

## Physical Disorders and Mental States: Cultural Representations and Answers

### Physical and mental resilience

**Iisapi:** Tirisi and Tipuula are about the same age. I am the youngest one here. We can see how they take care of themselves. Even though a lot of Tirisi's relatives have died, including her children, she's still up and about. She is a happy person. Isn't she a good role model for us?

Yes.

**Tipuula:** One of my children told me that I am a role model. I myself think I am a role model in one area but not in others. I told my children, when there were no strangers around, that there was one thing that I would like them to follow. I told myself when I got married that I would be faithful to my husband, and committed to one man. I know for a fact that cheating creates anger. Young people argue about this. I tried to ensure that was not a part of my life. There are a lot of bad things that go through my mind, but one thing that I vowed never to do was cheat.

### *How did parents make their children strong physically?*

**Iisapi:** Newborns back then seemed to be weaker than newborns today. The heads were very weak. We would hold their heads up until the time they started smiling. It seemed that they had less strength back then compared to babies that are born today. I think this is based on diet. That is where the difference lies. We all have noticed how much stronger babies are today. We bore children that were much weaker. Even if they were chubby, they were weak.

**Tipuula:** We would try to guess why the newborn was weak.

**Iisapi:** If the hands tended to be open and the baby was weak, it was said he was not holding on to his life. Some babies' hands would be clenched.

### *If babies sleep with their hands clenched, is this a good sign?*

**Iisapi, Tipuula, Tirisi:** Yes.

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**Ilisapi:** That was really noticeable when they were newborns.

*Really?*

**Ilisapi:** Only when they were newborns.

**Tipuula:** Even babies born with their hands open could have a long life, though some did not survive.

*Were you able to tell if someone would become a good person, just by looking at them?*

**Tipuula:** Our ancestors before us were able to tell what type of person a child would become, based on how the child looked and acted. You could tell if he was going to be hard or easy to handle, right from birth. Children's personalities were different, even if they had the same father and the same mother. Our parents could tell what type of person the child would become, when he or she grew up. My younger sister Sipuura and I were told that Sipuura would keep a tidy home and my home would be less tidy, for she was quick to move and I was not. This was before my sister had problems with her legs. I moved much more slowly. Based on that, they predicted our future. They said I would not take care of my things as well as she would. My mother was less talkative than my father. He could predict what we would be like when we grew up. He could tell if a boy was going to be a good hunter, based on the way he moved. Boys who took a long time to get up in the mornings would not be very successful hunters. The animals start their day early in the morning. Once it was dawn, the animals would not wait around for a person who tended to get up late. I myself could never predict what my children would be like when they grew up.

*Would they know what children would be like from birth?*

**Tipuula:** Sometimes.

**Ilisapi:** Those who had big bones would become big sturdy people. Even from birth, they could tell from the bones if the person was going to be skinny or chubby.

**Tipuula:** Some babies gained weight even though they did not eat much. You could tell from their flesh what they would look like. Although they would not be skinny, they would not be overweight and they would be fit.

**Ilisapi:** I could tell what the child's physical appearance would be like, but there were others who were able to tell what traits the child would have.

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**Tipuula:** When a child was old enough to start talking, the parents would be advised, if it was a girl, not to raise her to talk back to those older than she was. Some children are very talkative and some are not. Older siblings were advised not to provoke their sisters, as one day they would be married. They tried not to raise a girl to fight back, so she would not challenge her husband when she grew up. Women put themselves in a bad situation if they talked back to their husbands. If you had younger sisters you were advised not to make them angry, as they were already preparing them for the future.

*You mentioned you could tell if a child was going to be lean or overweight by their flesh. How could you do that?*

**Tipuula:** If the flesh was not very flabby when they were babies, you could tell that they were not going to be fat. When a baby's flesh was very flabby, you knew that the baby would gain weight.

*Before there were any doctors, how were they able to tell where a person was sick? Did they use animal anatomy as a guide to human anatomy?*

**Tipuula:** Men are the ones who butcher the animals. If a person was feeling pain in a certain area, you could tell where the pain was by comparing it to animal anatomy. It has been said that a rabbit's anatomy is the most human-like.

*Can the human body be considered as two quppariik, separate vertical halves?*

**Ilisapi:** We know that there are differences. One side is stronger than the other. If a woman had an illness on the right side, she might die if she had a pain in the arm. There seem to be two sides. One side is slightly bigger than the other. If a person has one side that is noticeably smaller, this is considered their bad side. The person is fine but their body tends to be *uvingajaaqtuq*, slanted more to one side. The sides are not equal. One side has the heart while the other doesn't.

*Taamusi Qumaq from Puvirnituk said that the hands, the mind, and the heart are the most important parts of the body. What do you think about this?*

**Tipuula:** Our mind, our heart and our hands are the most important parts. We have to keep active all the time, especially our minds. Before I go to sleep, I think about the things I will do when I wake up.

**Ilisapi:** I think the right side of the body is very important.

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**Tipuula:** If we had an infected *siqpaluaq*, ingrown nail, we were told that it was more dangerous if it was on the side facing you rather than on the other side. This applied to both our fingers and toes.

If it was infected they could tell how serious it was by determining if it was facing away from the person or towards the person. They used to sew a really tight bandaid to cover the finger until the nail started healing. It would start healing while it was covered. If it wasn't covered up well, it would *qissuqtuq*, the flesh would stick out of the wound.

**Ilisapi:** The flesh would be really inflamed.

*What does qissuq mean?*

**Tipuula:** It is when the flesh is protruding from a wound.

**Ilisapi:** When that happened to me as a child, it was hard for me to keep the bandaid on, so my mother would dip my finger in very hot water. It was healed by the hot water.

*Ouch! Was the water salted?*

**Ilisapi:** It was just plain hot water. That's what made it heal. I guess the hot water made it shrivel and dry up.

*What was done when a person froze a body part and gangrene set in?*

**Tipuula:** If the foot was going to be amputated, the tendons would be cut, and it would be removed at the joint. If the gangrene travelled further, the dead flesh would be removed. The tendons would be cut and the bone would be sawed off.

**Tipuula:** I would like to add something regarding *quppariik*. I have a child named Alurut. I adopted him at birth. When he was born, I could see that one half of his body was different from the other half. I could see the difference compared to my other children. When he fell asleep and was dreaming, one half of his body would be twitching and the other side would be jerking. When he slept, the twitching in his hands, legs, and feet used to be different in one side than the other. Inuit believe that this might be due to a problem in the head or the heart. That is how Alurut was. It seemed as if his body was *quppariik*. He is still like this today. He is left-handed and yet he can be ambidextrous. He can write with both hands. During the full moon he tends to be left-handed.

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**Ilisapi:** Back then, we were more aware of children growing into adulthood. Children's personalities are different, even siblings that come from the same parents. My children are very different from each another. I do not even have to ask some of them to do chores, because they are aware of things that need to be done. Some of them do not seem to have a care in the world, and seem oblivious to what needs to be done. You can really tell the difference between children, even when they are raised by the same people. Even though they are raised the same way, they differ from each other. Our ancestors really paid attention to the differences between children, as they had nobody to rely on but themselves. Our ancestors even paid attention to what children ate. They would know if a child was going to live off other people's catches and have to rely on others.

