knowledge are important and therefore should have priority.

My Ph.D at the Sami University College began as a part of the IPY (the International Polar Year) research project "Ealát." "*Ealát*" is a Sami word meaning "something to live on" (especially for reindeer), and it originates from the word *eallit* which means "to live." The project focuses on adaptation to the projected future climate change in world reindeer husbandry.

The University of the Arctic Ealát Institute was established as a legacy of the International Polar Year and grew out of the IPY Ealát research project. The Institute was established in a formal ceremony in 2011 at the Sami University College in Kautokeino, Norway and since then has not only offered an online course called Adaptation to Globalization — the Case of Reindeer Husbandry, but has coordinated numerous events and linked closely with other Arctic and indigenous Peoples' academic institutions across Scandinavia and Russia.

The Ealát Institute now has its own web pages where you learn about the Institute's work, and where future courses will be offered. Here you can also access a growing resource centre with documents and materials related to reindeer husbandry:

www.reindeerherding.org/tag/ealat/

LANGUAGE OF THE LAND

by Jeannette Armstrong

Jeannette Armstrong is an Okanagan Canadian author, educator, artist, and activist. She was born and grew up on the Penticton Indian Reserve in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley where she has lived for most of her life and has raised her two children. She is the recipient of numerous awards for her contributions to the international Indigenous community.

The Okanagan people are a First Nations and Native American people whose traditional territory spans the U.S.-Canada boundary in Washington state and British Columbia. The Okanagan word for "our place on the land" and "our language" is the same, so the Okanagan language is thought of as the "language of the land." This means that the land has taught us our language. The way we survived is to speak the language that the land offered us as its teachings, to know all the plants, animals, and seasons and construct language for them.

We also refer to the land and our bodies with the same root syllable. This means that the flesh, which is our body, is pieces of the land. The soil, the water, the air, and all other life forms contribute parts to be our flesh. We are our land/place. To not know and to not celebrate this is to be without language and without land. It is to be displaced.

The Okanagan teaches that anything displaced from all that it requires to survive in health will eventually perish. Unless place can be relearned, it compels all other life forms to displacement and then ruin. This is what is referred to as "wildness," a thing that cannot survive without special protective measures, and that requires other life forms to change behavior in its vicinity.

As Okanagans, our most essential responsibility is to learn to bond our individual selves and our communal selves to the land. Many of our ceremonies have been constructed for this. We join with the larger self, outward to the land, and rejoice in all that we are. We are this one part of Earth. Without this we are not human; we yearn, we are incomplete; and we are wild, needing to learn our place as pieces of the land. We cannot find joy because we need a place to nurture and protect our family/community/self. The thing Okanagans fear worst of all is to be removed from the land that is their life and their spirit.

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THE SAMI LANGUAGE

Where did it come from?

by John Weinstock, Ph.D.

The Sami language, or languages – for there are more than one – have evolved over many centuries. From a means of communication that enabled hunter/gatherers to survive in harsh, arctic conditions, to a language of nomadic reindeer herders some 500 years ago, to a form of speech enabling Sami to communicate with one another in the 19th century in such a fashion that the authorities were unable to understand them, to today's Sami language that has become the vehicle of a burgeoning Sami literature. The Sami have always had a remarkable ability to adapt to ever changing conditions. What do we know about the history of their language or, going further back, its prehistory? How did the Sami come to speak the languages of today?

Sami is a Uralic language – Finno-Ugric branch, related most closely to Finnish, but also to a number of other languages such as Estonian, Hungarian and Samoyed. At one time these languages were spoken in the vicinity of the Ural Mountains of Russia, but surprisingly, not in the Scandinavian and Kola peninsulas where Sami is spoken today. To make some sense of this we must look at the settlement of the Scandinavian Peninsula after the Last Glacial Maximum that ended about 20,000 years ago. Before then any humans so far north were forced to head south to glacial refuges until the climate improved. Once it became warmer, flora returned, and fauna and humans entered Scandinavia through whatever corridors were ice-free. Late Ahrensburgians – a Stone Age hunting culture from northwestern Europe – moved north along the west coast of Sweden (Hensbacka culture) and the Atlantic coast of Norway (Fosna culture) as far as Eastern Finnmark (Komsa culture) by circa 11,500 BP (before the present era). Post-Swiderian hunters/gatherers also came to Eastern Finnmark and Finnish Lapland from northwestern Russia as early as circa 11,000 BP, or perhaps even earlier. These various groups did not speak the same tongues nor did any of them speak a Sami language. Yet the "Sami" of Scandinavia today speak Sami. How can that be?

Before giving an answer to this question we have to discuss Sami ethnicity. Just when did these late Scandinavian Stone Age hunters become Sami? Wait, you say: they've always been Sami, haven't they? Well, no. A group defines itself by how it interacts with other groups with which it is periodically in contact, e.g. we migrate spring and fall, they have permanent dwellings; we herd reindeer, they grow crops; we speak one language, they speak another. Recent cultural-historical models date Sami ethnogenesis toward the end of the last millennium BCE (before the common era) when trappers/foragers began to distinguish between "us" and "them " — the latter often farmers. In other words, ethnic boundaries emerged through social interaction and a concomitant objectification of cultural practices, i.e. we do things in another way than they do. If we accept the last millennium BCE for the birth of Sami ethnicity, then who were these people who came to Scandinavia so much earlier and what language(s) did they speak? That they were not a uniform population is quite clear: they came via different routes and, moreover, present-day Sami genetic profiles vary significantly from northwest to southeast. Although there is no historical trace of the languages they spoke, we can conclude that they spoke multiple tongues that we might call Palaeo-European languages. How the descendants of those original settlers came to speak Sami is an enigma that has trumped scholars for well over a century. Many theories have been propounded, none satisfactory.

Recently, though, a Sami scholar has – in my view – solved the problem. Ante Aikio, in a series of papers suggested that phonological innovations in Pre-Sami led to Proto-Sami near the Gulf of Finland at the onset of the Iron Age (ca. 500 BCE). Think of Proto-Sami as the common ancestor of all of today's Sami languages, including those that are now extinct. Speakers of Proto-Sami moved north and northwest assimilating the Palaeo-European bands and replacing their languages with Proto-Sami throughout the interior of Scandinavia by the beginning of the Common Era. Over the following five centuries or so Proto-Sami disintegrated into early versions of today's Sami languages. But, the unknown languages had an effect on Proto-Sami and, thereby, on all the Sami languages.

If Proto-Sami replaced the Palaeo-European languages then there may be traces of the receding languages in Proto-Sami. Linguists term this substrate influence. Occasionally when two languages come in contact the one with more prestige replaces the other. Let us imagine the contact situation: early in the Iron Age these Palaeo-European groups each occupied mostly discrete territories in the interior of Fennoscandia and Kola where they hunted and foraged. This was the so-called *siida* system that lasted for centuries. The territory was divided up along what we would call ecological principles. Since fishing was essential during most periods in the annual cycle, the hunting/gathering areas were organized around rivers and inland lakes that were navigable summer and winter. These were the *siidas*. The boundaries between individual siidas were the watersheds between watercourses. The typical *siida* was formed around 8-11 hunters plus their families, hence a very small group. Mobility was mostly limited to the *siida* one lived in as a recent genetic study of the population structure of northern Sweden among Sami, Swedes and Finns shows: "a tendency towards marriages between individuals born in the same river valley region, at least until the mid 20th century," a reflection of the siidas of old, albeit with three ethnic groups represented. The few Palaeo-European speakers in each siida were no doubt easily influenced by the Proto-Sami bands moving up from the south. There was likely no conflict between groups; the Sami's small numbers mitigated against belligerence on their part, but there was admixture. And the immigrating Proto-Sami speakers had something to offer the Palaeo-European bands: a viable economic model with trade in furs and other hunting products playing a vital role.

Aikio has thus created a rigorous framework for dealing with vocabulary that has survived the demise of languages. His criteria: 1) the number of substrate items must inspire

(*WEINSTOCK continued on page 19*)

ART, HUMOR, and IMAGES of SURVIVAL

by faith fjeld

The Sami had no word for art until contact with Europeans. In *Greetings from Lappland*, the late Sami poet/artist Nils-Aslak Valkeapää wrote: "we have adopted words like 'art' and 'artists' from neighboring nations." He stressed that it is important for the Sami to absorb new elements into their traditional art and mould them into Sami forms. "Whether a culture is viable or not is dependant on its capacity to absorb new things and to find its own forms of expression which are in step with the times," he said.

Here in North America thousands of tribes, nations and villages speaking thousands of languages each have their own forms of expression. Their art and humor is as varied as their lands. Unfortunately since contact, however, the Indigenous Peoples of North America have been lumped together and defined by non-Native artists and photographers who have perceived them as nonentities, and portray them as noble and mystical, or else bloodthirsty but defeated. In that respect, the beautiful romantic "vanishing culture" sepia tone photographs by Edward Curtis are not that different from "End of the Trail" belt buckles. Such images promote cultural stereotypes about Natives that continue to confuse and misinform members of the dominant society.

