BAIKI

Issue #18 The North American Sami Journal 1998

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AND THE SAMI: TELL THEM WE DON'T JUST WANDER

Nathan Muus

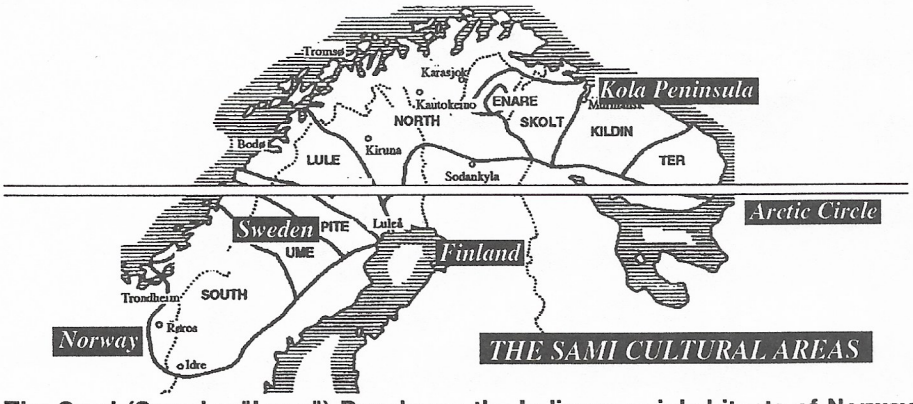
SAMI KNIVES: USEFUL, SHARP, AND BEAUTIFUL

Eric O. Bergland

BEYOND THE LAST LINE OF FOREST TREES

Pekka Aikio

WHO ARE THE SAMI PEOPLE AND WHAT IS "BAIKI?"



The Sami (Saami or"Lapp") People are the Indigenous inhabitants of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Russian Kola Peninsula. About 100,000 Sami people live in the Nordic countries today, half of them in Norway. The map shows the nine cultural areas where nine versions of the Sami [Finno-Ugric] language are spoken. The North Sami word for the Sami nation is *Sápmi* and the South Sami word is *Saemien Eatneme*.

Báiki is the international quarterly cultural magazine that grew out of the North American search for Sami roots. We estimate that at least 30,000 people of Sami ancestry live in North America. They are the descendants of Sami people who, due to cultural genocide and the closing of the borders in their areas, emigrated to the United States and Canada as Norwegians, Swedes, Finns and Russians. Until the publication of *Báiki: the North American Sami Journal,* their story has been left out of immigration history. The descendants of these immigrant nomads are now seeking to reconnect with their culture in a meaningful way.

"*Báiki*" ["ba-hee-kee"] is the nomadic reindeer-herding society's word for cultural survival. It means "the home that lives in the heart" as one travels from place to place, the invisible bond that transcends linear time and physical space. *Báiki* was begun in 1991 as a simple eight - page publication. Today *Báiki* has expanded to a twenty-eight page magazine. With little publicity other than word of mouth, our first seventeen issues generated a worldwide readership of over 2000, and a loyal circle of creative support. The success of this magazine is a sign of growing interest in Sami history and culture. *Báiki* is recognized as a major source of Sami information in North America. It is read and quoted by members of the academic community as well as by those who are seeking to reconnect with their Sami roots.

The *Báiki* logo was designed by Faith Fjeld. A "báiki" is the basic traditional Sami survival unit, the reindeer nomad's cultural connection that migrates with them from place to place. Nils-Aslak Valkeapää referred to a báiki as "the home that lives in the heart." The symbols in the *Báiki* logo are pictographs from Sami Drums: The reindeer symbolizes physical support. It faces east toward *lavvus* or Sami tents which symbolize home. These are located at the base of a mountain which symbolizes spiritual support. All are connected to a *njalla* or storage shed which symbolizes group and cultural survival.

This issue was produced and designed by:

Faith Fjeld and Nathan Muus, co-editors
Jennifer Hyypiö, graphic artist and computer consultant
Mark Iddings, Sami Language translator
Marilyn Jackson, special projects coordinator
Jolene Jacobs, correspondence and circulation manager
Clay Kark-French and Zulema Maixala, proof reader

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ADDRESS ALL *BAIKI* CORRESPONDENCE TO:
The Saami Báiki Foundation
1714 Franklin St. #311, Oakland, CA 94612
e-mail: saamibaiki@sinewave.com
tel: (510) 452-0930 / fax: (510) 834-4264
For subscription information see insert.

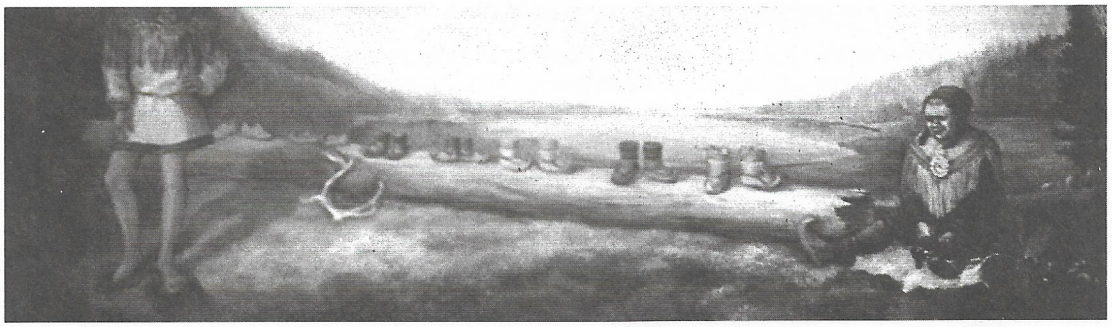
IN THIS ISSUE

BAIKI

Issue #18, 1998

THE COVER:
Jennifer H. Hyypiö, Oakland, CA, chose Saami woven patterns to represent identity. "We each weave our own personal threads into the patterns and paths our lives will take."

WE HAVE TO FIND OUR ROOTS AND THEN WE CAN LEARN FROM OUR BEGINNINGS.



acrylic: "Senna-grass Socks," Gladys Koski-Holmes

Faith Fjeld

For the past five hundred years, whether our ancestors sailed west, or met the boat when it got here, we have all been forced to attend the boarding school of Western civilization. Now, many of us long to sneak out and go home. The longing for a *báiki* - a spiritual home - has surfaced in this generation.

This need to re-connect with our long-lost extended family should prove to skeptics that the Indigenous Spirit - "the home that lives in the heart" - has managed to survive the all-out efforts of the church and the state to destroy it.

In the acrylic "Senna-grass Socks" by northern Minnesota artist Gladys Koski-Holmes, a woman poses with her head out of the picture. Her modern mini skirt and pumps contrast with the traditional *gakti* and *gallokak* of the woman who sits spread-legged on the ground stuffing shoes. The fallen tree trunk that connects the two serves as a platform for a row of Sami boots. The title refers to the Indigenous shoe-grass that insulates Sami feet against the rigors of the Arctic winter.

The photo of Gladys' nephew Jaron Bouton was taken by his grandmother Henrietta Koski in Turlock, California at Skandi-fest. While rushing to get dressed for the Sami camp's stage presentation, Jaron put on two unmatched shoes, one Sami and the other American. Jaron's shoes and the shoes of the two women symbolize the fact that once we re-connect with our roots we will find ourselves walking in two worlds, one "civilized," and the other Indigenous.

On page nine of this issue artist Synnøve Persen and her daughter Charlotte - two Sami women of two generations - discuss the Sami situation in the modern world. One blustery August evening in 1991, I was invited by Synnøve and Charlotte to have dinner in their Bevkop home on Norway's Porsanger coast. During our meal the conversation turned to Sami identity. "How do Sami people of your age differ from Norwegians?" I asked Charlotte, who was seventeen at the time. I'll never forget her answer:

photo: "Jaron Bouton at Skandi-fest," Henrietta Koski.

"We shouldn't deal with differences," she replied. "That is limiting and we have to stand together. We should emphasize the similarities. We Sami are a link in a changing wheel."

She continued. "The old religion is resurfacing. We have to tell today's youth about Sami history and the Nature religion. We have to solve the problem of living on this planet and we have to do this together. I am part of both. I am part of the Inuits and the Asians. I'm part of the world. My Mom's generation may want to point out the differences, but we can't afford any more wars. We have to find our roots and then we can learn from our beginnings. We don't need revenge."

Charlotte passed away last year. It is to the memory of this young Sami woman and to her generation that this issue of *Báiki* is dedicated.

SAAMI

BLACK SWEDES: FLYING WITH THE HAWKS

My grandfather's mother was a Sami from Dalarna, Sweden. She emigrated with her family in 1866 to Minnesota. When they moved to the U.S. they passed themselves off as Swedish. Betsy was a tiny, dark woman. I remember seeing a picture of her as a child and exclaiming, "She is an Indian!" My mother quickly told me that Grandmother Betsy was a Lapplander, but, indeed, with her hair parted straight down the middle into long braids, her dark complexion, round face and big brown eyes, there was no doubt she was a "black Swede" (as my cousin said). It was always clear to me that my grandmother Betsy was thought to be less educated and "cultured" than the rest of my Swedish relatives.

Although I never met her, I remember many tales told to me of her life. This diminutive woman lived in a small house in the wilderness along the Rum River in Minnesota with her four young sons while her husband worked as a blacksmith in the city. He was able to walk the 30 miles home late on Saturday only to repeat his journey on Sunday afternoon, so Betsy managed the small farm and "staked" their claim on the land.

She was known as a healer and midwife. When one of her sons fell in the fireplace she walked many miles to a neighbor who had sheep and spread the sheep dung on the boy to stop the burning and scarring (I suppose the lanolin worked). Betsy is still remembered for her herbal remedies and legendary "medicinal" wine made from berries gathered from the river banks. She also shared her food with the many Native Americans who still wandered along the river. My grandfather told of knocks on the door and the silent communication that occurred between his mother and the tall Indian man standing in the door way as she handed him food.