**Tipuula:** The ones who were slower to move didn't seem to be aware of anything beyond their immediate surroundings.

**Ilisapi:** You could see this, even when they were children. There are some children who pay attention to the weather.

**Tirisi:** Those who didn't pay attention to the weather could not even tell which direction the wind was coming from.

**Ilisapi:** Adults tend to ask, "How is the weather?" Some children say, "I don't know." Others will say, "It is windy." There are some children who pay attention to the weather and some who do not. These days when children go to school and you ask, "How is the weather?", they just look out the window and they say, "It is excellent," whether it is good or bad as long as it is bright outside. Some tend to be like that. I think it is our responsibility to make them aware of the weather, not just the school. They do not forget what their mothers teach them.

### *Is this even more important if you have a son?*

**Ilisapi:** Both boys and girls have to be aware of the weather, as we live in a harsh environment.

**Tipuula:** We carried our children on our backs. They would be searching all over and even before we would see anything they would say, "There is a seal." Children see better than we adults do.

**Tirisi:** They could see little birds too. Children see better than adults. Some boys were more aware than others and saw things more quickly. Based on that, you could tell what they would be like as adults.

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**Iisapi:** We did not actively teach our children. We did not always pay attention to what they were doing. They started to notice things by themselves. When they saw people for the first time, they would note the resemblances to other people they knew. If you paid attention you became aware of the things they knew.

**Tipuula:** A mother could ruin a child by trying to make the child do things that he was still too young for. It is better for a child to learn some things when he's older. Some children who grow quickly are said to be more advanced physically than mentally but this eventually evens out. A child can be ruined if the parents have unrealistic expectations.

**Iisapi:** Trying to teach children too much at the same time can confuse them, not about routine things in the home, but about things that are beyond them.

**Tipuula:** If we try and shape our children's future when they are too young, we can end up ruining them. We should not rush them into things. They are eventually going to learn anyway, when they are ready. We also need to pay attention to those who are old enough to know certain things and yet do not. When they are young, we should not treat them as being older than they are. Some children are more mature than other children at the same age. Forcing a child to grow up too quickly is considered a bad thing.

**Iisapi:** I have noticed that once a child turns five years old, they are expected to grow up and leave their childhood behind. They do not learn about their mother's activities as they are only home on week-ends. Even when they are home, they tend to play outside. If I was a *qallunaag*, I would recommend that children should not attend school before the age of five.

**Tipuula:** We are very different from the *qallunaat*, even though we are similar in some ways. We have been taught not to correct children, even if they pronounce something the wrong way. Even if the child reverses their syllabics, we should not correct them, as they will eventually figure that out themselves.

**Iisapi:** The child is not really making a mistake because it makes sense to them.

**Tipuula:** They use their own language until they realize that there is a certain way to say or do something.

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**Tirisi:** My grandchild just recently developed an awareness that the husband was her father and the wife was her mother. She is only discovering these things now.

**Ilisapi:** I had a problem with a kindergarten class I was teaching. I was advised as to what was correct and what was a mistake. I said that they were only children and that was why they were talking like that. I was told that teenagers do not know how to speak properly anymore. Forget the teenagers, little children have their own language. It is as if the kindergarten children are expected to speak like adults. I was told that I could not teach the kindergarten children anymore. It is only proper to let children speak children's language first. Today, they are not allowed to make mistakes. There is even a checklist as to what is correct and what is a mistake.

*Do you think it would be better to send children to school when they seem ready, rather than based on their age?*

**Ilisapi:** Children that range from five to nine years old are expected to know the same things. Do five and nine year olds use the same language? I asked, "How is it that these children do not speak like children? Do *qallunaat* children speak like adults?" I was told it was not that way. I think if they are good, it doesn't matter if they speak like children.

*I had a classmate for many years who could not pronounce "uuttiaru," which means "wait," properly. Even when I tried to teach her, she would insist that she was saying it the right way. Eventually when she was a teenager, she finally realized what she was saying all along.*

**Tipuula:** Children eventually find things out on their own. They find things out themselves from their surroundings. We should not try and make them do things. We should not try and stop them from trying out new things. Of course, we will not let them do something if it is dangerous.

*Were children taught to do things so that they would be prepared for when they became adults?*

**Tipuula:** That is what we were preparing them for. If a child made a mistake, you would wait until the child realized that what he was doing was wrong, as long as it wasn't dangerous. Sometimes small children try and handle things we do not want them to touch, things that are dangerous. They do not realize what they are doing is wrong. Even when we say no, they do not understand what we mean since we are just saying

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this orally. If you slap them on the hand, they will eventually understand that they are not permitted to touch that. Do not just say no, or try to stop them by talking to them. You have to slap their hand until they understand.

**Ilisapi:** The *qulliq*, the seal oil lamp, was out in the open and had a flame, so the baby had to be taught to stay away from that. There were *uluut*, women's knives, and sharp objects around. They had to learn not to touch those things for they were dangerous.

**Tipuula:** If you just tell them, "No, do not touch that," they will never learn. They will keep trying to touch things you do not want them to. If you slap their hand while you are speaking to them, they will eventually start to look at you before they touch anything.

*You have to watch them.*

**Tipuula:** Children do not forget. They start learning what they are not allowed to do right away. They even start to tell other children what they are not allowed to.

*How can we help a child to develop intellectually?*

**Ilisapi:** There are people around who think differently, but I think it is best if we follow the advice our mothers gave us, so that we don't run into problems. If we follow our mothers' advice it is better, because their advice is based on experience. We should listen to our mothers, so that we don't encounter anything that becomes too difficult to handle.

*How can we develop their ability to think?*

**Tipuula:** We were taught how to think while we were growing up. We weren't taught other people's ideas; we learned how to make decisions of our own. If we felt something was right, we accepted it, and if we felt it was wrong, we didn't. We had to learn to think for ourselves.

**Ilisapi:** We do not really teach children how to think. We all think differently. As I said earlier, children today seem to be expected to speak like adults. When this happens, they are so used to being pushed, they can't think on their own. They will only do things if they have been told to do so.

*Does this happen when they aren't given the chance to just be children?*

**Tipuula:** Yes.

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**Iisapi:** Children tell themselves that they will only do things if they are told to. It seems we have to keep telling them what to do these days. “Dress warmly,” or “Get dressed.” They just sit and wait to be told what to do since they have never really done anything on their own. I have often noticed this about children who go to school.

*Were children taught during childhood not to just wait around to be told what to do?*

**Iisapi:** Yes. Children are all different. Today they have to sit and write in school. Some of them enjoy writing and some start writing and then get bored. I guess their nostrils get too warm so they start getting nervous.

**Tipuula:** Their breathing changes.

**Iisapi:** Even when we carried our children on our backs, their breathing changed when they wanted to go outside. Once children enter school, they are expected to learn at the same level. There are a lot of children in a classroom. If a child has behavioural problems they are singled out. I am sure they want to behave like the other children, but it is their desire to be outside that causes them to misbehave.

*We are all different from each other.*

**Tipuula:** It is unnatural for children to be indoors while they are growing up.

**Iisapi:** I think that was the reason why some didn't graduate. I think the reason why the older ones didn't graduate was because when they were younger we would take them outside in our *amautit* every time they wanted to go outside, especially boys. They were the ones who often did not finish school, especially the ones who thought they knew more than their teachers. They would start becoming non-attenders and start doing bad things, not because they were bad, but because they were little boys.

*Does this happen when they are told to sit still all the time?*

**Iisapi:** They are told, “Sit still! Stay still!”, until they start getting angry.

*Some children are being told what to do to the point where they do not want to listen anymore.*

**Tipuula:** Yes. They hear things so often they don't listen anymore. Even though they are told to stop something, and they say ‘yes,’ they still continue doing it.

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**Ilisapi:** They want to listen but they have a hard time doing so.