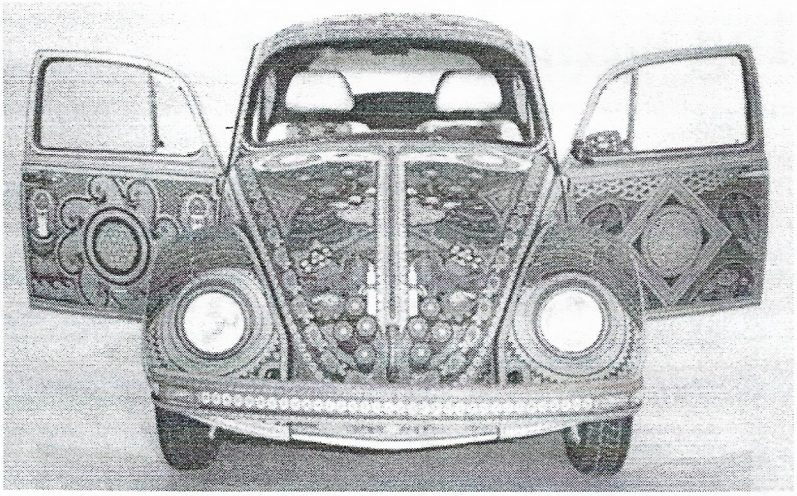
In his classic work *Give or Take a Century*, artist Joseph Senungetuk (Inupiaq) makes the following point: "The arts of the native have suffered immeasurably from foreign intrusion...The manufacture of so-called 'crafts' for the benefit of tourist sales has taken precedent over the loving care with which the arts were produced before white contact. This writer believes that first of all there must be a revival of learning, an understanding of the culture of the people, and the place of art in their lives."

Seen here, the "Eskimo Jam" CD cover, the beaded tennis shoes with 3 inch heels, the Volkswagen Beetle decorated with beads, and the presence of Coyotes in various forms are but a few examples of Native artists poking fun at American pop culture.

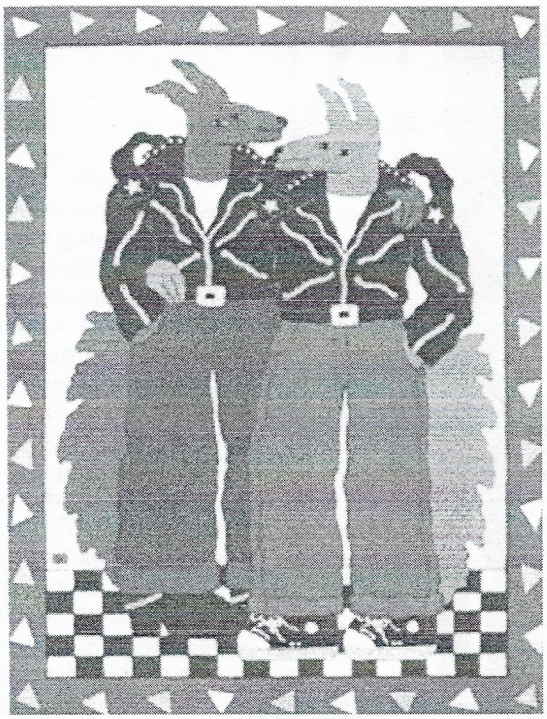
This brings us to Indian humor which plays a vital role in Native self-awareness. Janeen Antoine (Sicangu Lakota), director of American Indian Contemporary Arts, points out that Native communities see themselves very differently. Humor creates an openness that cannot be underestimated. She says that "Humor gives us a cosmic fix. It takes us out

"Eskimo Jam," Peter Twitchell (Yup'ik), CD cover. A jar of salmonberry jam sits on the snow-covered Alaska tundra with salmonberry plants in the background. A spoon shaped like a guitar stirs things up. Peter, a guitarist and song writer, is descended from Reindeer Project herders who worked with the Alaska Sami.

"NDN Girlz," Teri Greves (Kiowa), beaded high-heeled tennis shoes. Teri's mother sold Native beadwork made by artists from all around the country who stopped into her trading post. At the age of eight she was taught to bead by an adopted Shoshone aunt. Working with Native elders, Greves has combined ancient methods of adornment with funky, hip design expressions — a beautiful example of old and new working in harmony.



"Vochol." Huichol artists from Nayaret and Jalisco, Mexico used glass beads and fabric to decorate a 1990 Volkswagen Beetle. "Vochol" is a combination of "*vocho*," a popular Mexican term for VW Beetles, and "Huichol." More than two million glass beads went into this piece.

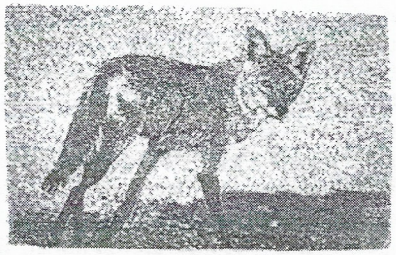


"Wide Eyed and Bushy Tailed," Harry Fonseca (Maidu), acrylic on canvas. Fonseca painted his first Coyote in 1979 and for the next 15 years until his passing, Coyote was a major focus of his popular paintings, posters and calendars. Over the years Coyote allowed him to constantly update what he called "this remarkable myth that supports other realities. At times, Coyote is very playful and foolish, however, I never forget he is wild, he can bite very, very hard — and he is a survivor." — Harry Fonseca

of our center of the universe, enabling us to laugh at ourselves — a saving grace when there seems so little to laugh at."

Here's an example of Indian humor in the face of racism in a true story told by artist Duane Slick (Sauk and Fox): "My father and his cousin walked into the diner in Tama, Iowa. Tama is located just outside the Mesquackie settlement. They sat at a booth and waited for the waitress to serve them. After several minutes the waitress approached their table and says 'We don't serve Indians!' My father's cousin just looks at the waitress and says very sharply, 'We don't want Indians! We want cheeseburgers'!"

Slick says, "I've always enjoyed this story, because somehow it's about the right to equal access and information. It's also very humorous and sarcastic in the face of an ugly situation. That's a form of empowerment. It's an example of Indian humor's ability to slide around words and definitions, unveiling the images and expectations they create."



"There is a Coyote in the Television," Duane Slick (Sauk and Fox), mixed media on plexiglass. "There is a Coyote in the television, and he has been here for quite some time." — Duane Slick

A DIFFERENT YIELD
Speaking with the Corn

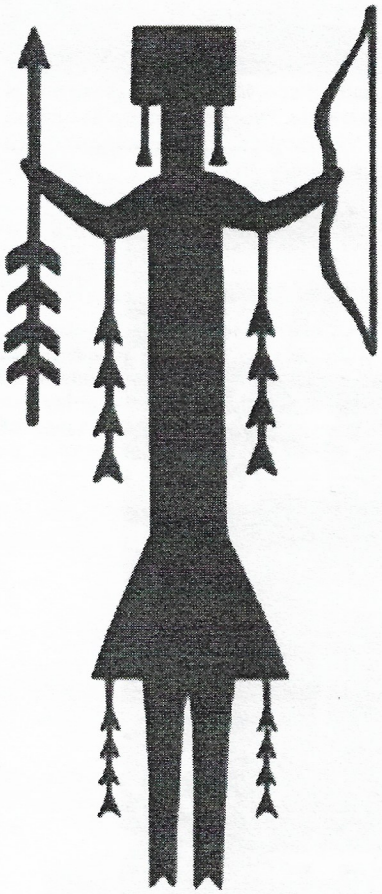
by Linda Hogan, Ph.D.

This is an excerpt from Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision, *an anthology of postcolonial thought by Indigenous scholars edited by Marie Battiste, Ph.D, and published by UBC Press in 2000. It is printed here with the permission of the author, Linda Hogan (Chickasaw). [Editor's note: compare the Hopi drawing of the Corn Mother (below) and the Sami pictograph of Juksáhkká (facing page). Are we talking about kindred Spirits?]*

When I was a girl I listened to the sounds of corn plants. A breeze would begin in a remote corner of the field and move slowly toward the closest edge, whispering. After the corn harvest at my uncle's farm, the pigs would be set loose in the cornfield to feed on what corn was left behind kernels too dry for the picking, too small for sale, to cobs that were simply missed by human hands. Without a moment's hesitation, the pigs would make straight for any plant that still held an ear of corn, bypassing the others. They would listen, it seemed, to the denser song of corn where it still lived inside its dress of husk.

Barbara McClintock is a biologist who received a Nobel Prize for her work on gene transposition in corn plants. When I first heard of her, it confirmed what I thought to be true about the language of corn. Her method was to listen to what the corn had to say, to translate what the plants spoke into a human tongue. McLintock came to know each plant intimately. She watched the daily green journeys of their growth toward sky and sun. She knew her plants in a way that a healer would know them, from inside. She saw an alive world, inside plants, a fire of life. "In the summertime," she wrote, "when you walk down the road, you'll see that the tulip leaves, if it's a little warm, turn themselves around so their backs are towards the sun. Within the restricted areas in which they live, they move around a great deal. These organisms are fantastically beyond our wildest expectations."

A few years ago, I was fortunate to meet the Jamaican artist Everald Brown. Brown is what Jamaicans call an "intuitive artist," though he himself says only that the doves have taught him his craft. One of his intricately carved stringed instruments is painted with a blue sky. White, luminous doves are flying across it. He lives in a rural mountain town where houses have settled in with the enduring red earth. He creates carvings, paintings, and musical instruments that are radiantly alive with a resonance reaching far beyond the material and far beyond the creations of most other artists who work with the same wood and pigment. And his wood carvings, made of *lignum vitae*, the tree of life, are rich with the lives of animals and birds emerging from the heavy center of wood.



Hopi Corn Mother

In Indigenous traditions, healers are often called interpreters because they are the ones who are able to hear the world and pass its wisdom along. They are the ones who return to the heart of creation. When we go back in human history, we find that it is not only the people now recognized as continuing in a tribal tradition who have known the voices of earth, how corn both sings her own song and grows better with the songs and prayers of the people. In recent times, the term "myth" has come to signify falsehood, but when we examine myths we find that they are a high form of truth. They are the deepest, innermost cultural stories of our human journeys toward spiritual and psychological growth. An essential part of myth is that it allows for our return to the creation, to a mythical time. It allows us to hear the world new again.