It was my grandfather and his brother Dewey who really taught me a little of what it was to be Sami. Both of them loved the outdoors, and saw things that other adults did not seem to. Each walk with my dear Grandpa would teach me something. He told me to look down as well as up, for the earth always left gifts for those who needed them. And we always found a special rock, feather, flower...even a shiney silver dollar once! He also taught me to leave offerings for the tomtens and sprites. Each night we would put out bread in milk for the tomtens who helped out with the barnchores, and it was always gone in the morning! (Perhaps the fat old barn cat helped himself, but who knows?) And Grandpa shared with me the joy of singing! Every task had a song, every moment a tune, and who needed the right lyrics? Just sing what the spirit put in your head. My Uncle Dewey was a great hunter and outdoorsman who taught me to revere all life, and to always respect any animal who gave its life force for my betterment. Another uncle who was a travelling evangelist chided him for not going to church regularly. Dewey responded, "I spend every day with God out in those woods. His church is there, not in your old stuffy buildings. Why you think God would join you hyprocrits when He could be flying with the the hawks, I will never know." It made such an indelible impression on me that I can still hear every word!

With the death of my grandfather and mother I had put aside all thoughts of my Lapp heritage, indeed, I had never even heard the word Sami. Then I heard Mari Boine on the car radio, and I literally had to pull over to the side of the road. The tears poured down my face as her music touched my soul. It was the spirit of the joik, the siida, my ancestors.

Thank you for publishing this wonderful journal and for reminding so many of us of our history.

Gloria Jean Harwig
2815 Ulysses St. NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418

THE SAMI - PAPUA NEW GUINEA CONNECTION

From Papua New Guinea: Do you know anyone who might want to trade Papua New Guinea bows, arrows, necklaces, knives, fish hooks, shark-tooth swords, bark capes, stone axes, etc. for Sami tools / weapons?

Neel Carpenter
SIL Box 166
Ukarumpa EHP444
Papua New Guinea
neel_carpenter@sil.org

FINNS ON THE WEB

If some of your Finnish Báiki readers are interested in trying their hand at family history they can register at: finngen@genealogia.org, addressed first to http://www.genealogia.org. Does *Baiki* have a website?

Robert Best
P.O.Box 1496, 310 SeawellSt.
Carthage, NC 28327
finnfolk@ac.net

[Yes, we are at saamibaiki@sinewave.com] and its just the beginning!]

WHO WERE THE TSCHUDIT?

I just saw "The Pathfinder" Video. Do the Tschude have any other identification or does it just mean enemy? In the book edited by Harald Gaski [In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun], several Sami writers praise "The Pathfinder," but no I.D. of Tschude.

Nancy O. Lurie
Milwaukee Public Museum
800 W.Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212

[Editor's comment: The Tschudit are usually referred to in reviews as "a band of marauders who are not Sami." In this film, a special non-language was invented for them so as to avoid connection with any existing People. Johan Turi wrote that they were from Russia. We would welcome information regarding real and / or allegorical identities of the Tschudit. Send us a letter or an e-mail and we'll print it in the next issue.]

FIRE AND WATER

Just finished reading Issue 17 Great!!! One important question: On page 16 Mel Olsen talks about *guovsahasat* [the northern lights] as being the cosmic blending of fire and water. Any source for that? Since it relates to the Norse creation story, any clues for sources will be greatly appreciated.

Jürgen Kremer
Kawdimyri 4
600 Akureyri, Iceland
muninn@nett.is

[Mel Olsen replies: a great many creation stories have to do with fire and ice, or fire and water, depending on the climate. If I remember correctly, the Norse creation epic is of fire and ice with the great dead giant (the earth) lying in the middle. My information came from Eather's Majestic Lights. The mythologies are also dealt with by Holmberg, and I believe, Manker.]

CONNECTIONS

KOTA KOLA

Enjoyed Báiki except for one mistake. "Kota" is a Lapplander's tent. "Kohtu" is the word for womb.

Alyce Ruikka
Rte. 3 Box 128
New York Mills, MN 56567

[About] the word "kota" in our Lakota Sioux language: "la" means "special." "Lakota" means "relative." "Kola" means "friend."

Day Woman (Oglalla)
Rosebud Reservation,
South Dakota

WHO ARE THE BLACK NORWEGIANS?

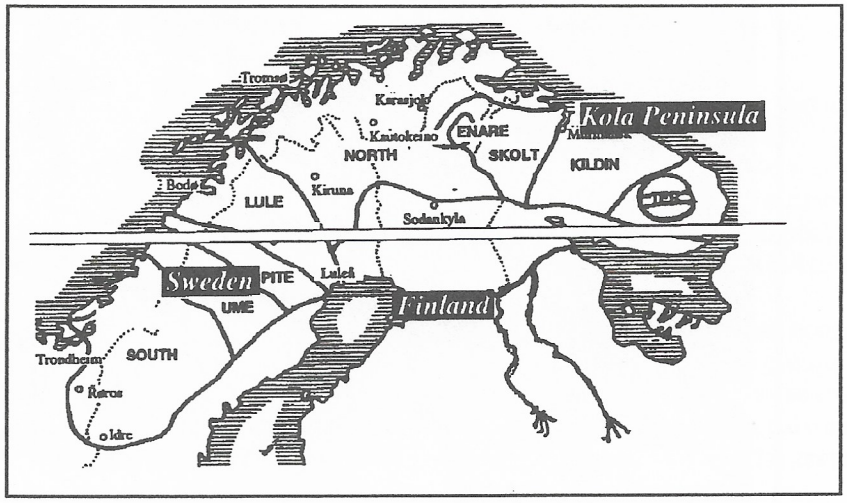
My father's name was Malvin Engelsen. "He emigrated in 1949. What little I know about my father's family is that they were from Odda, which is 90 miles north of Oslo, and considered to be a resort area up in the mountains. It would be possible for me to get a fairly detailed genealogy...but there is no indicator on it of Saami heritage... that apparently not being something to be admitted to. If my father was a "Black Norwegian" but his Saami heritage was not acknowledged, does that make me Saami? How many generations back can my Saami ancestor be and it still be legitimate for me to claim Saami heritage?

Karen Davis
1824 Fillmore St. N.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55418

[Editors' reply: You are not alone in your questions; they are asked by people who live in Sápmi too. Today there is even controversy over whether one must own reindeer or speak the Saami language in order to be a "real Saami." What we are dealing with is the difference between national and Indigenous identity. In the process of assimilation, official proof of Saami identity becomes lost in church and state records that only record national identity and denominational affiliation. The fact of Indigenous ancestry is passed down by language, oral history and family stories. Cultural spokespersons often define this as "a way of life we have." The term "Black Norwegian" is commonly understood to be a person of Norwegian ancestry with very dark skin, black hair, brown eyes and Eurasian features. Many of us have such grandparents, but people in Sápmi have seldom heard the term. Hopefully articles in this and forthcoming Báikis, will help you answer all these questions for yourself.]

"ENLARGED REINDEER PEST"

Your magazine is great. Please forgive my observation:



Bill Shields
2231 Pine St.
San Francisco, CA 94115

THE SILENCE OF MY GRANDMOTHERS

My grandmother Christina Peterson Thompson McCaffrey Sterry Johson was born June, 1854 in Sogndal, Norway. She outlived four husbands and died May, 1931 from tuberculosis in Beltrami, MN. I am unfortunate never to have known her. I'd like to believe we have had much in common!

A great void haunts my days - begins my nights - until sleep stills moments of yearning, seeking, questioning.
Why do I feel an urgency to know who you were?
Why do I need to honor your existence?
Why does your identity pull at me over all these years?
Why can't I let the past rest?
I wonder where my roots began.
I wish to know who you were, great grandmothers - is it your pain and melancholy that flows through my veins?
Are your gifts of vision imbedded in my sight?
Are your passion and strength the forces driving me to seek equity and justice?
I feel your warmth enfold me across the ages.
I share your need for solitude, for being a part of nature.
My soul honors our earth, our sky, our waters.
My heart is proud when it hears about my mother's mother, but what of her mother and her mother and her mother?
I cry when critters feel pain.
I grieve when nature is scarred by man's greed.
I do not fit within the scheme of "progress."
I find peace and wholeness when alone in the woods.
I celebrate the waves on the beach, the wind on moonlit nights, the soft, round pebbles beneath my bare feet.
I do not thrive in smog, in the constant roar of the freeways and the artificial lights of "civilization."
I'm troubled by memories as a child of feeling "not good enough" - somehow even dirty.
I try to negate my visions of things to come that actually happen.
I give thanks each day for my place on the earth.
I dream of living in the quiet of the great north - where I might finally hear your voices, know your wisdom, share your life force.
I yearn to know from whence I came.
Speak to me, my grandmothers, so I may know who I am.

Carol Aenne
5720 Marble Ave.
Mountain Iron, MN 55768
caenne@mib.k-12.mn.us

photo: from Turistföreningen i Finland archives, Helsingfors

Punkaharju, Finland

BEYOND THE LAST LINE OF FOREST TREES

by Pekka Aikio

This article first appeared in the anthology Story Earth: Native Voices on the Environment. *It is reprinted in its entirety with permission from the publishers, Inter Press Service - Mercury House, and from the author Pekka Aikio [see "Pekka Aikio: a Sami is a Sami," interviewed by Nathan Muus in Fall/Winter Báiki Issue #12.]*

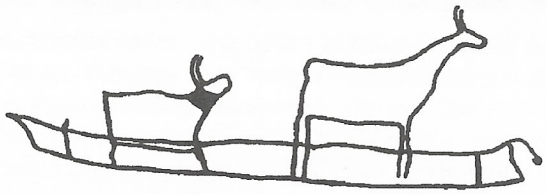
The cloud of radioactive fallout that passed over Scandinavia following the Chernobyl nuclear disaster of 1986 was just the latest in a series of events that have progressively been damaging the natural environment of the reindeer herders of Sápmi (Lapland), the home of the Sami People. Forest clear-cutting, construction of reservoirs, mass tourism, and excessive levels of air pollution had already dealt a harsh blow to the Samis, an Indigenous People who, like the North American Indians and the Inuits ["Eskimos"], had learned to adapt themselves to the harsh environmental conditions of life in the Arctic Circle.

In the northern sub-Arctic and Arctic regions, the adjustment of human behavior to the "economy" of nature has always been a challenging endeavor, where practicable alternatives are few. But the Indigenous People[s] inhabiting the northern circumpolar areas had always managed to adapt themselves to their surrounding ecosystem, and their success in survival - today under serious threat - could be a useful indication to biologists of how to keep the marginal areas of the earth inhabited by humans.