*In the past, adults didn't give in to a child's every whim.*

**Ilisapi:** In the past, there weren't any gyms that we could tell them to go to.

**Tipuula:** Even though children we no longer carried didn't need our undivided attention, we still had to look after them and make sure we fed them regularly. That was the only thing they got cranky about. As long as we fed them and made sure their hands and feet were warm, they would be able to keep themselves content and occupied.

*How were older children dealt with back then?*

**Tipuula:** When there was a newborn, an older sibling would be cranky for three or four days at the most. They got used to the baby as long as we didn't tell them to stop crying when they were crying.

**Ilisapi:** It was obvious that they wanted the attention instead.

**Tipuula:** Yes. They would cry because they wanted attention. It was okay to let them cry. They would cry for a while and then they would eventually get used to it. The jealousy they felt passed quickly. They got used to being the older child, and would realize that unhappy situations passed.

**Ilisapi:** You should not put the older child on your back again because if you did that, they would expect you to keep doing it. Our hearts went out to them. Sometimes we would put them on our back while the newborn was being held. After having been carried on your back, this was difficult for them.

**Tirisi:** It was also difficult when they woke up and were thirsty and wanted to be breastfed.

*There weren't any bottles back then. Did you breastfeed older children once in a while?*

**Tipuula:** No. I followed the advice I was given. It was difficult.

*An older child would not be breastfed once there was a younger sibling?*

**Tipuula:** I was told not to, to make it easier on them. Although mothers really felt for the older child, you had to think of their future. If you have a lot of milk in your breasts,

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you should not use this as an excuse to start breastfeeding them again. If you do, you are setting yourself up for a problem. They will both want to be fed and you will end up feeling like you have twins, even though you don't. If they were twins, then they would both be fed. I was advised to stop breastfeeding, even before the new baby was born. I was advised to wean the child, so they would have adjusted to this by the time the new baby came. If you did continue to breastfeed right up to the birth of the next child, you were advised to stop this as soon as the baby was born. The first three days and three nights were the hardest for the older child.

*Do we tend to create more work for ourselves by telling our children not to cry?*

**Tipuula:** If you tell them they will no longer be breastfed, you have to keep your word. If you say you are not going to breastfeed them anymore and you still do, they will not believe what you say anymore. You have to mean what you say so they will get used to it faster. It is best not to breastfeed the child, even if they are hungry and crying.

**Ilisapi:** Three times I have breastfed two children at the same time. I had too much milk and my mother advised me to feed the older one and said that he would eventually wean himself. Children are different from each other. My older child was the type who did not think of anyone besides himself. I kept telling him that he would not be breastfed anymore, so when we were going somewhere we left him behind. He got angry, so it was a good thing we left him behind. After that, I fed the newborn and the next youngest at the same time again. I fed them both for quite a long time, until the older one started to realize that the younger one should be feeding more, so he eventually stopped. When the younger one was medivaced for meningitis, the older one continued to breastfeed. He was old enough to play outside with a toy whip and was still breastfeeding. That was a problem.

*Was this your older child?*

**Ilisapi:** Yes. When the younger one came back, he was being bottle fed and the older one was still breastfeeding. I did not like the way I was feeding them, so I stopped breastfeeding the older one and fed the younger one. What Tipuula said was true about the problems you create for yourself by continuing to nurse an older child. This older child is now married. He cannot eat raw meat. It is good for men to be able to eat raw meat because sometimes they have nothing to cook with while out hunting. He still cannot eat raw meat today. He had too much milk when he was a child. Some women are stronger than others. It is very tiring to breastfeed two children when you are not very strong.

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*I wonder if the reason some people cannot eat raw meat is because they were nursed too long?*

**Ilisapi:** Yes. Some children are nursed for too long a time.

*No wonder they cannot eat raw meat.*

**Tipuula:** When we had to travel a lot, it was really difficult if we were nursing two babies. The reason why we were advised not to breastfeed two children was because we moved around a lot. We didn't live in houses. We were constantly moving. It was better not to breastfeed the older child at all. We would travel with our husbands between the Iglulik, Naujaat, Mittimatalik and the Tununirusiq areas. Even when we had small children, we still travelled. It was okay to feed an older child solid food when they stopped breastfeeding.

*From the time they were babies, had their future already been laid out for them?*

**Tipuula:** Boys were prepared for travelling outside when they grew older. They would be hunting in the cold, and they would not eat all day so they prepared them for that. They would be fed small servings in order to get them used to that.

**Ilisapi:** Even if it was not the best meat.

**Tipuula:** Food was not always available and the weather did not always cooperate. If a boy was a picky eater, his body would deteriorate quite quickly if what he could eat was not available.

*Some children refuse to eat a lot of things today. What did you do to make a child eat. Did you plead with them?*

**Tipuula:** It was best if you just waited for the child to get hungry.

*You didn't force them to eat?*

**Ilisapi:** We would just wait until they got hungry. Then they would eat.

**Tirisi:** By the time some children got hungry, they were nodding off to sleep, even though they were trying to eat.

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*These days we really want to make sure our children eat. We even start scolding them when they don't.*

**Tipuula:** That's because we are now following a clock. If we were eating and the child did not want to eat, we would wait until the child got hungry and then they would eat. If there was a limited amount of food available, we would try and give them little bites. If there was ample food available, you did not have to try and feed them, you would just wait for the child to get hungry, and they would start eating. You do not have to force a child to eat. I know we get concerned these days about eating at specific times because children go to school.

*That is what I do with my daughter once in a while. Sometimes she does not feel like eating, so I just tell myself that she will want something later.*

**Tipuula:** Yes, as long as there is more food, it is alright not to force a child to eat. Children only enjoy eating when they are hungry.

*I have a question pertaining to something else. Can you tell that someone is sick just by looking at them?*

**Tipuula:** People who see us often notice a change in us when we are sick, even though we are not aware of it ourselves. The person's demeanor will change and they will not be themselves. We would be told to take care of people who were not being themselves; for example, if a child had an earache and was being cranky.

**Ilisapi:** Especially if they were really cranky and pale looking.

**Tipuula:** One could tell if a child was sick by paying attention to their face and to their demeanor.

*Does this also apply to older children and adults?*

**Tipuula:** Yes. They tend not to be themselves and they are usually pale. If someone was feeling lethargic, you could tell.

*What did you do if you noticed someone was sick?*

**Tipuula:** We would take more care with a person if we felt there was something wrong. We would pay more attention to them and try to comfort them, depending on what was wrong with them. We would also try to provide whatever the person asked for.

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*You would let them have their own way?*

**Tipuula:** Temporarily, yes. As soon as they were better, things would get back to normal.

**Tirisi:** Even when they were better, children tended to carry on for a while.

**Tipuula:** They were not their usual selves while they were recovering.

### **Body aches and constipation**

*I would like to know if you have heard about signs of internal illness appearing on the skin?*

**Tipuula:** Yes. When that happened it was a good sign. These signs differed. When a sick person's illness erupted on the skin and they didn't seem to be recovering, this was a very bad sign. If they seemed to have more energy, this was good. If a person who was normally active became lethargic and they ended up with abscesses on their skin, this was not a good sign.

*Was this fatal?*

**Tipuula:** If it was not painful and the person was not vomiting, then the sickness was just sitting inside. Some of them died after a short sickness of just three days. I guess there was a rupture of some sort internally.

**Tirisi:** Probably that was what happened.

**Tipuula:** If nothing showed up on the skin, I guess a person died from a rupture.

**Ilisapi:** That only happened occasionally.

**Tipuula:** That didn't happen every year; just once in a while.

*What about people who look fine? I have a really bad toothache right now. Did they have toothaches back then?*

**Tipuula:** Not at all. Children never had toothaches back then. Toothaches were for old men and women. The only thing that happened to children was that their teeth came out naturally.