Octavio Paz has written that in older oral traditions an object and its name were not separated. One equaled the other. To speak of corn, for instance, was to place the corn before a person's very eyes and ears. It was in mythic time that there was no abyss between the word and the thing that it named, but Paz adds that, "as soon as man acquired consciousness of himself, he broke away from the natural world and made another world inside himself." This broken connection appears not only in language and myth but also in our philosophies of life. There is a separation that has taken place between us and nature. Something has broken deep in our core. We are losing vast tracts of the wilderness, we are losing a part of ourselves, he says, "The whole of western society is approaching a physical and mental breaking point." The result is a spiritual fragmentation that has accompanied our ecological destruction. With the nuclear reactor accident in Chernobyl, Russia, it was not the authorities who told us that the accident had taken place. It was the wind. The wind told the story.

The earth speaks its symptoms to us. I want to make a point here about language and its power. While we can't say what language is much beyond saying that it is a set of signs and symbols that communicates meaning, we know it is the most highly regarded human ability. Language usage in fact often determines social and class order in our societal systems. Without language humans have no way of knowing what lies beneath the surface of one another. Yet there

are communications that take place on a level that goes deeper than our somewhat limited human spoken languages. We read one another via gesture, stance, facial expression, scent. And sometimes this communication is more honest, more comprehensible than the words we utter.

What we are really searching for is a language that takes the side of the amazing and fragile life on our life-giving planet. A language that knows corn and that corn knows, a language that takes hold of the mystery of what's around us and offers it back to us full of awe and wonder. It is a language of creation, of divine fire, a language that goes beyond the strict borders of scientific inquiry and right into the heart of the mystery itself. Meridel Le Sueur writes:

Something enters the corn
at the moment of fusion
of the male and female
that is unknown to scientists.
From some star
a cosmic quickening, some
light movement-fast chemical
that engenders illuminates
quickens the conception
lights the fuse.

We are looking for a tongue that speaks with reverence for life. Without it we have no home — have no place of our own within the creation. It is not only the vocabulary of science that we desire. We also want a language of that different yield. A yield rich as the harvests of the earth, a yield that returns us to our own sacredness.

In most southwestern Indian cultures the pollen of corn is sacred. It is the life giving seed of creation and fertility. Papago planters of corn speak to the life-sustaining plants. Night after night the traditional planter walks around his field singing up the corn:

"The corn comes up
It comes up green
Here upon our fields
White tassels unfold
Blue evening falls
Blue evening falls
Near by in every direction
It sets the corn tassels
trembling"

I know that corn. I know that blue evening. These words open a door to a house in which we have always lived. Once I ground corn with a smooth round stone on an ancient sloping *metate*. Leaning over kneeling on the ground grinding the blue corn seeing how the broken dry kernels turned soft to fine meal. I saw a history in that yield, a deep knowing of whére our lives come from all the way back to the starch and sugar of corn.

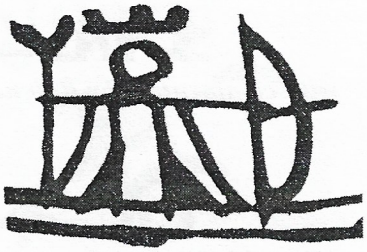
She, the corn, is called our grandmother. She is the woman who rubbed her palms against her body and the seeds fell out of her skin. They fell from her body until her sons discovered her secrets. Before she left the world she told them how to plant. She said plant the beans and corn together, plant their little sister squash between them. This, from an oral tradition, came to be rediscovered by agriculturalists hundreds of years later —almost too late — in their research on how to maintain the richness of farm soil.

Cornmeal and pollen are offered to the sun at dawn. The ears of the corn are listening and waiting. They want peace. The stalks of the corn want clean water, sun that is in its full clean shining. The leaves of the corn want good earth. The earth wants peace. The birds who eat the corn do not want poison. Nothing wants to suffer. The wind does not want to carry the stories of death. At night, in the cornfields, when there is no more mask of daylight, you hear the plants talking among themselves. The wind passes through. It's all there, the languages, the voices of wind, dove, corn, stones. The language of life won't be silenced.

In Chaco Canyon, in the center, my sister Donna told me, there is a *kiva*, a ceremonial room in the earth. This place has been uninhabited for what seems like forever. It has been without water so long that there are theories that the ancient people disappeared as they journeyed after water. Donna said that there was a corn plant growing out of the center of the *kiva*. It was alone, a single plant. It had been there since the ancient ones,the old ones who came before us all, those people who knew the stories of corn. There was one corn plant growing out of the holy place. It planted itself yearly. It was its own mother. With no water, no person to care for it, no turning over of the soil, this corn plant rises up. Earth yields.

Do you remember the friend whom the leaves talked to? We need to be that friend. Listen. The ears of the corn are singing. They are telling their stories and singing their songs.

Δ



Juksáhkká, the Sami Grandmother Spirit of Hunting

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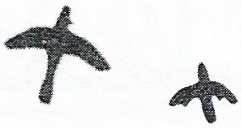
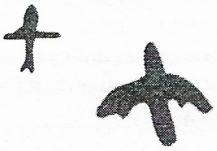
ON LANGUAGE, SURVIVAL,

with commentary by Roland Thorstensson, Ph.D





The first two lines of Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's poem are: "My home is in my heart / it moves with me." A few years ago my own heart's home was northern Norway in close proximity to Samiland. During that year my wife Edi and I worked on several translations of literary works by northern Norwegian writers. We were fortunate to work with a Sami scholar Harald Gaski. The result of this cooperation was a book, In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun: Contemporary Sami Prose and Poetry *[see Troy Storfjell's review,* Báiki *Issue #17, 1998.]*

To work with languages as intensely and intimately as one does when one translates was fascinating. It was frustrating at times when a wonderful turn of phrase in the original language lost its luster no matter what one did with it, but exciting when words, metaphors and phrases cooperated, when a poem didn't "end at the treeline."

Edi and I translated from Norwegian to English, Harald Gaski, whose first language is Sami and second Norwegian, checked our translations against the Sami original texts. Here are some of the shorter contributions to the anthology. The first four sections reflect on the most wonderful tool and toy we have: language.

[Editor's note: This two page spread first appeared in Báiki *Issue #18, 1998.]*

Roland Thorstensson is Professor Emeritus of Scandinavian Studies, Gustavus Adolphus College

THIS POEM ENDS AT THE TREELINE

I pushed the boat in motion
up the hillside,
the pole became blunt and useless
the pole disappeared.
This poem ends at the treeline.
— B. Moske

NOTHING

Nothing stays longer
in our souls
than the language we inherit
It liberates our thoughts
unfolds our mind
and softens our life.
— Paulus Utsi

IT'S SO HARD

It's so hard to write and explain
hard
and the better I know
how to write and explain
the harder it gets:
language is a prison
the ability to explain
is the beginning of silence.
— B. Moske

Yoik — sometimes spelled "joik" — is Sami poetry which is sung or chanted.

THE YOIK

The yoik is a sanctuary for our
thoughts
Therefore it has
few spoken words
free sounds reach
farther than words.

The yoik lifts our spirit
allows our thoughts to soar
above the little clouds
has them
as its friend
in nature's beauty
— Paulus Utsi

The Sami are an Indigenous People, a minority culture once threatened by extinction, a people of nature trying to survive, trying to help us survive. The snail is a snail, a survivor in any language.

LITTLE SNAIL

I see a snail
on the mushroom
I bend over
take it in my hand
blow on it
and say
Little snail
let
my reindeer calf
grow horns too
— Inger and Paulus Utsi

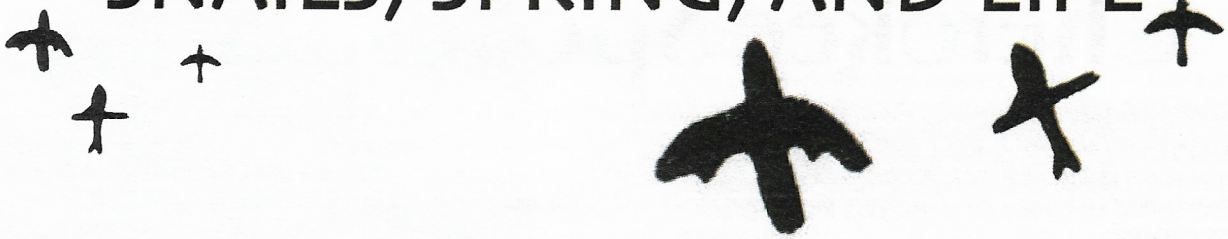
REFLECTIONS BY PEOPLE OF NATURE

In these modern times
the thoughts of people of nature
are like dust
if something touches them
they turn to nothing
lift
and disappear
They are like the mountain birch
when it is weighed down
and bent
to never again stand erect
— Inger and Paulus Utsi

IN THE CLOUDS

In the clouds the wind runs amuck
thinking it can extinguish
the tiny fragile light
But it keeps flickering
giving the Sami
belief in the future and strength
— Paulus Utsi

SNAILS, SPRING, AND LIFE



AS LONG AS

As long as we have waters
where fish can swim
As long as we have land
where reindeer can graze
As long as we have woods
where wild animals can hide
we are safe on this earth.

When our homes are gone and
our land destroyed
— then where are we to be?