Traditional Sami culture was based on subsistence economy, an economy that was almost entirely self-sufficient, dependent on fishing, hunting, and reindeer herding and geared to the surrounding eco-system, using natural resources in an ecologically sustainable manner. The aim was long-term well-being, using large tracts of land gently, one section at a time.

The Sami of today recognize that because their environment is so sensitive it will be impossible to rectify any damage for centuries, if ever. Through colonization, they argue, the surrounding society has influenced the

The Sun is our Father, the Earth is our Mother.
Traditin teaches the Sami that nature is to be used without being consumed.



environment and their economic activities, gradually taking away from them their land and water.

For the Sami, man is part of the ecosystem, with society adapting to an ecological balance between what nature can give and what man can use. The Sami people, like their Indigenous sisters and brothers, say: "The Sun is our Father, the Earth is our Mother." Tradition teaches the Sami that nature is to be used without being consumed. The Sami culture is a living culture that enables the people to adapt to various natural conditions and to acquire new knowledge that will enable them to survive. The social environment - relations between individuals or within a group - can easily respond to changes, both in the natural environment and in the cultural. The social environment is always characterized by the attitudes we [Sami] have toward nature.

Our traditional forms of economic activity have always been based on a holistic view of the world and structured on a self-regulating basis. If production of a particular resource becomes impossible at a certain time, an alternative is found until the original resource has recovered. This self-regulation is built into our economic structure through the combination of traditional and modern economic activities.

The Arctic is an exceedingly sparsely populated region of the world, totaling only a few million people. But there are over seventy circumpolar Indigenous Peoples, of whom the Sami form a relatively uniform group.

The Sami presently form communities in Finland, Norway, Sweden, and the Soviet Union. The area inhabited by the Samis encompasses a crescent-shaped zone extending from the eastern edge of the Kola Peninsula in the Soviet Union and running along the northern periphery of Fennoscandia [Finland and the rest of the Scandinavian peninsula] to Dalarna in Sweden and Røros in Norway. The Sami represent the oldest known population of the area, dating from pre-historic times.

For centuries, the Sami people had been able to live on the fringes of the polar ecosystem, an area beyond the last line of forest trees, where agriculture is unable to provide the basis for self-sufficiency, mainly because of the severe natural conditions. The Arctic climate is harsh, and though vegetation is surprisingly varied, with lichens, mosses, and herbaceous plants, the most common, the fauna, is relatively limited. Typical land animals include the musk-ox, polar bear, wild reindeer, Arctic fox, wolverine, lemming and stoat.

On the other hand, the Arctic supports vast aquatic fauna, partly a consequence of the relatively plentiful supplies of plankton, and partly a result of the migratory habits of many fish species that are only partially dependent on the food supplies available in the area. The major species are whales and seals, walrus, cod, and a variety of fish related to the salmon family.

It is clear that the relatively limited vegetable and animal resources of the area can sustain only an extremely sparse human settlement pattern. However, the modern technological culture that has spread to the area in more recent times has led to a sharp increase in population and settlement centers.

Those dependent on hunting, fishing, or reindeer herding for their livelihoods were nomadic peoples, moving in groups whose size was determined according to the organization of these activities. Over the centuries, the seasonal fluctuations in ecological conditions and availability of natural resources have led to the creation of powerful forms of social organization.

The length of the Arctic winter makes it difficult to keep livestock, and cereal plants do not grow. At the same time, the territory occupied by the Sami of Fennoscandia is extremely small compared with the areas inhabited by the Indians and Inuits of North America, who were able to continue their hunting within traditional territories undisturbed up to modern times. For this reason the Sami faced the limited scope of their natural economy at a very early stage.

As a result, they adapted themselves to the external conditions by creating a culture based on reindeer herding within which it was possible to practice a certain type of animal husbandry without the necessity for indoor animal feeding. In this way the level of intensity of economic activity could be increased without ecological damage. The equal and complementary relationship between man and reindeer was the basis of an entirely original form of social and economic organization and as far as the stabilization of their means of livelihood was concerned, one of the greatest achievements of the Peoples of the polar regions. Up until the introduction of modern mechanized methods of herding, this economic activity functioned well with a minimum investment of resources. Today, out of a world total of 4.5 million reindeer, 3 million are domesticated, 77 percent of them in the Soviet Union and 21 percent in Finland, Sweden and Norway. Though there is little information on reindeer herding in ancient times, there is some evidence that reindeer herding is one of the oldest forms of human economic activity in the northern polar region.

In the early 1970s, in the southwest corner of Finnish Lapland near the city of Tornio, a piece of a reindeer horn was found that was estimated to be thirty-four thousand years old. There are also many rock drawings - including the famous ones in the city of Alta in northern Norway that are more than five thousand years old - drawings that depict the form of a four-leafed clover, inside which are reindeer, elk, men, plus shapes resembling boats or sleds.

[AIKIO cont'd overleaf]

[AIKIO cont'd from p. 7]

Man used reindeer for food, clothing, means of transport, and so on, without endangering the functions of the ecosystem, while the reindeer got help from man in adapting to new ecological circumstances.

The reindeer used by the Sami were tamed from the wild mountain reindeer, but not merely to transform them into mechanical domestic or purely utilitarian animals. The process was one of "biological mutuality", in which man used reindeer for food, clothing, means of transport, and so on, without endangering the functions of the ecosystem, while the reindeer got help from man in adapting to new ecological circumstances, primarily the danger of predatory animals in the forest zones, the continuous use of shifting grazing grounds in an area with small basic production, and many physical conditions that changes according to the seasons.

Against this background, some sixty regional reindeer-herding associations have been established this century, one of them being the *Lapin Paliskunta*, managed by the Sami in Finnish Lapland. But over the past thirty years, great technological and economic changes have affected reindeer herding, transforming it from an activity closely identified with the ecosystem in which it operated to one that is detached from that ecosystem. This has been accompanied by rapid and complex social changes that have affected Sami communities.

The economic expansion of the state of Finland resulted in the building of the man-made lakes of Lokka and Porttipahta in the 1960s. Their construction was preceded by the removal of trees in the basin beginning in the 1950s; at some points the completely cleared area even extended beyond the shoreline of the basin. Large forests were also felled outside the basin area, and deciduous trees were similarly destroyed by spraying herbicides from airplanes. Today the reindeer grazing grounds are not homogenous. Through the loss of land, some vitally important winter grazing grounds were erased, and increased pressure came to be exerted on other grazing areas. The result has been chaos.

The felled and plowed winter-feeding lichen areas have been transformed into weak late-summer ranges. Forests of lichen-covered trees, extensively used as feeding grounds by reindeer during hard snow-cover periods, vanished. In open felled areas, snow conditions are different from those in a sheltered forest, and digging for food becomes much more difficult.

The winter grazing grounds dwindled and were not able to provide herding associations with a healthy annual rhythm for the reindeer. As this rhythm broke down, the balanced relationship between man and reindeer also disintegrated. The main point of the change in the man-reindeer relationship has been the transition from a relationship of equality to one of domination by man. Prior to this change, reindeer herding was the dominant feature of the Sami mode of life. After the change, the reindeer economy became an occupation. The change is remarkable from the viewpoint of the Sami ecosystem. Herding activities became mechanical, almost putting an end to the natural reindeer herding culture.

In the 1980s a huge national park was established in the eastern part of the area. In principle it should have been able to provide more protection for the traditional way of living of the local Sami reindeer. In practice the park has become an El Dorado for hikers, which damage the sensitive sub-Arctic ecosystem by disturbing the natural rhythm of the reindeer,[and] trampling the gazing grounds underfoot.

The creation of environmentally-protected areas in the Sami region also includes some colonial characteristics. From the viewpoint of the emerging autonomy of the Sami and other Indigenous nations, we can see the seeds of conflict in the legislatures. In Finland, under the Nature Protection Act ...reserves can be established only in areas owned by the state. We know that there are no state-owned lands in the territories of the former Lapp villages, in fact more than 50 percent of the land of Sápmi in Finland is either nature reserve or wilderness, which are very similar in legal status. If the present legislation implies state ownership as a prerequisite for the establishment of nature reserves, or aims at defining them as state-owned lands, the Sami will find themselves in a very complicated contradictory situation.

To advance [the] protection of nature as a primary condition of Sami life would mean to support state efforts to strengthen...its rights to the former territories of the Lapp villages. On the other hand, the Sami want to retain their voice and power in those areas and oppose the establishment of nature reserves, this means they must give free reign to economic expansion and the exploitation of falls, waters, and wild forests.

It was the Chernobyl disaster of 1986 that served as a turning point in the Sami stand on environmental issues. Since then, the Sami people have been forced to consider the possibility of an ecocatastrophe, even in virginal Lapland (through the real impact of nuclear fallout was far worse in the 1960s after Soviet nuclear tests in Novaya Zemlya).

A Sami environmental program was developed in cooperation with the Nordic Sami Council and adopted by the Nordic Sami Conference in Åre, Sweden, in August 1986. The program declares...that the Sami people have an irrevocable right "to take good care for our livelihoods and our communities according to our common provisions; together we are going to protect our lands, waters, resources, and our national inheritance for future generations." It calls for legal protection of Sami rights to land and natural resources and introduces a broad concept of "environment," which takes into account social and physical factors, with the latter subdivided into natural and cultural sectors.

Now, in the 1990s, the Sami people, together with other Indigenous Arctic Peoples and governments, have started work to protect the Arctic - to combat pollution, to safeguard the vital rights of the Indigenous Peoples, and to benefit the Arctic environment, a vulnerable and indispensable part of our common Mother Earth.

Pekka Aikio (Sami), formerly the director of the Nordic Sami Institute, is currently the President of the Sami Parliament of Finland. He is on leave of absence from the Research Institute of Northern Finland, University of Oulu, where he heads a research program on northern Indigenous cultures and reindeer herding.