**Tirisi:** Children never had cavities.

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**Tipuula:** Earaches have always been around though.

**Ilisapi:** When an elder got a toothache, they would remove the tooth themselves.

**Tipuula:** If they could not remove it themselves, then another person would help them.

*Even if the tooth wasn't loose?*

**Tipuula:** Yes, if they were in a lot of pain. Teeth are different from each other. Some toothaches are so painful that you can black out from the pain. Some teeth can be removed without much pain. Others are deeply embedded. The tooth was removed before the person started blacking out from the pain. If a person was in intense pain, then someone else would have to help them remove it.

*What was used to remove the tooth?*

**Tipuula:** Sinew.

*Even when the tooth wasn't loose?*

**Tipuula:** Yes. The person would keep their mouth wide open. I knew of a person who had a really bad toothache. He tied his tooth to a rock with strong thread.

*Did his tooth come out?*

**Tipuula:** Yes.

*If a child had a loose tooth that came out, was it fed to the dogs?*

**Tipuula:** I have never heard of that.

*I heard that children were told to feed their baby teeth to dogs so they would have excellent teeth. They would hide the tooth in palaugaq, bannock, and give it to a dog.*

**Tipuula:** I have never heard of that.

**Tirisi:** I have never heard of that either.

**Ilisapi:** Nor can our children's teeth turn into money.

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*You have said that children didn't have toothaches. What other problems did children have?*

**Ilisapi:** Sometimes babies would become constipated when the feces hardened in the intestines. When this happened we had to help them to defecate. They were said to be *tuutajut* if they were constipated. Some children actually died from this. Have you heard of that?

**Tipuula:** Yes.

**Ilisapi:** I think that almost happened to my daughter. She was my only daughter at the time and we were still living with our in-laws then. I noticed she hadn't defecated for a long time. I thought that she must be urinating and defecating on her own, even though I never noticed her doing this. She never even asked me to wipe her bum, even though I was still doing this for her brothers. Boys only have to remove their pants when they defecate. Girls have to remove theirs whether they peed or pooped. She was quite cranky and pale and it turned out this was from being constipated. Her pants had a bit of poop on them. I found out that her anus was sore.

She was pooping the watery part but she could not get rid of the hard part. I wasn't paying enough attention. I attempted to help her poop by using the end of a comb and digging it out. I made sure I did not hurt her flesh. Her anus was really sore but I kept telling her to push and it slowly started coming out. When it came to the rim and started coming out, she kept pooping all night. It was a relief.

**Tipuula:** When they were like that, they could be helped by using the *patirniq*, a caribou leg bone that had had the marrow removed. The marrow in the bone was removed and the bone was shaped into a tiny scoop. It was used to help people who were constipated.

**Ilisapi:** The feces would be removed by digging it out.

**Tipuula:** The term that was used for that was *saulluqtaq*.

**Ilisapi:** Today, when this happens, children are taken to the Health Centre right away. We don't use *saullurniq* any more.

*Could soap also be used?*

**Ilisapi:** We used soap a lot for children who were breast feeding because they became constipated a lot.

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**Tipuula:** We wouldn't use soap with newborns.

**Ilisapi:** If the intestine was not too full, soap could be used. The intestines could fill up if you didn't poop regularly.

**Tipuula:** The feces had to be removed, even if you had to dig it out. Otherwise it could cause death.

**Ilisapi:** Even if it was an adult that was constipated, the same thing had to be done. You could help someone, even if you weren't a doctor; you just had to make sure not to damage the flesh. There are things that we can take care of ourselves without spending large amounts of money to send patients off to Iqaluit. Maybe we can do something about this.

**Tipuula:** Before there were doctors, there were some people that would be requested if medical attention was required. Even if the person lived in another camp, they would be informed if there was a problem. If they were concerned, then they would go and see the sick person.

***Narunalattijuq***, sickness that travels through the body;  
depression, and the value of conversation

*Some diseases travel through the body. Have you heard about this?*

**Tipuula:** I think we all have heard of that.

**Ilisapi:** That is called *narunalattijuq*.

**Tipuula:** If a person had a sickness that travelled through the body, that was a bad sign.

**Ilisapi:** Are you saying that if a person had a pain in one area and it moved to a different area, that was called *narunalattijuq*? Was this considered dangerous?

**Tipuula:** If one had a pain that kept moving from one area to another, that was considered a bad sign.

*Did that used to happen back then too?*

**Tipuula:** Yes. Sometimes, when a person had a pain that moved around in the body, it would just disappear.

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**Ilisapi:** The elderly were the ones who usually suffered from this.

*Was there a cure?*

**Tipuula:** It was usually chronic, although occasionally it would disappear completely.

*Did it travel through the blood?*

**Tipuula:** I don't know. It probably did, but we had no means of knowing.

**Ilisapi:** I have always wanted to ask about this, because I seem to be the only one who has heard of it. I heard that if a person who has constant stomach-aches starts excreting blood, then they will get better.

**Tipuula:** Having things pass out of the body has always been a good sign. If a woman was having pain in her uterus and nothing came out, that was a bad sign. Even if the woman felt embarrassed, she needed to tell someone. It is the same thing with a stomach-ache. If something started to come out it was a good sign. It was okay not to tell anyone they were in pain, if something was coming out. If nothing was coming out and they were in pain, they needed to tell someone about it. It could be dangerous if nothing passed out of the body. If our urine or feces change in some way, we need to tell someone about it. If we tell someone about it it is less scary. Once the sickness had passed out of the body, the person could recover.

**Ilisapi:** These days if someone excretes blood, it is considered dangerous. I do not agree with that myself. I think that it is a good sign.

*If a person is depressed and does not talk about it, do they just get worse?*

**Tipuula:** Yes, it is similar to what we were just talking about. The pain they are feeling mentally has to come out before they can start healing. Our mind is part of our body as well, so it is similar.

*What does it mean if a person is sighing all the time? Did people do that back then too?*

**Tipuula:** People who tended to worry too much were the ones who tended to sigh a lot. If a person worries too much then their breathing changes.

**Ilisapi:** It is as if they are very tired.

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**Tipuula:** Their breathing sounds like they are tired, either from worry or because their body is feeling discomfort. When a person started to breathe like that, that was one way you could tell they were not feeling well.

*How did they help people who were sighing a lot?*

**Tipuula:** I feel better after I sigh. If I do not sigh for a long time, my body starts feeling tired. After I sigh, my body feels better. Am I the only one like this?

**Ilisapi:** No, but there is a difference if someone sighs too frequently. It is easy to see that something is on their mind. They may think it is only minor and keep it to themselves, but I feel if they talked about what was on their mind, it would help.

*I sigh a lot. I am starting to think that sighing is a part of life.*

**Tipuula:** This could be because you are mentally or physically tired. Sighing can be a sign that something is wrong, if you start sighing more than you usually do.

*Did people who were chronically ill have to keep strong mentally?*

**Tipuula:** I was raised in a family that was quite healthy. I was exposed to sickness for the first time when I moved in with my in-laws. My father-in-law was chronically ill. His mind was stronger than his body. I found that he was a lot livelier if he did things that he wanted to do once in a while, even though he was advised against this. Being a man, there were certain things he wanted to do and he felt better only after doing them. He knew what his limits were. If he did things he wanted to do once in a while, that really helped him. Some men can never stop doing things. He was always livelier after doing certain things, even though he was advised not to. When I was living with my parents, I never knew about illness as my parents were quite healthy.