Our own land, our lives' bread,
has shrunk
the mountain lakes have risen
rivers have become dry
The streams sing in sorrowful voices
the land grows dark,
the grass is dying
The birds grow silent and leave

The good gifts we have received
no longer move our hearts
Things meant to make life easier
have made life less

Painful is the walk
on rough roads of stone
Silent cry the people of
the mountains

While time rushes on
our blood becomes thin
our language no longer resounds
The water no longer speaks.
— Paulus Utsi

The seasons Edi and I experienced 250 miles north of the Arctic Circle were not those we were used to from our years in Minnesota and central Sweden. All the seasons had their distinctive beauty, even the Arctic winter nights, but spring was the most dramatic. B. Moske hears, sees and feels spring thus:

I LISTEN

I listen
one more time:
The sounds of spring come to me
more clearly
And the sounds are no longer
just sounds
but also light
endless days
longing for waters
where the char swim
the rivers' melting crust of ice

For each week the days grow
longer
longer for each day
life grows shorter.
Humans are humans' solace:
I let the child run,
on swift legs,
onward,
without slowing it down.
— B. Moske

THE SHADOW

In the moonshine I leave
gentle plains behind me
The shadow, the shadow
is my friend
The shadow from the skis
The shadow from the pole
My shadow
follows me
as long as the moon is shining
— Paulus Utsi

And life? What about life? Valkeapää says: "Home, is where your heart is." But it's not only in country songs that hearts can be restless and rootless. The Sami heart roams, yearns and feels lonely as well. Perhaps the snail is to be envied. Carrying one's home on one's back is an ingenious idea. Or did the snail interpret Valkeapää too literally?

And who will accompany us as we travel alone across life's moonlit frozen tundra? The shadows, says the poet, our own shadows are our friends in tow. For awhile.

And what will happen to the tracks we leave behind us in the snow? Paulus Utsi knows.

OUR LIFE

Our life
is like a ski track
on the white open plains
The wind erases it before each
morning dawns
— Paulus Utsi

I SIT AND LOOK AT MY OWN LIFE

I sit and look at my own life:
countryside.
cities
valleys
mountains
always on the move.
and I,
the eternal wanderer
will not become rooted
until the roots
have grown through me.
—B. Moske

Cherokee Spokespeople

Swedish-Cherokee artist, America Meredith blends traditional styles from Native America and Europe with pop imagery of her childhood. She is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee language and syllabary figure prominently in her work, as they are the strongest visual imagery unique to her tribe. America earned her MFA in painting from the San Francisco Art Institute and her BFA from the University of Oklahoma. She has shown throughout the United States and in Canada and Europe in the last 17 years and has won numerous awards.

by America Meredith

Spokecards are laminated cards that can be held in place by the spokes of a bicycle wheel, which bike messengers use as souvenirs for bike races and other messenger events. The international bike messenger community is a surprisingly close-knit network spanning major cities on six continents, so I enlisted the aid of couriers and other cyclists to stage an international art exhibit on spokecards, *the Cherokee Spokespeople Project.* I distributed hundreds of spokecards by hand, at San Francisco Bicycle Messenger Association meetings, at cycle courier races, and through the mail. This project continued from 2004 to 2011.

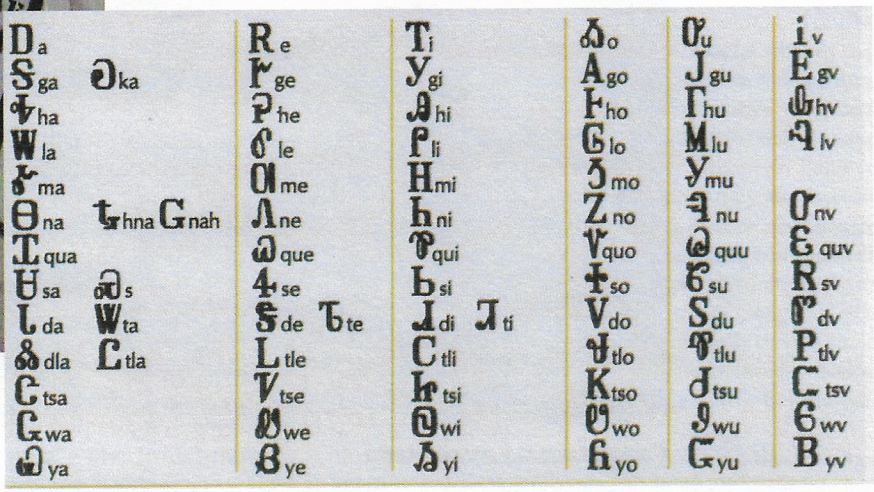
Cherokee is the southern branch of the Iroquoian language family and is the native language of the Cherokee Nation, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the United Keetoowah Band. The language has a unique writing system developed by Sequoyah in the early nineteenth century that is still in use today in a modified form. With less than ten thousand Native speakers, primarily in North Carolina and Oklahoma, Cherokee, like all other Native American Languages, struggles to survive as the social and economic impetus to speak English only drives out smaller languages. According to Cherokee Nation tribal leadership, our current generation, the fourteenth generation since European contact with the Cherokees, is said to be the generation that decides whether the language grows or dies.

My spokecards carry Cherokee words or phrases both in syllabary and Roman letters to aid in pronunciation, as well as images to illustrate the words. After receiving a spoke card, the participating cyclists who sent me documentation — a photograph, digital image or video — of the card featuring their city could request a hand-drawn spokecard with a word of their choice, as long as it was a word that could be illustrated. For words that don't exist yet in Cherokee, I sought out the help of Native speakers to create new words and phrases, using traditional Cherokee methods of description. For instance, I asked David Scott to invent a word for "Swedish" and he created *Aniuganasta* or "they are very sweet." After several native speakers drew a blank for "magpie," requested by no less than three bikers, Beverly "Mooney" Squirrel invented the new phrase, *uwonidi tsisqua*, or "chatty/outspoken bird" for "magpie."

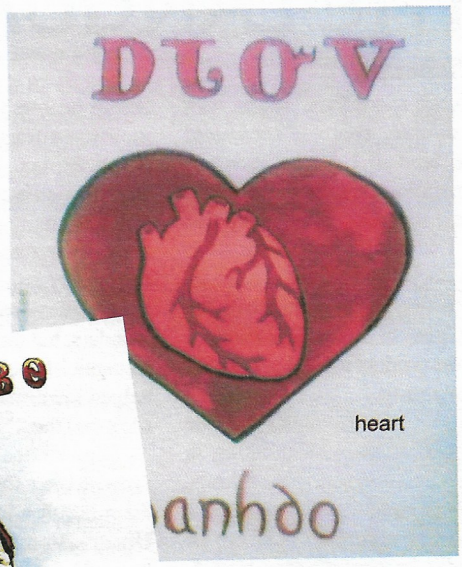
To survive, Cherokee cannot be relegated to the past or isolated in one geographic area. Cherokee Spokespeople is a small step toward introducing new people to the language and recontextualizing the language in an international urban setting.

Rochester, Minnesota: (l-r) Bronze seated statues of C.H. Mayo II and William James Mayo are photographed in front of the Mayo Clinic, which they founded. They are the grandfather and great uncle of Dr. Charles H. (Charlie) Mayo II, who is a beloved Elder and artist in the North American Sami community. According to Charlie, "...they both rode bicycles in their youth." This photo by Ted Soroos includes a bicycle sporting a Cherokee spokescard illustrating a zebra.

(left) America Meredith: *"Ssiquoya Dagoliyesgv Unvquolada"* (*"Sequoyah's Reading Rainbow"*), fumage of palo santo smoke on mulberry bark paper, 13" x 10," 2011. Sequoyah dealt regularly with whites who had settled in his area. He called their writing "talking leaves," and saw the system as a way to transmit information on paper to other people in distant places. Around 1809 he created a syllabary of 86 characters for the Cherokee language (shown below).



blizzard



heart

Inuit

Three of America Meredith's Cherokee spokescards.

TELLING OUR STORIES

Photo by and © Kenneth Hætta

THE LANGUAGE OF KNITTING

by Laura Ricketts

Knitting, like all specialties, has its own language. Of course, there is technical language: cast on, bind off, knit, purl, increase, decrease, not to mention the abbreviations and language structure found in patterns, but this is not of which I write. Knitted fabric itself tells a story. The story begins with the material available to the creator, and continues with the parts the creator puts in of his or herself. It only ends when the product itself is completed and begins its own story.

To illustrate this, many readers may be familiar with Aran sweaters originating in Ireland. There is a fanciful story of Aran knits, which began when a gentleman saw, bought and wrote about the first Aran pullover he found in a Dublin knit shop around 1925. These sweaters are centuries old, he told us, citing a picture of a man in the *Book of Kells*. The man is covered in Celtic knots, which twine about him, creating a beautiful fabric of gold. Tradition holds that each sweater is a unique combination of symbols, braids and signs that signify both the knitter and the wearer, and help identify the fisherman should he drown at sea.

Unfortunately, like many grand stories, these Irish traditions are a bunch of blarney. In truth, Aran sweaters began the century before he saw this sweater, in the home cottage movement designed as poverty assistance after the potato famine. They are made of natural, undyed wool, which is cheaper than dyed wool. Based on older, gansey-style fisherman sweaters, the designer and knitter substituted cable patterns for the gansey knit/purl motifs. Yes, many symbols were created and lovingly knit into these textile wonders, but they began newer traditions than the romanticists believe. And the only hand knit that helped identify a drowned sailor was a badly knit sock that the knitter recognized as her own.