PROFILE OF TWO GENERATIONS

by Hanna H. Hansen

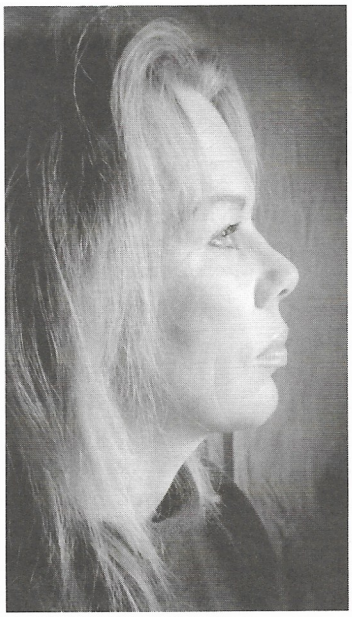
translated from Sámigiella by Mark Iddings and from Norwegian by Ingvild Greve
photography: Hanna H. Hansen

Synnøve and Charlotte Persen. Mother and daughter. Synnøve is an artist and writer. She participated in the hunger strike outside the Storinget [the Norwegian Parliament Building in Oslo] to protest against the Alta Dam project. [See Báiki Issue #5, Niillas A. Somby, "The Alta/Kautokeino Conflict," p. 4 , and "A Chronological History of the Alta/Kautokeino Conflict," same issue p. 16.] She has later been involved in Sami artists organizations.

Charlotte passed away in 1997 at the age of 23. In the phonebook she had the title "samf. krit " - "Critic of Society". [Norwegian phone books list occupations.] Charlotte was the leader of the Porsanger Sami Organization and was involved in Natur og Ungdom (a youth organization for environmental issues), Folkereisning mot krig (People Against Warfare), and oreningen for Marfans syndrom (Organization for Marfans Syndrome), the disability from which she suffered .

SYNNØVE PERSEN:

"The voices we hear belong to a few people. The men who are good with words make other voices silent."



We believed in and wanted a change. We grew up with the policy of assimilation, of making us into Norwegians. As students at the end of the seventies we started fighting for our rights. Some people have dared to suggest that the *Sámidiggi* (the Norwegian Sami Parliament) came about as a result of the work of the Norwegian government in the fifties. The truth is that we sacrificed our hearts and our souls to make it happen.

I have been on the speaker's platform in the *Samediggi*. I have great respect for it, but only the voices of men are heard. We didn't want this and it threatens democracy and the variety that exists in the Sami society. These men wear Sami clothes, but wield power just like the other politicians.

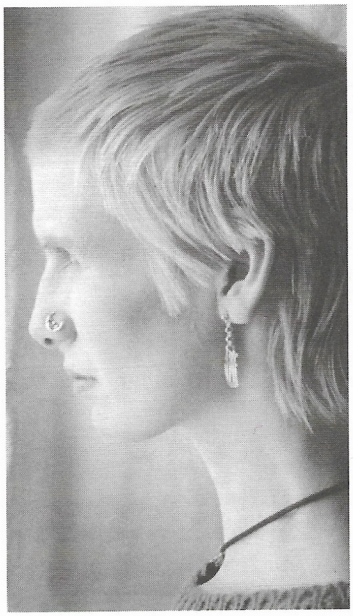
Women are also interested in finding solutions for the benefit of everyone but there has been a change in women's involvement and position in the Sami community. The women have been the bearers of tradition whereas the men have attended meetings. Party affiliation and loyalty have become more important than the People... more important than solutions. It's not a grass roots movement as it was before. I know that the women are not silent, that they do not lack opinions, but they cannot get through, because they don't play the man's game.

Before, conflicts were sent to Oslo. Today the authorities listen to what the *Samediggi* says and it is more difficult for individuals and small communities to get through to the authorities in Oslo. Activities in smaller communities, where women usually have played a part, have decreased.

[SYNNØVE: cont'd on p. 21]

CHARLOTTE PERSEN:

"Sami culture has something to offer others. We have knowledge the world needs."



The Sami political organizations have been dominated by self-centered "super activists." I'm not satisfied with that. My family has always been involved in Sami politics. I have not always understood what they were doing, and when I see how much "b. s." there is, I sometimes wonder how they can stand being involved. But there is a force that makes me enthusiastic every time the subject of Sami rights comes up.

To me, Sami politics is more than just paperwork. The protests surrounding Alta were not only about environmental rights, but about a People and their right to their history that might enable them to look towards the future. There has been too much focus on "we were here first." The point is that we are here now, and that must be taken into consideration.

We have to act according to our spiritual selves, not only the rational and thinking part of us. The spiritual has a prominent place in Sami culture. Things were as they were, everything was a part of a greater whole, everything had some meaning. You have another connection to a cause other than a rational one. People are just not aware of that. If we were, we would be stronger.

I'm happy and proud of the fact that someone took a stand and started fighting for our cause. Their motivation came from the heart. But a lot of the people who are all fired up use the same methods as the former oppressors. To be counted in the Sami census, for example, you need to have the right blood quantum and language, but the oppressors robbed us of our language because in language there is history, knowledge, and

[CHARLOTTE: cont'd on p. 21]

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AND THE SAMI:

"Tell them we don't just wander!"

Nathan Muus
with Faith Fjeld

For over a century North Americans have been introduced to countless Indigenous cultures through the imagery of *National Geographic.* The Sami people have been featured in more than twenty articles that yield interesting - even outstanding - photos on one hand, but misleading information on the other. These are born of the misconceptions that the dominant society has towards Native Peoples in general.

The term "nomad" frequently appears in these articles. The American Heritage Dictionary defines nomad as "a group of pastoral people having no fixed abode and usually moving from place to place in a search for food and water; one who has no fixed permanent domicile; a wanderer." The labeling of the Sami as such lead one reindeer herder to remark to the author of Herds of the Tundra, "Tell them that we don't just 'wander'!"1

The Sami first appeared in *National Geographic* in 1903 in an article called "Reindeer in Alaska," a description of the Alaska reindeer herding collaboration of Sami and Chukchi with the Inuit. Gilbert Grosvenor, a member of the *Geographic*'s founding family wrote condescndingly that:

"Siberian herders were at first imported to teach [the Inuit] and later the more intelligent and efficient Laplanders..."2

Fifteen years later, his son Edwin, in an article called "The Races of Europe"(1918) wrote that: ***"The Lapps are pathetic figures to foreigners. Though closely related to the Finns, they and their ancestors in their wanderings have never known any part of the world except the permanently frozen sub-soil and the treeless wastes of the tundra. In consequence they are dwarfed in body and mind. They average only four feet, seven inches in height. The faces, even of the young, are drawn and appear old and the whole frame often is underdeveloped and misshapen...They are steadily decreasing in number, the little civilization that has reached them not being altogether beneficial...how far this secretive people have really abandoned pagan beliefs and practices is not known.***

"The word "Lapp" is supposed to be Swedish and to mean 'enchanter,' but others suggest that it is derived from the Finnish lappa, meaning 'land's end folk.' Long regarded as sorcèrers and necromancers, they appear in Norwegian tales as proficients in the black art." 3

Strangely enough, the Indigenous People of the Nordic countries are sometimes presented as aliens in the very land of their ancestors. This is akin to presenting the Indigenous Peoples of the Northern Hemisphere as "the first *Americans*" who all supposedly came here over the Bering Straits. In "Sweden, Land of White Birch and White Coal"(1928) we read:

"The one exception to the homogeneity of the [Swedish] population is the Lapp. Some seven thousand of them, a race apart, dwell in the arctic wastes of the far north. In some vague past - their racial memory is short - they wandered in from the east, possibly from Mongolia. They have not stopped to carve their names on the eternal hills. They are deaf to the tread of the centuries. For them the music of life comes only through the singing of the wind above their nomad tents of bark and through the velvety tramp of fleet, vagrant reindeer hoof. As protected wards of the Swedish State, members of this alien race [sic] ***roam securely over the tundras and snow-capped fjelds of the north."*** 4

The Sami are referred to as a collective body called "the Lapps" in much the same way that American Indian Peoples are lumped together as "the Indians." "The Lapps" do this, "the Lapps" do that. Inaccuracies and misrepresentations abound. While there are more than ten Sami cultural areas, each with its own style of dress and language, in "The Nomads of Arctic Lapland"(1939) we read:

"All the Lapps may be divided into three groups: the poorer sedentary Lapps, who make a living chiefly by fishing; the mountain Lapps, who carry on reindeer culture; and the forest Lapps, who live in the forest district and have settled down to a large extent with their reindeer herds." 5 What about the coastal Sami and those on the Russian Kola Peninsula, for example, who don't fit this pattern?

Some of the material is amusing in spite of the subject matter. In "Scenes of Postwar Finland"(1947), the author wrote:

"We took off at dawn one morning...to head for one of the worst war-damaged districts of East Finland...We drove in a sedan, which was warm, fortunately, but the driver was a madman; besides, he had a wooden leg. He wasn't a madman, actually. We learned that all Laplanders drive this way...Roads were incidental. There was nothing to do; he couldn't be stopped. And it seems he didn't need to be. He knew more about handling a car in snow than Santa Claus knows about his Lapp reindeer." 6

There is confusion as to how many Sami there are and where they live. In "Friendly Flight to Europe"(1964) U.S. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson reported that ***"Finnish Lapps today number fewer than 3000 people; they rarely venture as far south as the Arctic Circle"*** while on a 1963 State Department goodwill tour of the Nordic countries just prior to President Kennedy's assassination. 7 In fact at the time there were more than 7600 Sami living in Finland according to a population study conducted by the Nordic Sami Council, and there was already a colony of Sami students and intellectuals in Helsinki, far south of the 66th parallel.