*Is it better to try and stay active when you are sick?*

**Tipuula:** A person knows their own body and knows their own limits. If we just sit back and do nothing, it can be detrimental. It is good to push yourself once in a while. Before we realize that we are sick, we try and do things normally, but this can be really tiring. Once we know that we are sick, then we know when to stop before we get too tired. We can only learn by trial and error. I have experienced this myself.

*Did people get depressed back then too? Did some people react violently when they were depressed?*

**Tipuula:** Those who were chronically ill were often depressed.

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**Tirisi:** Depression is definitely connected to the weather.

**Tipuula:** Yes. People are definitely affected by the weather. People who had chronic heart problems and those who had pain in certain areas of their bodies were always affected by the weather. We didn't worry about them taking a turn for the worse during a full moon because this happened monthly. Women's bodies change when they are going to have their period. It's a regular occurrence. It's the same thing for those who have a chronic illness.

### *How did they try and help them mentally?*

**Tipuula:** We would try and cheer them up, since we all knew they were not going to die. Their families tried to maintain a cheerful atmosphere around them. They would eventually get over feeling depressed. If a person is feeling discomfort, and hearing negative things, this can make them even more unhappy, even though the negativity is not directed at them. For that reason, you need to maintain a cheerful atmosphere around someone who is feeling depressed. That way it is easier for them to get over their depression.

### *We see women on television who have beautiful bodies and beautiful blonde hair. In the past did people value a person's physical appearance as well, or did they value a person's inner characteristics?*

**Tipuula:** I was told not to judge a person solely on their appearance. I was advised if I was going to judge someone, it should be on how well they could make things such as clothing. If I liked a certain woman's work, I would try and make something similar. If I did not like it, then I would not try and copy it. I was advised never to judge a person or to say that they were good or bad.

**Ilisapi:** A person would be advised not to worry all the time. If they did so they would tend to make themselves sick. It is better to talk to someone about what you are worried about, even if it is not directly to the person that is causing you to worry.

**Tipuula:** They could talk to anyone they felt comfortable with.

**Ilisapi:** Yes. The person should talk to anyone who will listen to them, even if the person is older or younger than they are, as long as the person is trustworthy and doesn't talk about what is being said. Sometimes you tell someone something in a confidence and much later, you hear back what you said. The person you trusted broke your trust. You should find someone you feel comfortable talking with, who identifies with your

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problems, even if it is a young person. That is what I have heard. Women used to say some teenagers were really easy to talk to and were really kind and welcoming. If you don't feel comfortable speaking with a fellow adult or an elder, a teenager can sometimes be a good person to talk to.

**Tipuula:** You need to find someone who is easy to talk to.

**Tirisi:** Yes, definitely. You can end up helping each other.

**Ilisapi:** We have to constantly try to cleanse ourselves. Just as our clothing gets dirty and needs to be cleansed, our minds do too. Life has always been a combination of good and bad, like a very nice day and a stormy day.

**Tipuula:** We tend to experience good things and bad things in life. Feelings of pain and loss do occur, but they pass.

**Ilisapi:** You have to constantly try to make your life better. Eventually, all bad things pass.

**Tipuula:** It is better to deal with a problem right away and admit what is bothering you. If you deal with things immediately, it is easier to avoid stress. If you cannot find a person to talk to, you can always turn to God for he is forever listening to us.

**Ilisapi:** Our life today is entirely different from the life we lived back then. Our belief in God becomes stronger as we get older. As we grow older we know for a fact that it is better to talk about things. We know the sea is calm on some days and rough on other days. It is hard trying to understand our young people today. We should tell them that the roughness will pass and the calmness will come again. It is hard to try and think about what kind of advice to give them. I try not to feel intimidated in situations I find threatening. I find comfort in expecting the rough seas to pass. It is not only you young people who go through hard times, we elders do as well. Only those who try and comfort each other and let things out can avoid getting chronically ill. It is very tiring to live an unhappy life.

*Were you advised not to worry about the next day's food and clothing?*

**Ilisapi:** Yes. We were also advised not to be stingy. We would be told there would be more food later on.

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**Tipuula:** We were told there would be more food later on. We just had to wait and have patience. Sometimes it was hard to be patient. When we ran out of food we would cry. The future looked bright again after the hardship had passed.

**Ilisapi:** We were often left behind when the men went out hunting. They would sometimes travel for days searching for food. After they left, sometimes we were sad while we were waiting for them to return. Our dwellings were not too warm, and we became tired of looking after the children. Then all of a sudden, they would arrive quite unexpectedly. We never knew when they would be back. After they returned, it seemed as if we had not gone through any hardship at all.

*I guess women had to be able to do a lot of things because they were often left behind.*

**Ilisapi:** It was for that reason that we were trained to do many things from childhood. We were often left behind. I sometimes used to lose hope that my husband would come back. I thought that we would go hungry. These thoughts often went through my mind. That never happened though. The men would come back with their catch after travelling by dogteam. Then everything would seem right all of a sudden, and the awful feelings would go away. When you had a new husband you had to adapt to living with your in-laws. When you moved in with your in-laws, life was different from living with your parents. You entered into a new life.

**Tipuula:** We were prepared for this from childhood. We would end up following a different way of life than we were accustomed to.

**Ilisapi:** When you get a husband you end up with a family that is either more capable or less capable than the family you grew up with. Either way can cause difficulty. People did not give in to you and you were not always fed like you were before. You have to try and raise your children properly, even though you love them a lot because they are named after someone you hold dear. You shouldn't treat your child as special just because they are named after a loved one. You have to prepare a child for the future. Somewhere down the road, they will live with a family that is completely different from the one they were born into.

## Childrearing

*What was done to children that misbehaved too much?*

**Ilisapi:** They were given a spanking.

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**Tipuula:** We were taught to spank a child in a place where they would not be hurt physically, such as on the buttocks because there are no bones to break there. We were told never to hit a child on the head. We would try to correct their behaviour so they could live a good life.

**Ilisapi:** We were also advised not to abuse a child.

**Tipuula:** If it was a boy, it was his father's responsibility to discipline him. If he only wanted to spank him once, then he would only spank him once. He would behave for a while, and if he started to misbehave again, the father could spank him a second time. We women took care of our daughters. Some children reached adulthood without ever needing a spanking. Some of them needed to be spanked, and would thank us when they were older for correcting them. Parents would spank children to make them aware of things they had not been paying attention to. Some children were spanked when they did not deserve it and this was bad for a child's development. When they realized they did not deserve a spanking, they became angry. Children who deserved to be spanked grew up being thankful for the discipline they received. Children who did not deserve to be spanked grew up to become angry people.

### *Can you spank a child too much?*

**Tipuula:** If they do not deserve it, you should not spank them at all.

**Ilisapi:** Some of us tended to take out our frustration on our children when it was our husband who we were angry at. Even if the child had done nothing wrong, if he made one small mistake, we took out our frustration on him. If children were treated like that, they could be damaged. It was their spouse they were angry at in the first place but they took their frustration out on their child. That is not the way to treat a child. It is not good.

### *You should not spank them when they don't deserve it?*

**Ilisapi:** Sometimes we make mistakes, at least I did. My mother-in-law told me that even though I did not think I was angry, I reacted to things at the spur of the moment, when it was really something else that was bothering me.

### *Do you think it has always been like this?*

**Tipuula:** If you take out your frustrations on a child who doesn't deserve it at the spur of the moment, it catches you off guard.

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**Ilisapi:** You have to make the child understand that what you did was done at the spur of the moment and was never intended. You have to tell them that you are not angry at them, that you are angry at something else. That way they understand.