Sámi knitted mittens follow similar lines as the Aran sweater myths. And my journey in studying them began a long time ago. In 1992, I went to Ulaanbaator, Mongolia to teach English as a Second Language at the State Pedagogical College and help in a local church. I had many Mongol and Kazakh friends. The majority of Mongols in the country lives in round, felt tents called *gers* with the majority of the Mongols outside of the capitol city being nomadic sheepherders. I traveled through the country from China to Russia on the train, but never got to the extreme northwest where the Mongol reindeer people live. I read about them, though, and talked to friends who had been to Lake Huvsgul, where they live, but my only memento was a small birch bark butter container from the region.

Fast-forward to 2010 when I attended the Nordic Knitting Conference held at the Nordic Museum in Seattle, Washington. I have been a knitter for years, but especially love the fine color work, which is characteristic of the Nordic lands. As I walked through the museum's regular holdings I saw many beautiful textiles characteristic of the various People groups in and around Sweden, Finland, and Norway. Traditional outfits, shawls, slipper inserts – it was all there – including the gákti of several Sámi siida. I was excited and surprised to find similarities between the Sámi and Mongols: nomadic history, herders, similar dwellings and crafts, even the commonality of reindeer.

As a textile enthusiast, I was also attracted to the wonderful colors in the gákti. To me, the clear blues, reds and yellows spoke to me of a people who love beauty, peace and truth. "Where are the Sámi knitted goods?" I asked.

Here come the myths: "There are none," I was told. "The Sámi peoples live too far North to herd sheep. They herd reindeer, and you can't spin reindeer fur. There is no knitting tradition among the Sami, and even if you did find Sámi knitting, it would be with Finnish, Norwegian, Russian or Swedish designs. The Sámi have made no knitting contributions."

Because you are reading this article, you know that this is not the true story. I did not stop my search with those answers, but researched through Norwegian, Finnish, Swedish, Russian and Sámi websites and books to find a beautiful wealth of Sámi knitted patterns, pictures and history.

Knitting came to the far north slightly after it arrived in Norway. Traditionally, reindeer skin boots and gloves were stuffed with softened sedge grass, prepared by the women, a practice that continues up until today. But having learned knitting from interaction with Europeans, Sámi soon made knitting their own in the mid-1800s and added this to their clothing choices. While nomadic reindeer herders did not keep sheep, Coastal Sámi have been shepherds for generations, and have used their wool to spin and weave. Reindeer herders obtained their knitted goods through trade. Knitting has remained in the outskirts of Sámi duodji ever since, mainly being used for mittens, or, in North Sámi, *fáhcat* or *girjefáhcat*.

Now, let us look first at the materials of Sámi mittens. This, we could say, is like the building blocks of knitting language: words and sounds. Sámi knit mittens are made from sheep's wool. Wool mittens are not as impervious to the elements as reindeer mittens, but they are useful in the late spring and early winter — indeed, even in summer — when the cold is not as severe. During the coldest time of winter, wool mittens are used as a liner mitten inside reindeer mittens. One Inari friend stated they are a better buffer against the hard seams in reindeer gloves than grass, and are easier to use with a lasso than either reindeer gloves or bare hands.

Secondly, let's look at the characteristics of the mittens which reflect the Sámi people who make and wear them. These craftsmen and women are like authors forming sentences and phrases. Like the mainstream duodji, mittens are useful and practical, but also beautiful. The stories they tell speak of beauty wrought out of limitation. They are made to be practical and durable in a rugged element.

Sámi mittens from the Sápmi interior do not have ribbed cuffs, but they do have braids and tassels. Work mittens have a rolled cuff, and decorative mittens usually have a non-stretchy, decorative edging made with twisted stitches and multiple colors. A herder or any outdoor workman could shake off cuffless mittens in a hurry whenever bare hands were necessary. Mittens could then be tied to a harness by the braids, or tucked into a belt, cuff down, keeping out the snow. Braids were also used to hang the mittens by the fire to dry after they were washed.

In contrast, Coastal Sámi mittens always had cuffs to help keep mittens on for fishermen working in cold surroundings. Like other northern fisherman, some of these mittens were knitted with two thumbs – one on each side of the four fingers. The material of which these mittens are made, sheep's wool, is quite amazing: wool naturally repels moisture, making it an ideal medium for fisherman's mittens. When the non-absorptive threshold is crossed, wool can absorb up to 30% its weight without feeling damp. When this percentage is surpassed, a fisherman with a two-thumbed mitten can rotate his hand to the other thumb and work in comfort for double the time. Lastly, fisherman mittens were knitted from singles roving at a larger gauge and size. Moisture and friction made when working with the fishing gear would full (or, felt) the fabric to a smaller dimension and perfect fit for the wearer.

In another example of the versatile and practical Sámi knitting, Mountain Sámi mittens do not have a braid and tassel, or if they do, the braid is very short. I have read that this is to keep the braid from catching on trees and undergrowth common in this area. Therefore, braids are not as useful in this region as in other places in Sápmi.

For all areas, work mittens were almost always made from natural, undyed spun roving of grey and brown. Pure white roving was used to dye or make pure white bridal mittens. Colorful, decorative mittens were worn to church on Sundays or for church celebrations like Easter, weddings and christenings.

Finally, the mittens themselves tell the final story of different siidas and regional differences in Sápmi. The first photograph of Sámi knitting I have found dates from 1867. In this shot, a group of reindeer herders pose for an outdoor summer photograph. Even though it is summer, one of the men in the forefront is wearing knitted mittens. (Photo from Nils-Aslak Valkeapääs book *Beaivi Áhcázan*) A photograph in the archives of Tromsø University shows a group of Sámi ladies from 1883; one woman is wearing the same style of mittens.

This style of mittens is usually referred to as Ávzi mittens, the town in Norway where Elen Clementsdattar lived. There are similar forms all across Sápmi. Elen Clementsdatter (1841- 1920) was a Sámi woman, and wife to a Sámi reindeer herder. She was renowned for her highly skilled mitten knitting and band weaving, and she is credited with creating this unique design. It features a colorful but simple pattern around the cuff, a diamond-based pattern on the back of the hand and thumb, and a blank palm and inside of the thumb. This interesting design is made with knitting technique not found anywhere else. The majority of color knitting is created by using two different balls of yarn, switching back and forth between them throughout each row, and carrying the yarn not used on the unseen side of the knitted fabric. In contrast, Elen knitted with upwards of ten colors per row and carried the unworked yarn vertically to the next row. Since she was an expert band weaver, this technique was probably borrowed from weaving. Most definitely, it conserved the use of colored yarn, a difficult and potentially expensive item to obtain or make in the far north.

While the Ávzi mittens are distinctive, they are not the only distinctive Sámi mittens. In fact, each gákti has its own mitten, as can be seen in *Sámi Duodji* book, published by the Finnish Sami museum in 2006. Each type of Sámi mitten echoes its gákti's colors or patterns. Mittens from Kautokeino and Enontekio are red, blue and white and imitate the stacks and stacks of colorful ribbons that encircle the girtle, cuffs and hats. Mittens from the Inari region often incorporate green and sometimes yellow along with the red, blue and white. Mittens from the Mountain Sami in Sweden also use green, but they also borrow heavily from the Swedish mittens around them and use a colorful rosebud motif, while mittens from the Southern Sami and Utsjoki region of Finland have borrowed the Norwegian Selbu star. Skolt Sámi mittens usually have a stitch of white between all the colored stitches, creating a softer, but equally distinctive, pattern.

Like many things, however, these are not hard and fast rules. Knitting, like language and food, is affected by trading and communication with those who live nearby. This is especially so amongst traditionally nomadic peoples, like the Sámi. I encourage you, if you have a gákti, to find, buy or knit a pair of mittens to complete it. Even without a full gákti, Sámi mittens speak as a beautiful reminder and celebration of a living, historical tradition.

Thanks to Áile Aikio from the Siida Sami Museum in Inari, Finland, and Dikka Strom from the University of Tromsø in Norway for their help with this article.

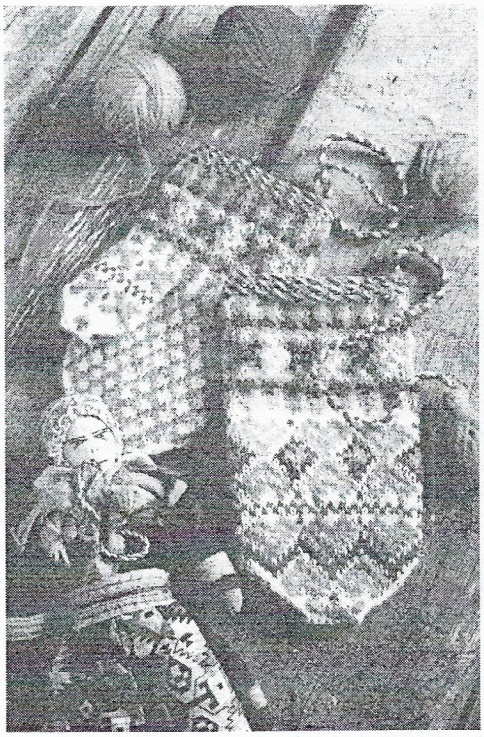
(*LAURA RICKETTS continued overleaf*)

SÁMI CHILDREN'S MITTENS

by Laura Ricketts

These mittens, knitted from a photograph of a pair of children's mittens from the Norsk Museum in Oslo (with permission of the museum), are typical fancy or "church" mittens from the Åvzi region of Norway. They were obtained in the town of Kautokeino, a crossroads of sorts for the Sámi people, as most of its residents are of Sámi descent. Reindeer herders pass through on their way to the coast and the Easter celebration is a huge gathering, traditionally important as a time to wed and to christen babies.