Through the years Sami traditional clothing has often been pictured incorrectly or embellished for photographic effect. In "Our Foreign-Born Citizens"(1918), the caption under a photograph of two South Sami children in *gakti* calls them "Norwegian Children in Peasant Costume." 8 And perhaps in an attempt to make a photograph look more Sami in "Finland: Plucky Neighbor of Soviet Russia"(1968), a woman who does not herself appear to be Sami is photographed in a hokeyed-up man's gakti wearing a man's Four Winds hat, pulling a Sami sledge - a task usually reserved for harnessed reindeer, or by that time, snowmobiles. 9

And speaking of hats, at least two articles, "The Nomads of Arctic Lapland,"(1939), and "North With Finland's Lapps"(1954), compare the man's traditional four-pointed "Four Winds hat" to that of a jester:

"A figure walked toward us. Our first thought was that he must be dressed for masquerade. On his head was 'the hat of the four winds.' Its four billowing points, shaped like oversized ice cream cones, dangled haphazardly over his ears. It needed only bells to grace a jester." 10

"Lapland's Reindeer Roundup"(1949)

features some wonderful hand-tinted photographs but the text doesn't tell us where they're taken and pale lemon yellow is used instead of bright cadmium yellow and the results look "off" and of course are incorrect. 11

"Off" too are the condescending racist undertones in a caption under a hand-tinted photograph of a Sami man from Finnmark in "The Nomads of Arctic Lapland:*"Even the camp's gilt-edged Beau Brummel stuffs his boots with grass,"* it reads. *"Lapps wear no stockings, but fill their oversize shoes with dry hay which is easily replaced. Long leather trousers of this Kautokeino dandy are tied with ribbons over the boot uppers."* 12

Editorial statements such as "when the Lapps were Christianized" infer that assimilation into the dominant society and conversion to Christianity are "givens," when in fact, they are not. The author of "The Races of Europe"(1918) expressed doubt that the Sami had given up what he called their "pagan beliefs and practices," but twenty years later the author of "Nomads of Arctic Lapland"(1939) wrote this photo caption with conviction:

"THE LAPPS, THE ROUNDEST-HEADED PEOPLE IN EUROPE," caption under Borg Mesch photo, p. 462, National Geographic Magazine, *December 1918.*

"Stilled is the magic drum of the Lapps . Linnaeus, famous Swedish botanist, found this relic, with reindeer hide drumhead, when he visited Lapland in 1732. Now it is on display in the National Historical Museum in Stockholm. When the Lapps embraced Christianity in the 18th century, they destroyed their drums....When the Lapps were Christianized they were taught that the use of the magic drum was sinful, and they were persuaded-even compelled-to destroy their drums. This they did so thoroughly that the drums are now extremely scarce even in museums."11 And the caption under adjacent photographs of a Sami man and a Sami woman in "Lapland's Reindeer Roundup"(1949) tells us that the two, ***"like 30,000 of their kindred are Christians. When they were converted, they gave up their pagan drums, dance and myths."*** 14

But Sami elder Kaapin Jouni, 80 years old when he was interviewed for "North With Finland's Lapps"(1954) tells a different story: ***"When I was a boy...the magic drums were forbidden, but they were kept in secret places and brought out when needed. Some of those drums were very beautiful. I remember one made of birch log, the sides carved with scenes from a bear hunt and the head made from a fawn's skin."***15 Kaapin Jouni tells of consulting shamans and receiving help.

Through the years *Geographic* articles continue to present the Sami people as exotic wanderers, e.g., ***"Mysterious little people of a land of the midnight sun [who] live off the country above the Arctic Circle....among the far mountains and rivers of Northern Scandinavia..."*** and:***" Here wanders a mysterious race of people known as the Lapps."***16 And the coastal Sami People - the largest group by far - who typically fish and do not have reindeer - are rarely mentioned, nor is the fact that many Sami live as far south of the Arctic Circle as Røros in central Norway. In fact, the Åriel Saemieh [the South Sami] People are rarely photographed and never mentioned at all in any of the *National Geographic* articles.

The Sami, like other Indigenous Peoples, have been "vanishing" in dominant society publications ever since they were "discovered" by them. The Sami are included in the *National Geographic* Special Publication Book Vanishing Cultures of the Earth (1968) along with the Ainu, the Hopi, "Eskimos" [the Inuit], Australian Aboriginals, the Bushmen and others. The author of the chapter on the Sami attributes their impending "disappearance" to the premise that since traditional reindeer life is tough, fewer young Sami will choose to live it:***"Isak, content with his life - ardous as it may be - and envious of no one, hopes his sons will also choose to become reindeer herders. But clearly, time is not on Isak's side."*** 17 In fact today, thirty years after that article was written, the opposite is true. So many young Sami have chosen to be reindeer herders that there is an ecological danger of overgrazing the land still available in the traditional reindeer areas. Indeed, it is the continual encroachment of outsiders and non-Sami interest groups under the guise of "development" that is shrinking these areas.

Nonetheless, "Following the Reindeer with Norway's Lapps"(1977) portrays the Sami People more accurately than in the past, although reindeer herding, which represents only 10% of Sami occupations today is still presented as typical, and the term "Lapp" still persists.

In "Peoples of the Arctic"(1983) the Sami are seen in a more realistic light, as are other Circumpolar Native Peoples including the Inuit, Nenet, and Chukchi. Land rights and environmental struggles are mentioned, and an article on the Chukchi, "People of the Long Spring," is actually written by the Indigenous Russian author, Yuri Rytkheu, who is Chukchi himself. (Why don't we see this more often?) And in another article in the same issue, "the

***[MUUS:** cont'd on p. 17.]*

SAMI WOMEN AS BEARERS OF CULTURE

'The knowledge of how to survive without killing Nature still exists. This knowledge can be found in women."

Jorunn Eikjok

The Sami are the Indigenous People of Scandinavia. They inhabited a large area stretching from the Kola Peninsula to southern Finland, and the whole of northern Norway as far south as the high mountain region. In Sweden the Samis lived in the area from the high inland plains to the lowland forests near the coast. The Samis call these areas *Sápmi.*

Sápmi used to be organized into autonomous areas called *siidat,* extended family groups that utilized the natural resources within a defined geographical area.

The Sami way of life was based on harvesting the riches of the sea and the land. Along the coast, in the fjords, up the large river valleys and on the inland mountain plains they lived by gathering, hunting, fishing and farming. They migrated with the seasons and the availability of game. Sápmi was rich in food and fuel, and the Samis had a highly developed culture that was suited to the harsh climate in which they lived.

The colonization of Sápmi began in the 17th and 18th centuries. The colonists brought a mechanical-materialistic view of the world that had developed in Central Europe during the Middle Ages. According to that view, Nature was subserviant to culture, and the only true culture was the male-dominated European one which the settlers represented. The colonists legitimized their abuse of women, Indigenous Peoples and the Earth itself. Colonialism was referred to as "discovery" and their plundering of Sápmi was called "tax collecting," or "trading." The authorities did not regard the Samis as human beings and for them, Sápmi was uninhabited and the Sami subsistence economy was a hindrance to progress.

In 1751 Sápmi was divided between the monarchies of Scandinavia and the Sami People

Máderåhkká the Earth Mother

were spilt into four states: Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway. The siida system was gradually undermined by the colonists' ruthless exploitation which led to the extinction of certain animals and disturbed the balance of Nature. The new borders closed a number of seasonal migration routes for reindeer nomads. Colonization programs were set up involving land redistribution in Sápmi. Measures were taken to destroy the Sami language and enforce the languages of the four nation-states.

But the most radical changes to the Sami way of life occurred after the Second World War. A livelihood based on self-sufficiency and self-reliance became impossible. Small land holdings combined with fishing became uneconomical, as job specialization increased. People moved away from outlying districts, attracted to municipal centers. This development was [a] deliberate policy designed to integrate Sami society into the economy and politics of the nation-states.

Many Sami settlements were still self-sufficient well into the 1950's and 60's. Women had a key role, looking after society in general and providing continuity. They were responsible for the elderly and the young, a bond between generations. Men were away for a large part of the year, hunting and fishing.

Sami women were responsible for everything to do with food. They made clothes for the family and did all the daily chores in the home and on their small plots of land. In coastal Sami communities women also fished in the fjords. Women reindeer herders had their own animals and worked closely with the men all year. Many still lived in tents [*lavvus*] and migrated with their reindeer. In many places, those living on small plots of land also lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle, moving from permanent winter settlements to pasture land for the summer months. They had a pact with Nature. Women were the driving force in creating the social network between people in the local community and among villages... they maintained the *verdde* system based on the barter of goods and services. [See *Báiki* Issue #12, Edmund Gronmø, "Verddevuohta: the Sami Survival System."]

Women still fulfill similar functions [but] the situation today is more difficult than it was even 30 years ago. Sami society was drawn into a market economy after the Second World War. As a result, men took paying jobs outside the home and while their economic status increased, women did not receive the same economic and political rights. Thus the integration of Sami culture into the market economies of the nation-states went hand in hand with male domination.

In reindeer herding this change has taken place only recently. Increasingly, young women are being pushed out, as reindeer herding [also] becomes a male-dominated industry. It is difficult to foresee the consequences of this development.

The policies of the nation-states have inflicted dominant society values onto the Sami and the experience of the younger generation has been that their culture, language and knowledge

[EIKJOK cont'd p. 22]

WHAT DO YOU MEAN "INDIGENOUS"?

The official definitions by the World Council of Indigenous Peoples is: "1. the original inhabitants of an area, 2. the descendants of the original inhabitants of an area who are colonized, or 3. those who live in an Indigenous way." The Sami Council adds: "those whose grandparents spoke the Sami language, or who live in a Sami way and are recognized as being Sami by the Sami society." Or, as some say, "It's a way of life we have!"

by Faith Fjeld

The Indigenous Way of Life: **HARMONY WITH NATURE**	*Western "progress:"* **DOMINATION OF NATURE**
Everything has spiritual value. The spiritual and the physical are united.	Everything has monetary value. The spiritual and the physical are separated.
The laws of Nature are emphasized. Nature reflects the Creator.	The laws of man are emphasized. The Creator is in Man's image.
Feelings are important.	Feelings are rationalized.
Society is based on cultural pluralism and the extended family. Roots are remembered.	Society is based on the melting pot and the nuclear family. Roots are forgotten.
Cosmology is spatial and timeless.	Cosmology is lineal and time-oriented.
Education is experiential. Teachings are from Nature and family elders.	Education is from the mass media and salaried professionals.
Epistemology is based on cultural renewal.	Epistemology is based on personal atonement.
Technology serves the people and Nature.	The people and Nature serve technology.
Material wealth is shared and given away.	Material wealth is hoarded and consumed.
Behavior is cooperative.	Behavior is competitive.
Justice and equality are achieved by cultural forms.	Justice and equality are achieved by legislation.
Society is egalitarian. Women and men have equal freedom and power.	Society is patriarchal. Women are subservient to men.
Leaders put the People above themselves.	Leaders put themselves above the people.
The balance of Nature is maintained.	**The balance of Nature is destroyed.**

On Language, Survival,

with commentary by Roland Thorstensson

Roland Thorstensson is Chair, Department of Scandinavian Studies, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN.

The first two lines of Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's poem are: "My home is in my heart / it moves with me." Two 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 enough 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.]