**Tipuula:** After you discipline children, you should wait until they stop crying before you talk to them about the situation, and let them know that what they did was wrong. Make sure that discipline is followed by affection. Once children realize that you love them, they understand more and they behave better for a longer period of time. If you do not talk to them about the situation afterwards, then they tend to misbehave more frequently.

*Should we only talk to them after they stop crying?*

**Tipuula:** Yes. When they are finished crying and are feeling better, that is a good time to talk to them. You need to explain the situation. Let them know you do not like spanking them but what they did required discipline. Once they understand that, they will feel closer to the mother or the father. Things are completely different today. We only reprimand our children verbally because we are not allowed to use physical discipline with our children anymore.

**Tirisi:** Things are completely different today.

**Tipuula:** Children are different these days. Even in school they are hard to handle. No wonder, we are only reprimanding them verbally.

*Although they should be listening to us, it seems we have to listen to them instead.*

**Tipuula:** We are not allowed to discipline them physically anymore, even if they are misbehaving. We have to reprimand them verbally now. We will run into difficulties with the law if we discipline them physically.

*Did adults cry openly in the presence of children?*

**Tipuula:** When somebody died the adults cried openly, even when there were children present. If a husband is abusing his wife, he shouldn't do it in front of the children.

**Ilisapi:** The children don't understand what is going on.

**Tipuula:** Yes. They don't understand the reasons for the violence.

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**Iisapi:** Couples did not fight as often back then. I never saw a husband angry at his wife. Of course, couples would argue once in a while. They would say things like, “Stop rushing me, you are rushing me too much!” They would speak to each other like that from time to time. This was only verbal.

**Tipuula:** Men often scolded their wives by telling them to hurry up. Back then there were no drugs or alcohol available that provoked anger. It is only when those became available that we started having real problems.

**Iisapi:** When a man got ready to go hunting and he realized that his *kamiik* were not dry he would tell his wife, “You did not dry my *kamiik*!” Young wives forgot to dry their husband’s *kamiik* and their husbands would scold them. Couples did not always have perfect relationships.

**Tipuula:** The happy times outweighed the bad times.

**Iisapi:** We did not hurt each other physically.

**Tipuula:** While we were experiencing a problem, it would seem quite big though.

**Iisapi:** We tried not to feel bad if our husbands did not catch anything, even though we hoped they would have a successful hunt. They hunted for us because they loved us. We would say, “You’ll do better next time,” and it made them feel better.

*You mentioned yesterday that you made a pisiq, a song, while people were going through a time of hunger. Can you sing it?*

**Iisapi:** It was not me that made the song. Our ancestors created songs when they endured hardship. Even though men had the ability to catch animals, they made songs to help them catch more because they didn’t think they were very capable.

**Tipuula:** When they went through joyous times, they also sang about them. When they went through hardship, they created songs from the thoughts that went through their minds. They would sing songs about their experiences so others could learn from them.

**Tirisi:** *Pisiit* are really enjoyable to listen to.

**Tipuula:** Yes, some of the *pisiit* are really good.

**Tirisi:** Most of the *pisiit* have not been written down.

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**Ilisapi:** There was a man who recovered after being really sick during the winter. Once he got better, he created this song. I think I sang this one for you before.

**Alianaittuqaqpuq. Inuunialiqpunga. Ulluk suli tauvva.**

There is joy. I will survive. There is still daylight.

**Akuttujuuk angutinuk. Ulluk suli tauvva**

The *akuttujuuk* have caught up. There is still daylight.

**Quviasuliqpunga inuunialirama. Ulluk suli tauvva**

I am happy because I will live. There is still daylight.

He had been really sick and thought he was going to die of hunger because he had been unable to hunt. He got better as the days grew longer. That's when he made this song. He made this *pisiq* when the daylight was returning.

*Was he an elder?*

**Ilisapi:** He was not that old. He was still capable of hunting. In the past some young people made songs while they still had good voices. We only learned these songs from elders, when their voices were not as good anymore.

*Who taught you how to care for people when they were sick?*

**Tipuula:** Our mothers taught us how to help people who were sick. They would tell us to go and check to see if they needed help with chores, such as checking to see if the *qulliq* required oil. Our mothers were busy so they often asked us to go and check up on someone who was sick. If our mothers had enough oil, we would take some to the sick person. If the person was really sick and did not have help available, we would fetch water or ice for them.

We were taught to help sick people. We were taught not to tell if we fought with someone, if we argued, or if we got hurt as long as we hadn't damaged our eyes, but we were supposed to tell them if there was someone who was less fortunate than we were that required our assistance. Our mothers only wanted to hear about people who needed help. If we were too young to do something ourselves, we had to let our mothers know if there was a sick person who was lacking oil, or who needed to have their *quvvik*, chamberpots, emptied. When we were older we were encouraged to do these things ourselves.

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**Ilisapi:** When I was twelve years old, I had to help a girl who had broken her back. I helped look after her from May until August. She eventually passed away in August. There were no nurses then. She was only twelve years old. My mother did not help at all. She would tell me to go and help. Even when I was sleeping, the girl would send someone over for me. When I did not feel like going, my mother would tell me that the girl was not going to be here for much longer. I would end up going. The girl was slightly older than I was, but I really felt for her. She was capable of doing everything before this. After her accident happened, she deteriorated rapidly. She had an awful stench about her and she lost a lot of weight. Her brother would come over and inform me that his sister required assistance going to the bathroom. I do not think my mother was capable of dealing with people who were injured, so she would send me in her place. That is how I learned how to take care of sick people. Some men and women are really good at taking care of sick people.

**Tipuula:** Some people are very capable at taking care of the sick.

**Ilisapi:** When a sick person finds someone who makes them more comfortable than others, they tend to prefer that person.

**Tipuula:** When I was about twelve years old as well, I had to help a woman in our camp who had bad lungs. She had a child and she could only get around by holding onto something. I also used to be woken up when I was sleeping so that I could go and carry her baby around and look after him. She was not related to us but I had to go look after her child for her because she was really ill. I did that for about two months. Back in those days we didn't have any diapers so I had to make him pee. When I became an adult, when a woman went into labour I was requested. I was treated something like a doctor on call when someone was in labour, or was sick, or had an accident or showed signs that they would be dying shortly. Even when I was sleeping, someone would come over to wake me up. I had no choice but to go, although some people who were requested did not go if they did not want to.

**Ilisapi:** If they found someone they could count on, they tended to rely on them. There was one time I was even fetched by boat. It was not too long ago. Someone came to get me by boat even though the seas were rough because a woman was in labour.

**Tipuula:** I too was fetched by a person from another camp because a woman was in labour. I was quite pregnant myself. I had a baby on my back and started walking towards their camp. Twice women have come from other camps so I could deliver their babies. We used to be called upon before there were doctors. Thank goodness we have doctors now.

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*Is it really necessary to listen to your parents?*

**Ilisapi:** Listening to your parents is not only important for today; it affects the future as well.

**Tipuula:** Even if we do not feel like following what we are told, we have to try and overcome that. We have to try and overcome obstacles when we are required to do something.

*We probably ask too many questions, but once you have your own children you really want to gain more knowledge.*

**Ilisapi:** We prefer it when you ask questions.

**Tipuula:** Definitely. It's easier for us to talk if you ask us questions.

**Tirisi:** When you ask us questions we are not reluctant to answer.

*I am really grateful that I came here as I have learned a lot from you about raising my children.*

**Tirisi:** We have forgotten some things but when you ask us questions it helps us to remember them.

**Tipuula:** We were advised not to give in to children even if they cried. If you give in to them, then they tend to try and get their own way all the time when they grow up.