In my pattern, I have standardized the decreases and corrected discrepancies in the original, for example, making all lice stitches blue. If you want to copy the original pair of mittens exactly; continue the red-and-white pattern as established to the edge on both the front and the back. Knit two together to decrease at the mitten and thumb tip. Substitute a red one-stitch louse for the two blue ones that I used in the pattern. At the tip of both mittens, continue the larger red X motif, knowing that it will not completely fit in the tip. On the last row pull the tail of the yarn through the remaining stitches on the needle, and pull them tight.



The knitting pattern for the Sámi children's mittens, shown in color on the previous page, is by the author. It is based on a pair of mittens in the Norsk Folkemuseum in Oslo. The Swedish Sámi doll (lower left), is from the collection of the author.

INSTRUCTIONS

Mittens

CO 63 sts as foll: With CC1, CO 1st,with CC2, COl st with MC. CO1 st, pick up CCI strand from over the other 2 strands and CO1 st rep from * alternating CC2, MC, CC1, always bringing the new yarn over the old yarn until 64 sts are on the needle. Divide sts evenly onto four needles, pm, and join in the rnd.

With MC, k 1 rnd.

Work Tri-Color Half Braid as foll,

Note: The yarns will twist around each other.

Rnd 1: Bring all 3 strands to the front of work. * Bringing new yarn over old yarn, with CC1, p1, with CC2, p1, with MC, p1; rep from * to end of rnd. (Maintain an even, but not tight, tension.) Move strands to back of work. Do not break yarns.

Rnd 2: With MC, k.

Rnd 3: Rep Rnd 1.

Rnd 4:With MC, M1, k to end - 64sts.

Break CC2 strand.

Work Rnds 1-24 of Mitten Chart. Cut and reattach CC2 as desired.

Thumbhole

Note: The thumbhole is placed between the two plain rounds in main color (MC).

Right mitten only,

Rnd 25: With MC, k33, with waste yarn, k 14, sl these 14 sts to left-hand needle, with MC, k14, work in patt to end of rnd.

Left mitten only,

Rnd 25: With MC, k49, with waste yarn, k14, sl these 14 sts to left-hand needle, with MC, k14, work in patt to the end.

Both mittens,

Work Rnds 26-65 of chart — 16 sts rem. Place 1st eight sts on 1 needle and last eight sts on a 2nd needle. Use Kitchener Stitch to sew sts tog.

Thumb

Remove waste yarn and place 28 live stitches onto needles. Join MC at lower right edge of opening, leaving an 8-inch (20.3-cm) tail. Pick up and k 1 st in lower right edge of opening, k 14 sts from lower edge of opening, pick up and k 1 st from other end of lower left edge of opening,

pick up and k 1 st in upper edge of opening, k 14 sts from upper edge of opening, pick up and k 1 st in upper edge of opening - 32 sts total. Divide sts evenly on dpn, pm, and join in the rnd. Work Rnds 1-24 of Thumb Chart - 12 sts rem. Place first 6 sts on one needle and last 6 sts on a second needle. Use Kitchener Stitch to sew sts tog.

Braid and Tassel

Step 1: Each mitten requires 3 pieces of yarn, each about 36 inches (91 cm) long. Using the tapestry needle pull each piece of yarn through a separate stitch at the cast-on area, pulling until both sides of the yarn are each about 18 inches [46 cm] long.

Step 2: Braid the 3 doubled strands, incorporating the cast-on tails with the appropriate colors.

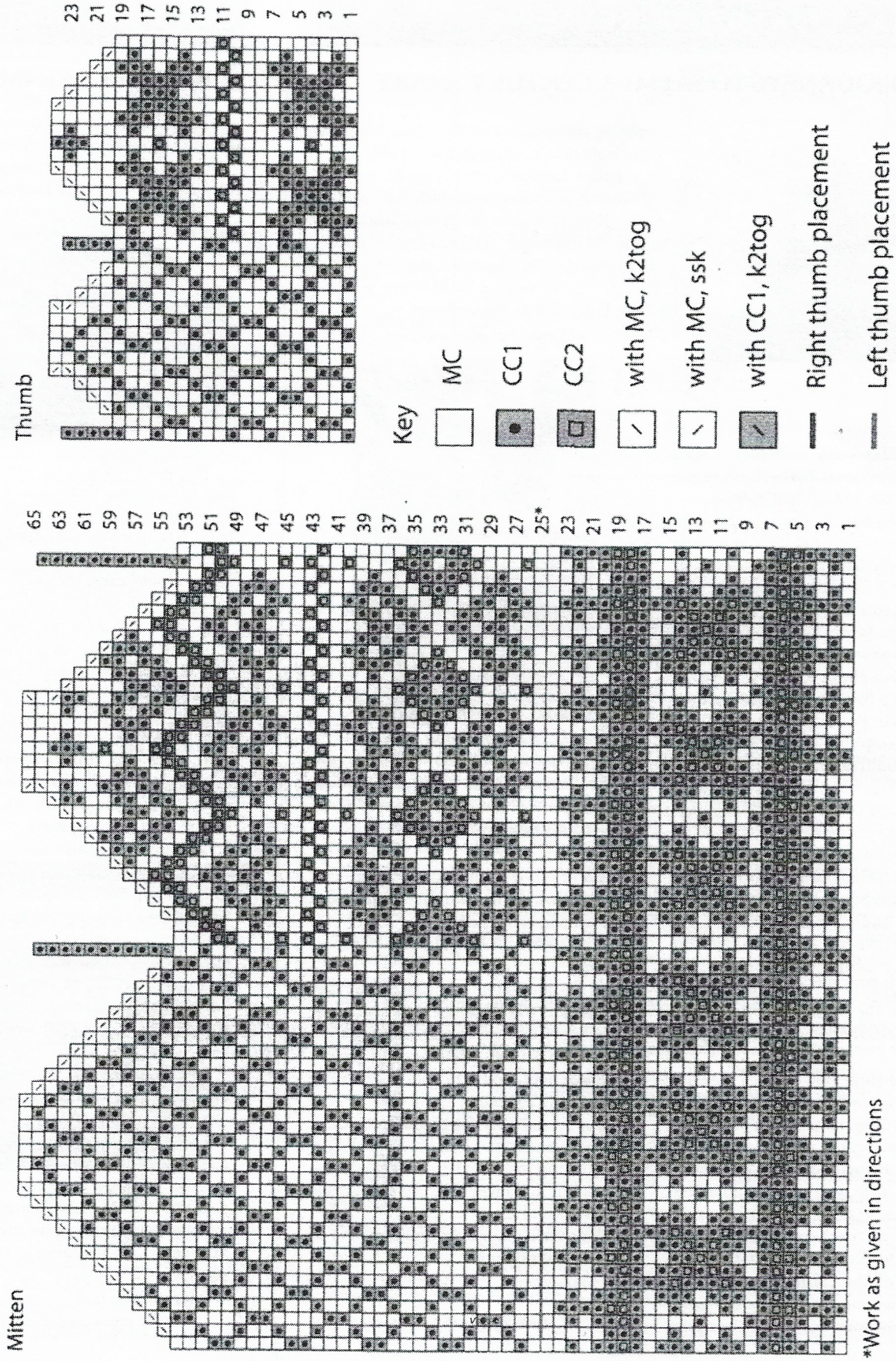
Step 3: Lay the ends of the braid across the wide end of a credit card or cardboard. Wrap CC1 about 40 times around the credit card, keeping the braid in the center. Tie the top of the tassel tightly with a long piece of CC1 threaded on the tapestry needle. Ease the yarn wrap off the card. Wrap the top of the tassel tightly with CC1, pulling the remaining yarn through the top of the wrap down to the ends. Trim the ends of the tassel.

Finishing

Remove any temporary knots. Weave in loose ends, tightening gaps at thumb join and at yarn changes block, cover mitten with a damp towel and press with a hot iron, avoiding the braid and tassel.

Laura Ricketts is a hand-knitwear designer and historian. She lives in north-central Indiana and loves to learn more about Sami mittens. Websites to check out:

www.avzidesign.com
www.manndalen-husflidslag.no
www.stashmuffinsloosethreads.com



BÁIKI BOOK REVIEWS

TWO JOURNEYS TO SÁPMI A CENTURY APART

***Sámi - Walking with Reindeer.* Erika Larsen, self published 2013. Hard cover, 108 pages, ISBN 978-1-909076-06-8**

Photography has the magical ability to show us the surface of things in minute detail, but in the hands of a photographer as talented as Erika Larsen it can reveal, not only objects seen by the eye, but feelings of the heart. While working on her four-year photography project among the Sámi, Erika chose to live as a *beaga* (housekeeper) for the reindeer herding family of Nils Peder and Ingrid Gaup while photographing near Kautokeino, Norway and Gällivare, Sweden. From that intimate vantage point, she was able to immerse herself in the culture, language, and land of the northern Sámi.

In this splendid coffee table book she combines striking color photographs illuminating the Sámi connections to their environment and each other with poetry exploring her own place within nature and the Sámi way of life. She speaks, both with photographs and words, of the connection of the present day Sámi with their rich ancestral heritage through nature and the land.