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 reflect on the most wonderful tool and toy we have: language.

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)

Joik - sometimes spelled "yoik" is Sami poetry which is sung or chanted.

The Joik

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

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

(Paulus Utsi)

This poem ends at the treeline

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

(B. Moske)

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.

As long as.....

As long as we have waters
where fish can swim
As long as we have land
where the 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)

Snails, Spring and Life

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)

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
grows horns too

(Inger and Paulus Utsi)

Two years ago I, a northern European, was a southerner. 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 stunning and 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)

And life? What about life? Valkeapää says: "Life is 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 a while.

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)

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

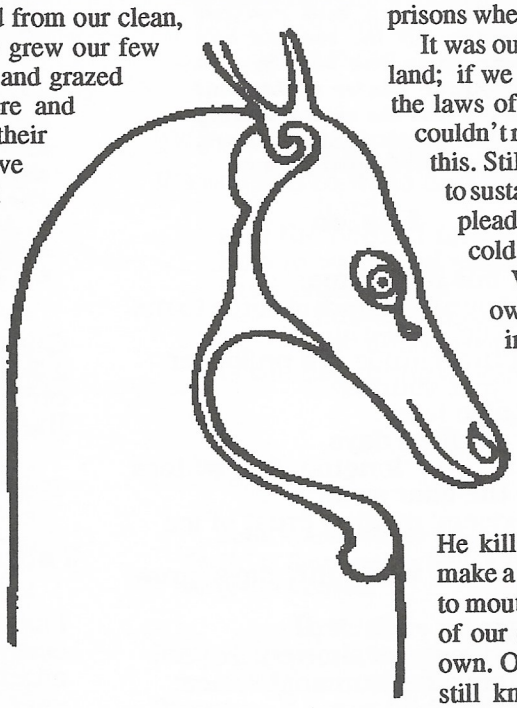
(Paulus Utsi)

"The face of the Invader is always the same, but he hides behind different masks."

TO THE AMERICAN INDIAN PEOPLES AND TO THE OTHER INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

by Evelyn Bell

The tribes of my people lived high in the hills of our homeland. That high cool country was ours; we had lived there forever. We loved the land as you love yours, we cared for it because it maintained and nurtured us. We hunted deer in our cool, green forests and fished from our clean, clear streams and rivers. We grew our few crops in little cleared spaces and grazed our tiny flocks of sheep here and there over the hills. From their wool we spun thread and wove the cloth for our colorful clothing. Each tribe had its own unique design which was its emblem. We were a strong people, and proud. There was enough for all.



Each tribe cared for its own people, respected and listened to its elders, taught our ways to our children and nurtured them, but we were imperfect. Sometimes the tribes warred with one another. Sometimes they warred savagely, killing and plundering and destroying, and taking captives for slaves. These things were done on these continents, as well, by your peoples' ancestors, and many tribes on the African continents, and in Asia. It is the way of humans, and has always been so. We were imperfect, and did not remember that we were one people defending one land.

One day the Invader came, as the Invader always has. Our warriors were strong and brave and fought valiantly to protect their separate tribes. But their weapons were no match for the weapons of the Invader, and their numbers were too few. In the end we were defeated and driven from our homelands. Those who survived fled to the four winds. Our villages and crops were destroyed, our livestock slaughtered. Our homes were gone; there was nothing to return to. Too late we remembered that we were one people, sharing and defending one land. And we should have remembered, because this was not the first invasion.

Scattered, confused, virtually leaderless, our people lived a hidden, frightened existence in the forests. The Invader knew we were there; he didn't bother to hunt us down. Easily, he put down our sporadic uprisings. We were told that there was a new law in the land, written in the language of the Invader, which stated that our people could no longer hunt the deer or fish from the streams, but of course we had to, or watch our women and children starve. *Then we were hunted down and either killed where we were* caught, or thrown into the Invader's prisons where we soon died from the loneliness of separation.

It was our land, yet now we were told it was no longer our land; if we wished to continue to live on it we had to follow the laws of the Invader or pay the price. But of course we couldn't really survive there anymore and the Invader knew this. Still we tried to survive without crops or deer or fish to sustain our bodies, without wool to clothe us. When we pleaded with the Invader for mercy his heart remained cold.

We were restricted by his laws from teaching our own language to our children, from instructing them in the ancient tribal ways of our people, even restricted from cutting timber in the forests for fires and shelter, forests which were no longer ours. Winter came, and many more of us died from the cold and starvation.

The Invader doesn't just kill individuals, he kills their means to shelter and feed their families. He kills their ways, their culture, all those things that make a people a People. He kills their hope, forcing them to mouth the words and names of [his] gods. Only a few of our elders remembered the words and names of our own. Other invaders had thinned our bloodlines, but we still knew in our hearts who we were. Yet we were powerless and our ancient homeland was lost to us.

Some of our people tried to survive by moving to the lowland cities. They had so little, with ways so strange and language so different, that they were looked down on and mistreated by the city dwellers. They were given the most menial tasks by which to earn a living for themselves and their families, which gave city dwellers one more reason to laugh at and abuse them.

The city dwellers, also victims of the Invader, had been led to believe that they were favored by him over the tribal Peoples, and their more prosperous lives seemed to bear that out. They showed no sympathy for the plight of our People because they were afraid and did not want to bring down the wrath of the Invader on the heads of their families.

Some of our descendants still live in that land, but our tribal Peoples never regained their homeland; it was lost to them forever. To this day, most of us are scattered over the face of the earth. Although centuries have passed, love of our homeland still mixes with hatred for the Invader in our hearts, as it does in yours.

So this is the story of my People. It is important to understand that what happened to you has happened over and over again

[MUUS: cont'd from p. 11]

CELTIC CONNECTIONS

throughout human history. It is important that you see your own People's history in the context of our total human history.

The face of the Invader is always the same, but he hides it behind many different masks.

Your people were not slaughtered and disenfranchised in their own land because their skins were darker than the skin of the Invader. Race is only one of the many excuses the Invader gives his willing and unwilling subjects as a reason to keep you disenfranchised, to insure their willing support in your continuing subjugation. Power is the only thing the Invader really cares about, not race nor religion. Only power moves him. Not even those of his own blood are safe from his terrible lust.

When you listen to the stories of all conquered Peoples of this world you will hear your own story repeated over and over told in many tongues. Now you have heard the story of mine.

The tribes of my People were called "clans," our woven tribal cloth "tartans," our lost homeland, the Highlands of Scotland in the British Isles. We call our pow-wows "Gatherings" and when our scattered people come together now we feel a little of the old tribal pride once again as we share in the old ways - but only a little, because too long ago we lost that thread of our spiritual bond with our homeland and the old Spirits. Unlike yourselves, we no longer have that essential sustaining thread to tie us all together and make us a People. Yet, somehow the fire in our hearts continues to burn and the memories of genocide are not forgotten. The faces of our invaders - all of them - were as white as our own.

Evelyn Bell is a San Francisco Bay Area native, a happily single parent of three daughters and grandparent of four, and a medical office manager. The drawings are from ancient Celtic stone carvings.

ERRATUM

Issue #17, page 9, first paragraph: "in the South Sami tradition" should read "in a South Sami tradition."

Lapps" are finally also called "the *Saami*," although the other word is used as well.

To date it is not possible to reference articles from issues of *National Geographic* by looking up "Sami" or "Saami." On the other hand, the Library of Congress and most public and academic libraries in the United States have replaced the word "Lapp." While working as Chief Librarian at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, Rudy Johnson (Sami), successfully campaigned to change indexing to "Sami" in American libraries.

Since the Sami have applied modern technology to reindeer herding, perhaps they're no longer "picturesque." In the March 1998 issue, the author of "Nomads of the Arctic" describes the Nenet - linguistic and cultural relatives of the Sami - as "wandering reindeer Arctic nomads," bringing to mind "Nomads of Arctic Lapland" and the "wandering Lapps" of sixty years ago and in spite of the fact that an Alutiiq scholar accompanies the researchers, he doesn't write the article. This proves once more that there still is a wide gap between who Indigenous Peoples are, what they might have to say about themselves, and how they are portrayed by *National Geographic*.

[A chronological list of all Sami-related National Geographic Magazines *will appear in* Báiki *Issue #19.]*

Nathan Muus is co-editor of Báiki.

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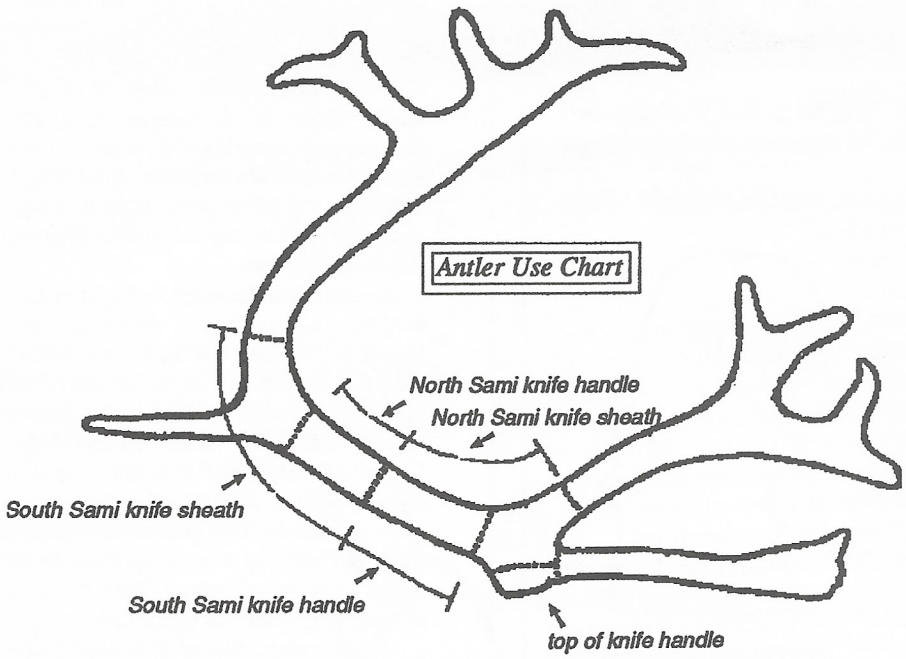