**Ilisapi:** This is especially true for boys.

*I think this is a practice that should be revived.*

**Tipuula:** You have to make sure you raise them like that from the beginning. Some children are really hard to handle but you have to be firm. Some people cannot stand up to their children when they want something.

*Were children said to be ivvarluktug when they couldn't get comfortable in bed?*

**Ilisapi:** If they are accustomed to sleeping in a nice warm bed, when it is cold they don't want to sleep. They learn to be like that from the time they are small. If a child who wants to play outside isn't taken out much, then he does not mind being indoors. My

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mother and my mother-in-law were very different from each other. My mother would advise against taking a child outside too often because then he would want to be outside all the time. Therefore, I would have to be outside all the time. My mother felt like this because she was always busy making something inside. My mother-in-law was not the type who made things all the time so she tended to spend more time outside with her children. They were very different from each other. I only really became aware of this when I looked back later. When I was making something, my mother-in-law would tell me that I would have time to do it later and to tend to the children for now. My mother would advise against taking the children out. I preferred my mother-in-law's advice as I had more time to work on what I was making after having taken the children out visiting or having spent some time outside with them. I did not agree with my mother's advice. There are different ways that people do things.

**Tipuula:** Some people say if we do not spend time outside with our children, we spend even more time scolding them.

**Ilisapi:** If a child wants to be outside, they cannot concentrate as much.

### *Children behave really well when they are playing outside.*

**Tipuula:** It is best to take boys out once in awhile. It's not really that necessary for girls. It is okay if they stay in all day as it does not affect their breathing. It is even different when you are pregnant with a boy or a girl. Girls tend to come out faster than boys.

### **The need to return to traditional midwifery**

**Ilisapi:** I have been thinking that there should be a committee at the Health Centre that could decide whether a person should fly out to Iqaluit for medical attention. They should be able to decide if a person should go or stay. Some pregnant women have no reason to go out. They are monitored in the community and then are sent to Iqaluit for further monitoring. They end up spending a lot of money unnecessarily on perfectly healthy women. No wonder the government has no money! We know that some medical problems that could be dealt with in the community are referred to Iqaluit. Inuit should have more control over this.

### *Do you think that traditional midwifery should be revived?*

**Ilisapi:** More care could be given to cancer patients and to those who are terminally ill if money wasn't wasted. Some sicknesses are not that serious at all. I think there should

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be more control over who is sent to Iqaluit. We want those who are really sick to be sent out, but some medical problems should be dealt with in the community. We should set up a committee to deal with this.

*Maybe you should start a committee in your community. We have a committee in our community.*

**Ilisapi:** It is easy to tell if a woman is having a healthy pregnancy. If the blood is good, then their pregnancy will be fine. Some women find even the early stages of their pregnancies uncomfortable. Those women need to be monitored closely. As long as they are not too young, there is no need to send them out of the community. If they are not too young, there is no need to send them out.

**Tipuula:** I have delivered twice in the hospital and thirteen times amongst Inuit, six of which when I was alone with my husband.

**Ilisapi:** I have delivered twice in the hospital and nine times amongst Inuit. It is frustrating when you deliver in the hospital for the first time as you are not used to delivering in that environment. There are people walking around when you are about to have the baby. It is scary.

**Tipuula:** Women who were in labour used to be well taken care of. It is hard for a woman to deliver when there are too many people around. Some women are not bothered at all by people roaming around. A delivery should be comfortable and it shouldn't take any more time than is necessary. Some women are not bothered at all if there are people walking around while they are in labour.

**Ilisapi:** They do not mind at all.

**Tipuula:** There are two types of women in labour; those who are too quick to react and those who take things in stride. Both types require great care even if they are delivering in a hospital. Some babies are *aiqtaumajut*, reluctant to come out because they are upside down and they are scared of their blood. These are babies that are in a breech position, or are not properly positioned to come out.

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## Broken bones and dislocated joints

**Tipuula:** If a person has a dislocated joint, the doctors advise us not to move the injured part at all. People with a dislocated joint are medivac'd. It's not that difficult to put a dislocated joint back in place. Accident victims who did not have broken bones were harder to help than those who did. We could do something for a broken bone, but it is difficult to help if there has been an internal injury. My husband used to get a dislocated shoulder.

### *What was done to help those who had broken collar bones?*

**Ilisapi:** This here is the *qutuq*, the collar bone. When it breaks it is called *qutuqaqtuq*. The joint connecting the shoulder blade to the humerus is called the *nigalluq*. When it is injured, this is called *nigalluaqtuq*.

**Tipuula:** You cannot fix a collar bone. You can put a shoulder sling on to help, but you cannot heal it. You can fix something that has been dislocated though.

### *By pulling on it?*

**Tipuula:** Yes.

**Ilisapi:** You can hear it snap back into place.

**Tipuula:** Yes, when it goes back in the socket you know it is fixed. There was a person that dislocated his shoulder when we were out on the land. We were advised to leave the injury as it was, for the doctors feared we might damage the tendon or get it caught between the bones by trying to put it back.

**Ilisapi:** And here he was in pain.

**Tipuula:** It was only after the plane picked him up, that he received an anesthetic and they finally fixed the dislocation. We used to fix dislocated joints in no time as long as the bone was not broken.

**Ilisapi:** One of my grandsons dislocated his shoulder in Iqaluit and while he was anesthetized they put it back into position at the hospital. That happened again when he was playing hockey when he was down south. That time he sat in a chair and put it back in place himself. After that, he put it back in place himself whenever that happened. It is becoming bothersome for him as this has happened repeatedly.

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**Tipuula:** My leg was dislocated before and it was at such an odd angle it was next to my body.

**Ilisapi:** How did that happen?

**Tipuula:** It happened when I was urinating. All of a sudden my leg snapped and it was lying beside me. I attempted to put it back in place repeatedly but every time I let go of it, it would snap right back to my side. This happened three times.

**Ilisapi:** Was this while you had your pants down?

**Tipuula:** Yes. There was a rough area of ice. I started worrying about my foot getting caught on a *nilak*, a piece of ice, so I tried to put it back in place. I positioned my foot in a certain way and attempted to put it back until I was successful.

**Ilisapi:** Were you in a lot of pain?

**Tipuula:** I could feel the pain. After it snapped back into position, the pain was gone. Luckily, the bones were not damaged.

*Does your grandson who repeatedly dislocates his shoulder need surgery?*

**Ilisapi:** The doctors told my grandson he needed surgery, but he said he didn't want it. I told him it is because he plays too much hockey that this keeps happening.

*What did you say about a dislocated hip?*

**Tirisi:** It is not easy to put a dislocated hip back in place. It is harder to put some joints back than others. You really have to pull hard to get some back in place.

**Ilisapi:** You put your foot in between the person's legs and pull. That is how you fix a dislocated hip.

**Tirisi:** You can also wrap your arms around the leg and pull on it while sitting with your back to the patient. That is another way of putting it back in position.

*Could a person's jaw also become dislocated?*

**Tipuula:** Something happened to my grandchild's jaw and four of his teeth came out.

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**Ilisapi:** My brother dropped a rock on his finger while he was making a cache and the tip broke off. He came over and told me to light up the Coleman stove. Here he was younger than me. He told me to heat up some water and he kept moaning. He did not tell me that part of his finger had come off as I guess he was afraid that I might faint. My mother was also with us. When the water heated up he dipped his finger in it while moaning in pain. I guess he was in shock. My mother applied a bandaid. He was in a lot of pain until it started to dry up. The muscles were hanging and you could see the bone. Once the bone had been sawed off, it was better as it had tended to get caught on things. My mother drilled a hole in a piece of wood and he inserted his finger so it could be held in place while she sawed it off.