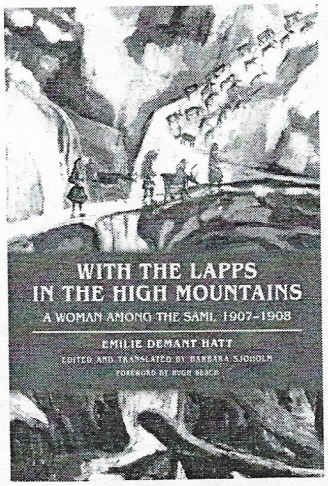
In her photographs, Erika doesn't flinch at the often bloody realities of the reindeer herding life, while finding a majestic beauty in the moving herds. Her approach to the people is equally honest but suffused with a palpable tenderness. Although coming as an outsider, she looks to the Sámi as teachers. "Through the Sámi I hope to better understand our role as stewards of the earth. It is inevitable when spending time in a more nature-based culture that one must recognize the cycles of life and death and therefore begin to evaluate man's role within this circle."

Erika Larsen's photographs will be featured in conjunction with the exhibit, *The Sami Reindeer Herders of Alaska*, at the Minnesota Discovery Center, Chisholm, MN, summer 2014.

— Reviewed by Marlene Wisuri

The book is $60. Order from:

e@erikalarsenphoto.com.



***With the Lapps in the High Mountains: a Woman Among the Sami*, 1907-1908. Emilie Demant Hatt. Barbara Sjoholm, ed and trans. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013. ISBN 978-0-299-29234-8.**

This new English translation by Barbara Sjoholm was a real treat to read. The foreword in this edition is by Hugh Beach, author of *A Year In Lapland: Guest Of The Reindeer Herders*.

In 1904, artist Emilie Demant Hatt and her sister took a trip to northern Scandinavia, where they happened to meet Johan Turi, a Saami wolf hunter. This meeting greatly influenced both parties. He introduced her to some of his extended family who were reindeer herders, and she encouraged him to begin work on the book he dreamed of writing. After the trip, back home in Denmark, she found a way to learn the Saami language, and then returned to Sápmi in 1907.

While there, she had the opportunity to go on an annual migration. She kept a journal, took photographs, and painted the scenes

(*LANTTO REVIEW continued overleaf*)

COVER ARTIST

JOYCE KOSKENMAKI

My work reflects my surroundings, here in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The particular kind of north woods landscape, its trees, rocks, lake, waterfalls, animals are what imprinted me as a child and to which I came back in 1998, looking for that which felt like home.

I was trained as an abstract expressionist painter in graduate school. This grounding has carried me through a lifetime of finally working with imagery. Shapes and negative spaces form the skeleton which holds the meanings, both articulate and inarticulate, of my expression. Now I am back to my origins in working abstractly again, with watercolor on color pencil.

I will probably also continue to paint birch trees, symbol and metaphor for our relationship to that spirit underlying nature. And animals continue to appear in my work in various guises. One recent direction had to do with the animals of the *Kalevala*, the old Finnish epic. The beauty and mystery of its images are haunting. Why does the gray dog keep barking?

But currently my obsession is with abstraction, evolving from years of imagery, both symbolic and descriptive. I need to get beyond the surface of things and deeper into that which holds us all together. Maybe it's my getting older that coincides with a kind of spiritual longing making its appearance in my drawings. Still new, I am watching to see where it takes me.

Her website is at:

www.joycekoskenmaki.com

(*LANTTO REVIEW (cont'd from previous page)*)

that eventually became this book, originally published in Danish in 1913.

As an artist Demant Hatt's eye for detail gives a depth to her writing that lets the reader in on her experience. As a foreigner she notices the small everyday actions that stitch together this beautiful culture — things like tent etiquette, how to pack a sled, or how to quiet an unruly reindeer by breaking off the tip of its antler, and many other aspects of reindeer herding.

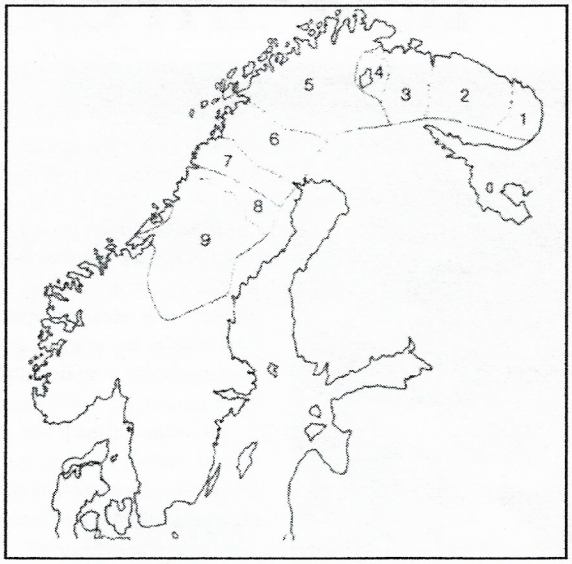
She describes the gentle tone of voice when the word *ruksemiessi* is used. "*Ruksemiessi*" (red calf) is a newborn calf, because the reindeer babies are red at birth. The new calves are so important to the Saami that whenever the word is spoken, it is with reverence.

The rugged terrain which the Saami have traversed, survived and thrived in for generations leaves the reader in awe, and it was fascinating to read how Demand Hatt adapted to a different lifestyle than that to which she was accustomed, telling with much humor, of driving a very wild reindeer, and even attending a Laestadian service. She also records interactions with non-Saami tourists and how the Saami of that time period respond. Her writing continually conveys the deep respect and love she had for the Saami people.

I recommend this book to readers interested in Saami people, travel, other cultures, nature and history.

— reviewed by Vicki Lantto

THE SAMI LANGUAGES TODAY



EAST SAMI
1. Ter Sami
2. Kildin Sami
3. Skolt Sami
4. Inari Sami

CENTRAL SAMI
5. North Sami
6. Lule Sami
7. Pite Sami

SOUTH SAMI
8. Ume Sami
9. South Sami

Source: *The Saami: People of the Sun and Wind.* Åjtte, Svenskt Fjäll Och Samemuseum. Jokkmokk: 1993.

(*WEINSTOCK (cont'd from page 5)*)

confidence, a minimum of several hundred; 2) the unknown words must be those liable to substrate influence (e.g. words for animals, topography, weather phenomena and place names); 3) the words in question often show non-native structural features, i.e. they look weird; 4) some words have strange sound correspondences between the Sami languages that borrowed them. Place names are just like ordinary loanwords, very likely to be borrowed during language shifts. Aikio lists 161 substrate items, a figure that could be substantially increased by including more Sami languages, plant names, reindeer vocabulary, and more. He includes nearly two hundred names of mountains and highlands in North Sami alone.

Aikio's time frame implies that Proto-Sami emerged in an area stretching from southern Finland in the west to the great lakes Ladoga and Onega in the east, which enabled contact with Proto-Finnic (the forerunner of Finnish) spoken along the southern shore and at the bottom of the Gulf of Finland.

Summing up: Ante Aikio's theory on the origin of the Sami language is the best explanation of an enduring enigma. When dealing with prehistory where there are no historical documents the conclusions are nearly always stronger if support can be found in other disciplines, in the case at hand, anthropological conjectures, archaeological relics, *siida* structure and current genetic patterns among Sami and other groups in Fennoscandia. Though perhaps not convincing individually, together they carry much more weight. As Pre-Sami speakers came from the east and their language evolved into Proto-Sami and as they then moved north and northwest over some forty generations beginning in the Early Iron Age, their genetic profile changed as they passed their language on to the people they subsumed.

John Weinstock is Professor Emeritus of Germanic Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. His comprehensive website on Sami culture is:

www.utexas.edu/courses/sami

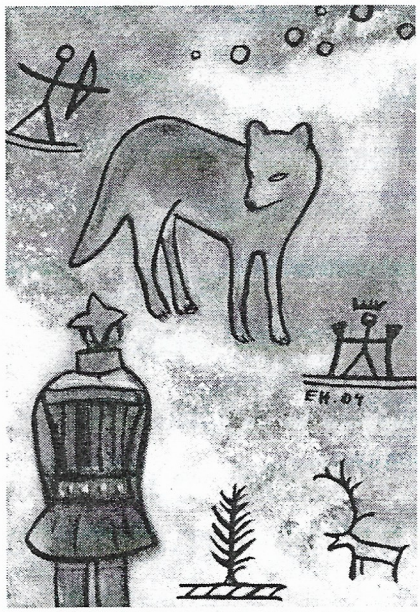
THIS JUST IN

FirstAmericanArt MAGAZINE

A beautiful new magazine edited by America Meredith has arrived on the scene. Please visit:

www.firstamericanartmagazine.com

DECOLONIZING THE WOLVES



acrylic: "Susi/Gumpe," Elina Helander-Renvall, from *Silde: Sami Mythic Texts and Stories*

GUMPE

According to Sami tradition, *Gumpe*, the wolf — and humans — hunt and use the same prey, each in their own way. The wolf is a wild animal, and does not bend to human will in the same way that humans are not meant to control nature.

The Sami used to be afraid of the wolf because of the damage wolves brought to reindeer herds. In earlier times, Sami used to herd reindeer throughout winter. When with the herd, the reindeer herder sung *juoigan* (yoiks — sacred songs). All things were sung: lands, people, animals. The wolves that had just entered an area were afraid of yoiks. But the wolf became accustomed to humans and their singing, and were afraid no more.

There has been much hatred against the wolf, and some reindeer and sheepherders have tried to eradicate the animal. But in older days, the wolf was honored as another sacred animal until Christian thought and the ideas of private ownership came to Sápmi. In an old Sami song, the wolf is *Suologievra*, meaning the Powerful and Strong of the Island. This is because the earth was once regarded as an island.