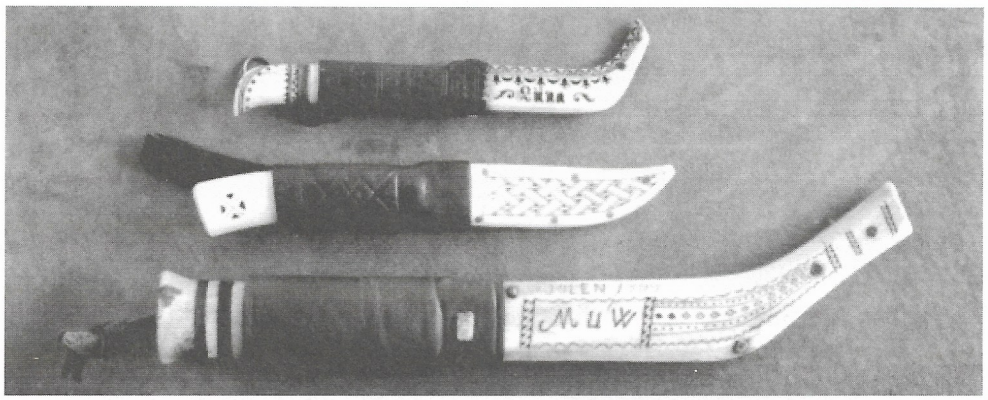
SAMI KNIVES
USEFUL, SHARP AND BEAUTIFUL!

by Eric O. Bergland

"A colorful group it was that headed west from St. Paul. The families from Lapland wore their distinctive national folk costume. From each man's belt hung a long knife." (Postell 1990:24 on the first group of Saami instructor/ herders to cross America en route to Alaska, 1894.) "

INTRODUCTION:

One of the more powerful symbols of Sami art and culture is the distinctive Sami knife. Owned and used by Sami (and their neighbors and descendants), they epitomize the "portable art" of the People (Olsen 1997), and reflect their Arctic and northern boreal adaptation. The world of the Sami, their social organization and economy and language may have changed, but the knife and other *duodji* [Sami craft] forms have remained. Why? Because they make a strong statement about cultural identity and adaptation, these oldest and most basic of human tools...



top to bottom: Small sameniibbi: Finn-type chain-hook hanger "open work scrimshaw," probably Northern Sami , marked "Cüna," ca. 1900. Small sameniibbi: modern belt loop, very well done scrimshaw, South Sami, marked "M. Henden," probably post WW II. Sameniibbi: possibly Swedish Sami marked "Julen" (yuletide) and "M.U.W.1909."

BASIC FORMS:

Traditionally, Sami knives were "fixed blade" sheath knives meant to be worn outside the clothing. They have single-edged blades, where only the bottom edge is sharpened. The standard size knife, with a 4" blade, is called a *unaniibi* or *sameniibi*. There is a much larger form, almost like a small machete, called a *storaniibi* or *leuku*; this generally has a blade in the 6-9" range. The leuku's blade typically is wide, while the unaniibi's blade is narrower and more pointed. Finally, we see a small version of the unaniibi, probably the most recent of the three in historic terms. In size, it can range from a miniature only 3" overall, to a small "user" knife 5-6" long overall.

What sets Sami knives apart from Scandinavian and Finnish counterparts, really, is the extensive use of the reindeer antler, both in the handle and the sheath. The more traditional knife designs will often have a flared or hooked handle end (pommel end), although simpler, cylindrical handles are to be seen also. The composite handles are "stacked" (layered vertically) and are often in very beautiful combinations of antler, wood, leather or birch bark. For me, one of the most compelling - even spiritual - aspects of knife design and construction is the selection and layout of these wonderful materials. They are truly gifts from our world, awaiting transformation.

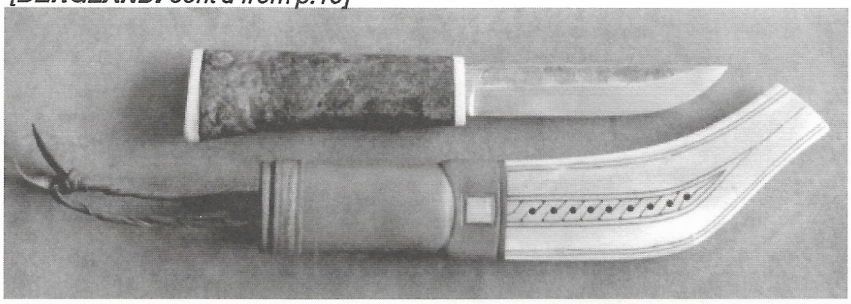
Sami knife sheaths can be real works of art, again, often composites of antler and leather or wood and leather. Of course, sheaths are also of all-leather or woven birchbark construction, but in this article I'll discuss in detail only the ones utilizing reindeer antler.

The lower sheath portion is curved reindeer antler which has been scrimshawed and/or decorated with holes through the outboard antler layer (called "openwork"). Traditionally the more geometrical design scrimshaw work on the antler is characteristic of the South and Central Sami, while the floral and figure design work is from the North Sami. The antler bottom provides outstanding support and protection for the knife's blade. There is almost always a hole in the edge, near the sheath tip, going through to the blade cavity. This allows the blade to "breathe" if it has been put into the sheath wet or dirty. Of course the sheath bottom is a great tableau for scrimshaw art, and is normally made from the densest material near the base of the antler, (see Antler Use Chart opposite page). The unaniibbi sheath bottom is constructed of two pieces of antler which have been hollowed out to accept the blade. Because of the large size of leuku blades, they are made from two to four pieces of antler, or are constructed of birch or alder. The lower sheath portions are traditionally riveted or pinned together, although some modern versions appear to be glued only. Some very expensive modern Sami sheaths are all antler, where the upper portion of the sheath is slotted - this allows the handle to spread the antler slightly when the knife is sheathed.

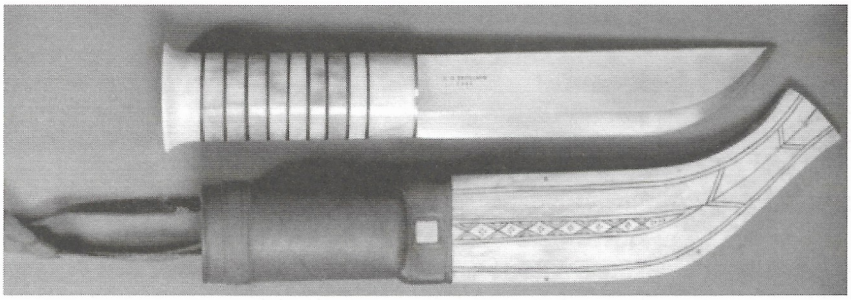
A particularly graceful element of Sami sheath design is the curve at the tip of the sheath; this reflects cultural similarities with Finnish and some Scandinavian designs, as well as sheath designs found to the east. The degree of curvature on the sheath, along with scrimshaw style and motif, was an indicator of Sami identity - more radically curved forms being characteristic of Northern Sami, while straighter versions are said to originate from the South Sami area (Kilburg 1996).

[BERGLAND: cont'd overleaf]

[BERGLAND: cont'd from p.19]



Bergland Sameniibbi: "rough-forged" carbon steel (Finnish blade), scrimshawed caribou antler, reindeer bull leather.



Bergland leuku with sheath.

The upper portion of the sheath is a leather tube into which the handle fits - it is essentially a "friction fit" sheath design, where retainer straps and other complications are unnecessary. Normally, the sheath upper is attached to the antler lower portion by "wet-forming" it around the top of the antler and stitching it very tightly up the back or side. The shape of the antler at the junction is such that once the leather dries, it's virtually impossible to slip off the antler; this is sometimes aided by a retaining lug which projects through the leather. The leather used in most genuine Sami knives is reindeer leather, although steerhide is sometimes found. It has a rawhide inner core, due to the partial tan that yields a very stiff material. (Bergman, 1997:13). Sami-prepared reindeer leather or steerhide is "bark-tanned" and then dyed with alder bark, which gives it a beautiful russet or deep reddish-brown color.

In terms of construction detail, all three Sami knife types are "guardless," that is, without the crossguards typically found in American sheath knives and many other European forms. And they often go without a bolster (a metal plate between the handle and the blade). Sometimes the blade tang goes all the way through the handle (known as a "through tang") and sometimes it is only part way into the handle material (called a "hidden tang"). Carbon steel has been the favored blade material; in the past the blades were trade items, obtained from the settled neighbors of the Sami. Some of the Sami *duodjar* are now forging and shaping their own blades, and at least one illustrated in the Kilburg book appears to be stainless damacus - these changes reflect both a more settled life style and an accomodation to collectors.

KNIFE USE:

The standard size and small sameniibbi and the leuku had uses related to their size and weight. The Sameniibbi is a general-purpose knife, used by both women and men for many tasks - food preparation and eating, woodcarving, skinning, cleaning fish, shaving kindling, cutting basketry material, leather or cordage, whittling, even scrimshaw. I suspect that because of its small size and delicate features, the small Sameniibbi was primarily a woman's knife. Because of the types of sheath hangers I've seen, I also suspect that the knife may have developed as more Sami people began to wear the clothing styles of their Scandinavian neighbors, an almost inevitable consequence of settled life.

The leuku is probably the most distinctly Sami knife - similar forms are not to be found in neighboring cultures. Its use was as a heavy-duty cutting and

[SYNNØVE: cont'd from p. 9]

chopping tool, hence the need for the large weighty blade. The leuku would be used for chores such as slaughtering a reindeer, chopping a hole in the ice, or splitting kindling for the fire. They are rather impressive pieces of cutlery.

In terms of modern use, many of the Sami knives are strictly collectibles, although more so in Europe than in this country. There are still many Sami who wear a knife daily, especially those engaged in traditional occupations such as reindeer herding and fishing. This reinforces the knife as a living symbol of Sami identity. Knives made by the better-known *duodjars* are richly scrimshawed, and because of their great expense, are seldom used in the functional sense. I believe that Sami knives make truly excellent general-purpose sheath knives for backpacking, cross-country skiing and of course, hunting and fishing. My wife finds her small Sameniibbi to be a great basketry tool - it is small, like a woodcarving knife, and this allows her good control in the cutting and splitting of tough bark and roots.

