

## Compte rendu

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2003 *Ungipaghaghlanga. Let Me Tell You a Story. Quutmiit Yupigita  
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Told by Ayyeghhaq, Tagikaq, Asuya, Alghalek, Nanughhaq, Wiri*, Fairbanks,  
Alaska Native Language Center, 185 pages.

This attractively produced book contains 35 tales, the major portion of a set of 49 tales originally recorded by the Russian linguist and teacher G.A. Menovshchikov from six Siberian Yupik speakers from Chukotka, Russian Far east, and published in the Cyrillic alphabet with Russian translation in 1988. Christopher Koonooka (born in 1978) a native speaker of Siberian Yupik Eskimo from Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, transliterated the stories into the Latin letter alphabet used by St Lawrence Islanders, and translated them into English. The presentation is not in the bilingual facing page format; English translations simply follow the Yupik texts. However, the correspondence is facilitated by matching paragraph numbers, and by the fact that the sentences of the Yupik and the English almost always correspond one to one. The book is illustrated with drawings by Native artists Jeffery Apatiki and Percy Avugiak.

The preface by senior ANLC linguist Steven A. Jacobson provides the historical background to Koonooka's project, and points out that there were some errors in the original Cyrillic transcription, which were corrected. It is also good to keep in mind that certain phonological distinctions are more consistently marked in the Latin based spelling system than in the Cyrillic one. Koonooka occasionally changed phraseology

to make the sentences agree better with his feel for the language. Jacobson correctly points out that this practice is in accordance with Yupik ideas about the oral transmission. The preface ends with a facsimile of the title page of Menovshchikov's 1988 book, samples from the text in that book, and a detailed map of Chukotka, with all Yupik villages properly spelled in Yupik, which is a treat in itself.

The introduction by Koonooka is remarkable in that it is first written in Yupik, and followed by an English translation. It describes in some detail Koonooka's procedure in adapting the text for St. Lawrence Islanders. He notes that some words were hard to decipher, and that he was able to figure them out by working back from the Russian translation. Where Yupik speakers from Chukotka use a different word or have a different pronunciation of the same word, Koonooka has wisely retained the original Chukotkan form. He also made a list of the words he did not recognize, and had them explained by elders from St. Lawrence Island. It is interesting that even though some of these more typically Chukotkan words (often words borrowed from Chukchi, an unrelated language) are not used by St. Lawrence Islanders, they have a passive knowledge of them. I had the same experience during my fieldwork on St. Lawrence Island in 1985. This phenomenon points again to the fundamental unity of the Siberian Yupik Eskimo language, regardless of the geographical and political separateness of the territories in which it is spoken.

The introduction also acknowledges the help of Russians and Americans, and concludes with a fascinating introduction to the storytellers, translated from Menovshchikov (1988), and edited by the Russian ethnohistorian Igor Krupnik. We learn something about the background of the six storytellers, of their generally energetic lives, and of Menovshchikov's and other Soviet linguists' relationship to them. Three are men, three are women. Two were blind. Five appeared to have been *Ungazighmiit*, natives of Chaplino, and the sixth is an *Imtugmii* from Sighinek.

The stories are of the *ungipaghaatet* (sg. *ungipaghaan*) genre. This genre is similar to European style folktales, in that they are traditional fiction, often contain animal or mythological characters, and are intended to entertain and edify. They are not always appropriate for children, as some contain descriptions of shamanistic rites. Other common motifs are fishing, whaling, or hunting, *i.e.* the quest for food, and the threat of famine; shape shifting into animal form; the importance of the weather and of nice warm clothing; the human faults of disobedience and curiosity; the human miseries of homesickness, of being an orphan, of spousal mistreatment and other sorts of human cruelty; and the relationships with the powerful neighbouring reindeer herding Chukchis, which were ambiguous at best, and warlike at worst. It is certainly not the case that all motifs are represented in this collection. My experience is that some *ungipaghaatet* have sexual or scatological motifs. Their absence in this collection is not surprising, in view of the generally prudish attitude of the Soviets.

A remarkable feature of the text is that there are useful footnotes in Yupik to the Yupik text, and footnotes in English to the English translation. The footnotes comment on unusual items of spiritual and material culture, loanwords, plant names and place names. However, the footnotes in Yupik do not necessarily match the footnotes in

English, which is a bit of a challenge for Yupik learners. There is no detailed ethnographic commentary, which would be necessary for a fuller understanding of some of the stories.

Story 5, pp. 35-46, is of particular interest for discourse studies because it contains a lot of indirect speech, and two stories are told inside the story. Some of the stories are quite well known. For example Story 21, *Mayeraaghpak* (pp. 109-112), has been recorded on St. Lawrence Island at least half a dozen times, in shorter and longer variants, and therefore would be a worthwhile topic of study in itself. I note that this version has the formulaic *panikellemaay* 'Oh daughter' (p. 109). Most St. Lawrence Island speakers prefer *panekellemaay*, with neutralization of the etymological *i* to *e* (schwa), possibly under influence of Sireniki, the original Eskimo language of *Sighinek*, now extinct.