The wolf is a spirit animal, a Night Wanderer. A wolf is the helping spirit and a companion of many *noaidi* (shamans). The wolf is also a teacher for some people. According to legend, a wolf can run through nine valleys in one night. The nine valleys represent the spirit dimensions of the Sami universe divided into three worlds— lower, middle, and upper earth. This world picture can be seen in drums and rock carvings.

Oral traditions portray many stories of Sami traveling in the form of wolves and bears. *Noaidi* would enchant people, making them run as wolves. But some people changed themselves into wolves by searching for a curved tree, and passing under it against the direction of the sun! That kind of tree still exists.

[A man called] Stuorra-Jovnna formerly stayed mostly in *Rastegaisá* in North Norway. Sometimes Stuorra-Jovnna wanted to be a wolf. He would go to the forest, pass under his tree, and then run as a wolf. Stuorra-Jovnna could run with the wolves for two weeks at a time. If he did not change back in time, he would never be human again. One day, Stuorra-Jovnna realized that his time had come. Two weeks' end was over that night and nine valleys lay before him. That afternoon, he ran through the nine valleys, back to the tree where he had circled and circled, turning into a wolf. Stuorra-Jovnna left behind by the tree his wolf's shape and habits and became a man again.

One more thing: I have visited the tree of Stuorra-Jovnna.

—told by Elina Helander-Renvall (Sami)

MA'IINGEN

This is the Anishinaabeg story about Original Man and *Ma'iingan* – the Wolf. Long ago, when Original Man walked the earth, he noticed that all the animals came in pairs – one male and the other female. He didn't understand why the animals had companions, yet he walked alone.

One day, he asked the Creator, *Gichi-Manidoo*, why he was alone. And the Creator said: "I am going to send you a companion. Together you will wander on the Earth on the same path."

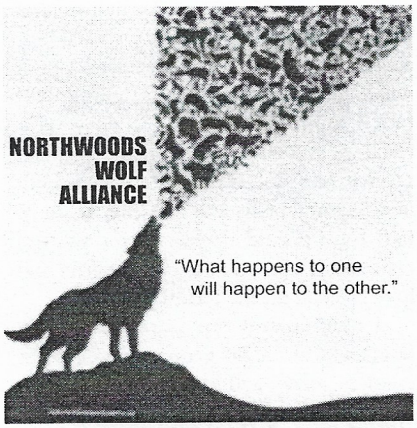
The Creator sent *Ma'iingan*, the wolf, to walk with Original Man. Together, they traveled over the Earth and gave names to the plants and trees. And after many years, they returned to where their journey began. Then the Creator said: "You will now walk separate paths, but what happens to one will happen to the other."

In their separate lives, Original Man and *Ma'iingan* were alike. They had families, a tribe, and clans. And they shared the same fate. They were hunted for their hair, and their land was taken from them.

We know that today legislators in Wisconsin and Minnesota are passing laws to hunt wolves. There was a picture on Facebook of two men kneeling behind a pickup truck. Twenty-five or thirty bodies of wolves spilled out the back end of the pickup. When I saw that photograph I thought about Original Man and *Ma'iingan* and I remembered the story and how what happens to *Ma'iingan*, happens to us.

—told by Robert DesJarlais (Anishinaabeg)

Northwoods Wolf Alliance



logo: Northwoods Wolf Alliance

The Northwoods Wolf Alliance is a grassroots coalition of Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe) people and their allies working to protect the wolves in *Anishinaabeg Akiing*, their home land. The area is also known as Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Supporters include members from the tribal nations of Grand Portage, White Earth, Sandy Lake, Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Red Lake, Leech Lake and Mille Lacs.

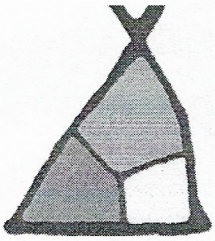
wolf paw print

THE BEAR AND THE WOLF

Photo: "Bear and Wolf," Lassi Rautiainen. Source: lassi.rautiainen@articmedia.fi.

The mission of *Báiki: the International Sami Journal* is to promote the peaceful well-being of the earth, the air and the water through Indigenous ways of knowing. "Báiki" [bah-h'kee] is the Sami reindeer herders' word for the home that lives in the heart and survives when nomads migrate.

THE SAMI CULTURAL CENTER OF NORTH AMERICA



Several projects are underway for the Sami Cultural Center of North America. The Cultural Center, which is recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit, is continuing the work that many people within the North American Sami community have been involved with for over twenty years.

A Virtual Sami Cultural Center is currently being created. Funds have been granted by Finlandia Foundation National for the building of a web site that will serve as the platform for the Virtual Center. Jane Reed of Red Pebble Design in Duluth, MN, will be designing the site, which promises to incorporate a beautiful Sami aesthetic. The URL for the site is: www.samiculturalcenter.org.

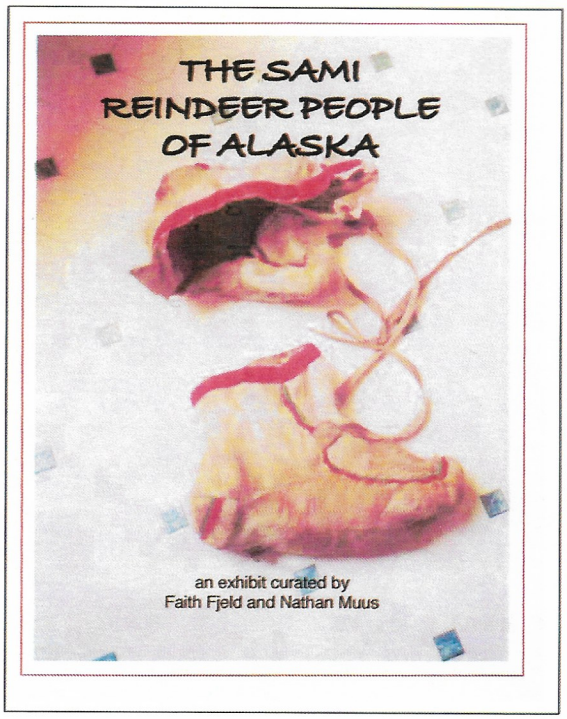
A prestigious advisory committee has been formed. They will help with the development of Virtual Center content. This committee includes Thomas DuBois, Ph.D (U. of Wisconsin – Madison); Olav Mathis Eira (*Sámiráddi,* Utsjoki, Finland); Tim Frandy, Ph.D (U. of Wisconsin – Madison); Harald Gaski, Ph.D (U. of Tromsø, Norway); Kikki Jernsletten, Ph.D (U. of Tromsø, Norway); Aiden Johnson, Stockholm, Sweden; Rauna Kuokkanen, Ph.D (U. of Toronto, Canada); Paulette Meyers-Rich (St. Paul, MN); Kathleen Osgood, Ph.D (U. of the Arctic); Troy Storfjell, Ph.D (Pacific Lutheran U.); and John Weinstock, professor emeritus, (U. of Texas – Austin). More advisors will be added as the project proceeds.

Descendants of the Reindeer Project Lois Stover (Sami and Yup'ik from Kodiak), and Pearl Johnson (Inupiaq from Nome), traveled from Alaska to Decorah, Iowa to speak at the opening of *The Sami Reindeer People of Alaska* exhibit at the Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum. Photo: Marlene Wisuri.

***The Sami Reindeer People of Alaska* updates:** The exhibit is finishing a very successful year long run at the **Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum** in Decorah, Iowa. The **Minnesota Discovery Center** in Chisholm, Minnesota will be the exhibit's next stop. It will be there from May through August, 2014 in conjunction with a collection of recent photographs taken in Sápmi by *National Geographic* photographer Erika Larsen. A review of her recently published book *Sámi — Walking with Reindeer*, is on page 18 of this issue. These two exhibits are joint projects of *Báiki: the International Sami Journal* and the Sami Cultural Center of North America.

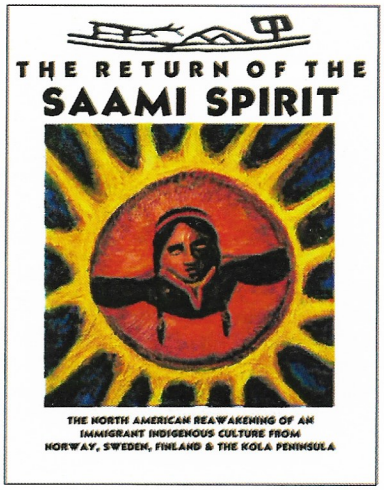
Exhibit catalogs are available. These contain a history of the Alaska Sami Reindeer Project by faith fjeld, with historic photos and personal anecdotes from Alaska Sami families. (See facing page.) — Marlene Wisuri

THE EXHIBIT CATALOG



The 54-page exhibit catalog is available from the Sami Cultural Center of North America, 5263 North Shore Drive, Duluth, MN 55804, USA. It features a history of the Alaska Reindeer Project by Faith Fjeld, photos and stories from the exhibit, a list of the Reindeer Project families and an extensive bibliography. Cost per copy is $10 plus $4 shipping for 1 copy, $2 for each additional copy. Minnesota residents add 69¢ tax per copy. Canadian orders are US$10 plus US$5 shipping. European orders are US$20 including shipping.

The exhibit catalog can also be ordered on-line : http://givemn.razoo.com/story/Sami-Cultural-Center-Of-North-America. After paying for the catalog online, please send your mailing address to the Cultural Center address above.



Coming soon: an anthology of articles, poetry and art from the first twenty years of *Báiki*. Look for ordering information in our next issue and on our website www.baiki.org.

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