And there's one more "use" I should mention: wear your Sami knife on the trail or in camp, or casually pull it out of your purse or fanny pack to open a letter or package, and you'll be noticed - I guarantee it...

Eric O. Bergland (Sami American) is an archaeologist and knifemaker who lives in Blue River, Oregon. He may be reached at (541) 822-3459, P.O. Box 186, Blue River, OR, 97413.

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The danger is that the voices we hear belong to a few people. The men who are good with words make other voices silent. This was not the kind of society we wanted. It is scary and harmful for democracy and plurality in the Sami society.

I have worked fifteen years for Sami artists' organizations. We have made the situation for Sami artists better. The organizations were born out of the commitment we made in the seventies. Things have become better in 15 years. I still encounter ignorance but I don't have to explain the entire history of the Sami people anymore. And I still experience things that tell me we're disdained as being "less" than other people.

I have thought of becoming a politician. It seems easy. I would not have to deal with the larger issues in life. But as an artist it would kill me. I would rather take part in life. It is more exciting. I live and think as an artist. A picture will be finished eventually but as a bureaucrat you're never finished.

Charlotte's involvement is different from mine and that's the way it should be. She grew up in the most politically active period in a long time. It would be strange if none of this was passed on to her. But I know that it is harder for youth these days than it was for us because racism is much more visible.

[CHARLOTTE cont'd from p. 9]

identity.

I don't understand why Sami politicians can't see that the oppressors actually succeeded. The most oppressing are the "elite" - those that can say without question "I'm a Sami!" because they have the right blood quantum and know the Sami language. If we keep thinking in terms of blood quantum we'll become extinct.

Every 150th person in the world is a refugee. We should be the ones with our arms wide open for other people. Sami culture has something to offer others. We have knowledge the world needs. In the past Samis had a knowledge about themselves and their ancestors... the whole picture. We, the new Samis, have lost a lot of that knowledge. Still we can access the old knowledge on the spiritual level and you don't have to be Sami to do it. You have to be open for it and take part in it. If you do, the knowledge will come to you, not on a CD-Rom, but by using your higher self.

I regard the *Samediggi* as something fundamental. Its establishment is a declaration that Norway has Samis, that they've been oppressed, and have had no rights. But it is only an advisory institution. According to my ambitions it would be interesting to raise my voice in the *Samediggi*, but because of my disability that would be difficult. It's an honor to be involved in taking care of our culture and I'm disappointed that so many people scoff at this. When the king arrives to open the *Samediggi* I'm filled with a sense of awe. The representatives sit up straight, dressed in their *gakti*, which is great. But it is important that they don't keel over from pride. They need to keep a balance.

I don't know of very many young Sami politicians. To be young is to dare to ask questions. To be young gives you knowledge. We see how the world changes. Sami politics should be infused with young blood.

This article first appeared as "Profiler generasjoner" in the Norwegian Sami magazine Gába. *The original version was published in two languages, Norwegian and Sámigiella. We are grateful to Ingvild Greve and Mark Iddings for translating the article from those languages into English. It is reprinted in* Báiki *by permission of the author Hanna H. Hansen, a freelance journalist and photographer who lives in Lakselv, Norway.*

[EIKJOK cont'd from p.12]

has no value.

Today there is an economic crisis in Sápmi [that] is part of the global environmental crisis. The Barents Sea, once the richest fishing grounds in the world, is being emptied by fleets of international trawlers. Reindeer lichen is disappearing from the inland mountain plains as a result of over-grazing and air-borne pollution. Reindeer herding will no longer be a way of life. The authorities intend to reduce it to a job solely concerned with the production of meat.

When people are not allowed to live their lives on their own terms, they become alienated. They may also lose their motivation and sense of responsibility. The authorities talk of the future only in terms such as "productivity," "the price of raw materials," and "profit margins." They pay no attention to the traditional wisdom of local and Indigenous Peoples and ignore their traditional ways of utilizing Nature.

When services and care have a market price and are bought and sold as products, human beings lose their self-esteem. That is why we are experiencing a human crisis as well. People are losing touch with their roots in the land and with their own culture.

Throughout the world people are searching for new models on which to base a new society that is viable for both people and Nature. The knowledge of how to survive without killing Nature still exists. This knowledge can be found in women. But they, like Nature, are under threat. Perhaps we will be forced to draw on that knowledge much sooner than we would expect.

Jorunn Eikjok was one of the seven hunger strikers during the Alta-Kautokeino Conflict [see Báiki Issue #5]. She is from the traditional Sami village of Skiipagurra on the Norwegian side of the Tana River and now works as a sociologist for the Tromsø Regional Hospital.

BÁIKI REVIEW

WIMME

Reviewed by Nathan Muus

Wimme Saari, aka *Wimme,* is a dynamic Sami joik singer from Kelottijärvi and Enontekiö in northwest Finnish Samiland. For those unfamiliar with his debut solo CD entitled "*Wimme,*" first released in 1995 on the Zen/Rockadillo label in Finland, it has now been re-released in North America on the NorthSide label from Minneapolis.

This is cause for celebration because he will surely reach a larger audience, and deservingly so. Wimme not only handles traditional unaccompanied joiks well, but he brings a grittiness into his vocal and throat techniques which recall older joiking traditions.

Of the three Sami joik dialects, he comes from the *luohti* northern joik style through his family. The *luohti* , using the pentatonic scale with no half tones, always describes a person, animal or subject.

Wimme combines tradition with modern production to effective result because the electronics don't overpower him. You may occasionally hear shades of Nils-Aslak Valkeapää in Wimme's clear melodic voice, but he has a completely different style. His falsetto voice and improvisations take us, as in his animal joiks, right into the forest. It's intense and challenging, but then can be soft as a mountain breeze.

Some are calling it "free joik," but it doesn't need a label. It's original joik as you haven't heard before - it might be the freshest that's come out in the past several years. But you still hear the strong presence of tradition there as well.

Wimme has toured Europe extensively to critical acclaim. Let's hope he will visit North America soon as well. Yes, he's contributed to several compilation CD's, and has a few other releases out - more on that later. If you haven't heard this one contact: NorthSide, 530 North Third St., Minneapolis, MN 55401 or e-mail: www.noside.com

Cover photo on Wimme's CD "Wimme," is of his father, a prominant Finnish reindeer herder.

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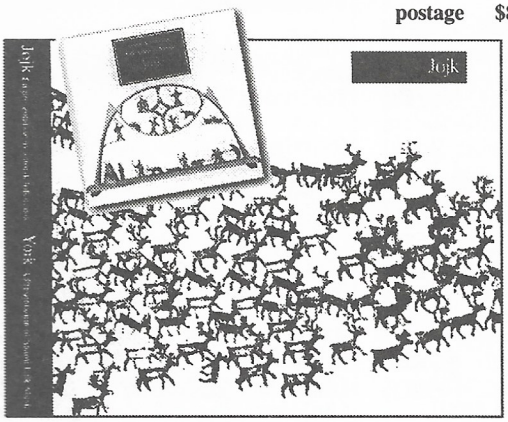

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We are especially grateful to **Kathryn Partridge** for her encouragement and advocacy on our behalf. Together you have played a major role in the reawakening of Sami cultural awareness in North America and for this we at *Báiki* will always be thankful.

THE SPONSORS OF THIS ISSUE

To our loyal supporters:

Without your investments we could not continue to publish this journal and maintain its outreach work. Your faith and support has had a major impact on the reawakening of the North American Sami community. For this, we at *Báiki* say *"GIITU"* to you, our subscribers and to you, the sponsors of this Issue #18:

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THE SAAMI SPIRIT IN THE WEST

The enthusiastic response to our Sami Villages at two major West Coast festivals this spring indicated that many people with Sami connections must have left the cold and snow of Sápmi and the Midwest. Both Villages were put together by the Saami Báiki Foundation, one, April 18 and 19 at the Scandinavian Festival in Thousand Oaks and the other, May 2 and 3 at the Norway Days Festival in San Francisco.

At both festivals the multi-media performances of photographer **Grete Kvaal** (Tromsø, Norway) attracted standing-room-only crowds. Her powerful black and white slide images with first-person narrative focused on four Sami women in their fifties who herd reindeer. The joik soundtrack was by **Mari Boine**. Another San Francisco performance took place April 29 at the American Indian Contemporary Arts Gallery.

FIRST WEST COAST SAAMI SIIDDASTALLEN
THOUSAND OAKS, CA APRIL 17-19,1998

The outdoor gathering drew long-time *"Báik*ers" and attracted new ones. **Henrietta Koski** (La Cañada, CA) **and the staff from the Báiki office** (Oakland, CA) coordinated events. **Eric Bergland** (Blue River, OR) carried the Sami flag in the opening procession while **Nathan Muus** (West Oakland, CA) joiked the gathering.

BEST OF THE FEST:

1. Driving the newest truck to the Siiddastallen: **Joanne Ouelette** (Wheat Ridge, CO) crossing the Rocky Mountains to be there. 2. First white raw silk West Coast gaktis designed for hot weather and worn by an entire family: **Henrietta Koski** (La Cañada, CA) her son **Will**, her daughter **Simone**, and her grandchildren **Jaron** and **Arika**. 3. Specialist in Sami culture coming the longest distance by plane: Purdue University's **Myrdene Anderson** (Lafayette, IN). 4. First Sami-American illusionist to perform at a Sami Village: teenager **Jaron Bouton** (Orange County, CA). 5. Artisan coming the longest distance by car with the classiest display: knifemaker **Eric Bergland** (Blue River, OR). 6. Best chance to identify wild animal tracks from a safe distance: **Jim Lowery**, Earth Skills Survival School, (Frazier Park, CA) and his "Tracking Quiz." 7. Most original personalized Sami-theme license plates: L.A. filmmaker **Donna Jonsson's "L A LAPP"** and **Henrietta Koski's "SAAMI ❤"** 8. Most gallant act of the weekend: **Erik Carlsen** (San Mateo, CA) presenting the Siiddastallen women with purple orchids tied with rainbow ribbon. 9. Most beautifully embellished reindeer part on the *Báiki* table: an antler carved with petrolyphs by **Mel Mattson** (Palo, MN) that will grace our exhibits from now on. 10. Most-missed non-participants: **live reindeer.**

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SECOND WEST COAST SAAMI SIIDDASTALLEN
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