Various formulaic and mysterious words can be found in these stories, and we can assume that they are old loans from other languages, usually, but not always, from Chukchi. They are interesting because they can tell us something about prehistoric relationships between the Siberian Yupik and other groups. For example, the 'seal language' expression *ram kelasap* in Story 18 (p. 93) might well turn out to be Chukchi; there is Inupiaq jabber in Story 19 (p. 97); and the 'magic word' *unaqeqaa* in Story 21 (p. 109) might well be garbled Chukchi.

A useful Selective Bibliography is provided at the end. The book is accompanied by a CD, on which Koonooka reads six of the stories in Yupik, one from each storyteller. While the full intonational and voice quality range of traditional storytellers is maybe hard to imitate while reading, Koonooka is a natural sounding reader, and his intonation of dialogic speech within the stories is quite realistic. Here and there one can "hear" a typo in the Yupik text, where Koonooka's correct pronunciation does not match the spelling (e.g., *llaghan* on lines 6 and 9 of p. 109 for correct *llaaghan*), but such occurrences are very few. In any event, a full display of storytelling skills cannot be conveyed by an audio CD, since accomplished Yupik storytellers use gesture and pointing to enhance their oral performances.

This book and its accompanying CD will be useful tools for Siberian Yupik Eskimos learning to read, as well as for fairly advanced learners who wish to familiarize themselves with the style and the genre of *ungipaghaatet*. It is hoped that it will further mutual understanding and cultural cross-fertilization between Siberian Yupik Eskimos on either side of the International Date Line.

Finally, this book is carefully and thoughtfully edited, as one has come to expect from ANLC publications. Koonooka is to be congratulated for his hard work, and he should be encouraged to produce more writing of this high quality. I expect his book will be a model for other linguists, anthropologists, and ethnohistorians considering the publication of collections of stories under similar circumstances.

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LAUGRAND, Frédéric, Jarich OOSTEN and Maaki KAKKIK  
2003 *Keeping the Faith / Uppirniqainnarniq*, with the participation of Inuit elders Pauloosie Angmarlik, Naqi Ekho, Saullu Nakasuk, Kullu Pitsiulak and Simon Shaimaijuk, Inuktitut text translated and edited by Maaki Kakkik and Alexina Kublu, Iqaluit, Language and Culture Program of Nunavut Arctic College, Memory and History in Nunavut / Nunavummi iqqaumajumajullu qanuinnirijausimajullu ilangit, 3, 187 pages.

Cette publication bilingue, illustrée par des dessins originaux, propose un ensemble de lettres inédites. Écrites au tout début du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle, elles émanent des premiers convertis inuit, au moment où le message chrétien se propageait, d'un campement inuit à l'autre, dans la région sud de la Terre de Baffin (l'actuelle région Uqurmiut au Nunavut). Ces lettres suivent de peu l'arrivée d'un missionnaire bien connu, le Révérend E.J. Peck, qui appartenait à la Church Missionary Society. Les Inuit le surnommeront Uqammak 'celui qui s'exprime avec aisance.' En 1894, le révérend Peck ouvre une mission et une école à Umanarjuaq (Blackhead Island), mais les premiers baptêmes ne seront célébrés que sept ans plus tard, une période au cours de laquelle quelques Inuit, convaincus de l'existence de Dieu, de Jésus et du Saint Esprit, manifestent une telle ferveur que les missionnaires les encouragent à assurer, en leur absence, les prêches et les confessions. Ce sont les témoignages de ces premiers convertis, hommes et femmes, qui sont rassemblés dans l'ouvrage. Leurs auteurs s'adressent à Peck qui, affecté en 1905 à de nouvelles responsabilités, ne reviendra pas à Umanarjuaq. Il entretiendra cependant, avec les convertis, une correspondance régulière jusqu'à sa mort en 1924. Parmi les rédacteurs les plus assidus, figurent les leaders Peter Tulugarjuaq et Luke Killaapik, leurs femmes Maria et Siimi, ainsi que Aatami Naullaq et Mary, une Inuk de Kimmirut.

Les lettres qui nous sont proposées ont été rédigées en syllabaire, un système qui avait fait ses preuves chez les Cris et les Objive, et que Peck avait introduit chez les Inuit, dès son arrivée. Rapidement assimilé en raison de sa relative maniabilité et de son caractère ludique, le syllabaire s'est avéré être un outil extrêmement performant dont les missionnaires ont su tirer bénéfice. Il a sans conteste favorisé la rapide diffusion du message chrétien, notamment grâce aux femmes qui l'enseignaient à leurs enfants, et à leur entourage, en l'absence des hommes partis à la chasse. Composé d'un