**Tipuula:** Yes. Fingers have to amputated when they are like that.

### *They did not try and reattach them?*

**Ilisapi:** They did not try to reattach them as the muscles were damaged. The part of the finger that was removed was left on top of a barrel for a long time and dried up with its nail intact. The finger eventually healed after being covered in bandaids. My brother has a part of his finger missing.

**Tipuula:** Sometimes people got a cut at a joint and it would get infected and abscess. If the cut was not down to the bone, they would dip the finger in heated salt water. That way the swelling eventually went down.

### *Would the water the finger was dipped in be kept heated?*

**Tipuula:** No. They would dip their finger in and out while the water was hot. They would dip their finger in and out of the water, until the water cooled down. That is what we did with my husband's hand when there were no doctors around and it was swollen. I fetched water from the sea and heated it up when his hand was swollen. He would dip it in and out of water until it was cool enough for him to leave it in the water. Then the swelling would go down. That is what we did before there were doctors.

### *What did they do when someone broke a bone?*

**Ilisapi:** It did not take too long for a broken bone to heal. People with broken bones seemed to heal faster back then. When a child broke a bone, they would rub oil on the area where the bone had been broken. Even if the bone did not have a splint on it, it would heal quite quickly.

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**Tipuula:** One of our friends broke a bone and they had to carry him on a stretcher to get him home. The adults consulted with each other. There was a dried bearded sealskin and they used it as a splint for his leg. They used a caribou skin for padding. It was fixed so that he could not bend it. He crawled around for a week. The next week, he was walking again. The splint was made from dried bearded sealskin which had not been softened so it was quite stiff. The sealskin was measured with a rope before it was applied so that it would fit properly. The leg would be bound after the swelling had gone down because it could be very painful otherwise.

**Ilisapi:** It tended to get too tight if they didn't wait for the swelling to go down first.

**Tipuula:** Once the swelling had started to subside, the sealskin would be measured and bound to the leg with padding inside. The padding was not very thick. It was quite thin.

*Was it only after the swelling had started to subside, that the skin would be applied?*

**Tipuula:** Yes, if it was still swelling, the sealskin could end up being too tight and it could be very painful. The same thing was done if an arm had been broken. My daughter broke the upper part of her leg and we did not have any dried skin so I placed some cardboard in layers around it and used that for a splint. We were in an outpost camp. The cardboard I used for the splint helped it heal. We could not just wait for things to happen. We had no choice but to try and solve our problems ourselves.

**Tirisi:** We were really capable.

**Tipuula:** We did not think that we were very capable. All we could do was try our best. We used to hear about people who had lung infections. When they were sick, they tended to just want to lie down. If their lungs were infected, they needed to keep moving around so that the mucous would not just sit in their lungs.

**Ilisapi:** They needed to keep moving around.

**Tipuula:** Yes, they could not just stay put. Even though they were in pain, they were not allowed to stay still. If they did not move around, they could end up being sick for a long time. They had to move around so they would get over the sickness more quickly. If they were *quqqqtuq*, too sick to move at all, we were advised to leave them be or else the lungs might rupture. We were not to move them around. We just made sure they were comfortable. Some people had a hard time breathing when they had a lung infection.

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### *What do you mean by quqqqtuq?*

**Tipuula:** It is when a person is so sick, they cannot move.

**Tirisi:** It feels as though you are being stabbed.

**Tipuula:** It feels as though you are being stabbed. Some people feel like they have a piercing pain. We try and make those who are in that kind of pain as comfortable as possible. If we are in a place where there aren't any nurses, and the person can still move around, we have to make sure that they do. That way, they can heal faster. We have been told that if a person stays put, they will be sick much longer. It seems to be that way.

### *How did they help people who had stomach-aches?*

**Tipuula:** If someone had a really severe stomach-ache, they would be told to lie on their back and someone would knead their stomach area. Sometimes the intestines were said to be twisted so they were moved around in the stomach.

We could also make an ice pack and place it carefully on the stomach. It could be effective. If there was no ice, snow could be used. If that did not help, we would try a hot pad instead, which we made by heating sand in a pouch.

## Headaches

### *Were snow packs used for headaches?*

**Tipuula:** Yes, they were used for people who had headaches and for those who had nosebleeds. They would put snow at the bridge of the nose when someone had a nosebleed and put snow in their mouth when they had a headache. I worry about people who get headaches nowadays.

**Ilisapi:** They don't put bands around their heads any more.

**Tirisi:** The bands would be tied very tight.

**Tipuula:** They would be very tight. It's surprising that the veins didn't pop.

**Ilisapi:** People with headaches felt better when they had a headband on.

**Tirisi:** The head felt somewhat lighter.

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**Tipuula:** After the headband was tied, the headache was not as bad as before; maybe because there was so much pressure on the veins.

**Ilisapi:** They couldn't use it for a long time though.

**Tipuula:** The name for a headband was a *niaquuti*.

## Swallowing polyps

*Have you ever heard of a person sneezing out a polyp through their nostrils? If that happened, did they have to swallow it?*

**Tipuula:** Yes, we have all heard of that.

**Ilisapi:** When it came out after sneezing, it was recommended we swallow it so that the person would live longer. It has been said that if a person sneezes out a polyp, it is a sign they don't have much longer to live. I don't know if this is true or not. If someone was quite sick and started sneezing, it was said the chances were he would live. If he was not sneezing or yawning, that was a bad sign. When he started yawning, people thought he might recover and return to his normal self.

*Will people who are sick in bed recover when that happens?*

**Tipuula:** As long as they have some signs of recovery they will.

*Can you explain further what you meant when you said to put the polyp into something?*

**Ilisapi:** If you were squeamish about swallowing it just like that, you could put it in a little piece of meat or *palaugaq*, and swallow it without chewing it.

*Has anybody died because they did not swallow their polyp?*

**Tirisi:** Probably they knew of someone that happened to.

## Treating eye infections with lice

**Ilisapi:** I am sure lice were not useful for our bodies.

**Tipuula:** I have heard that they were very useful for people who had eye infections that were not caused by snow-blindness. A head or body louse was tied to a strand of hair,

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and put in the eye that had become infected. The louse would walk around in the eye. After it was removed, the louse's legs were covered with the infected matter, which it removed from the eye. A person who was going blind was then able to see.

**Tirisi:** I guess when the infected matter covering the eye was removed the person was able to see better.

**Iisapi:** The louse would be tied at its head. It would be put in the eye, and would walk around and collect the infected matter. It was said that the louse would be unable to walk once its legs were completely covered. The person would wait until the louse stopped moving around before removing it. When it was removed, the legs were all covered with the infected matter.

*The film that had collected on the eye could be removed?*

**Tipuula:** The person would be able to see once the louse had removed this film.

*Did you squash the louse after?*

**Iisapi:** After you had finished using it you would squash it.

**Tipuula:** Breast milk was used to heal badly infected eyes caused from snow-blindness.

## Hypothermia

*What was done to someone who fell in the water who was becoming hypothermic?*

**Iisapi:** When someone falls in the water they become cold immediately because of the temperature of the water. My father fell in the water once while he was out boating. He managed to get back in the boat but fell back out again. When he got back in the boat again he lost consciousness. Those who have fallen in the water lose consciousness very quickly because the water is so cold. He was brought to shore. This happened in the days before there were doctors. All his clothing was removed in the tent and an adult man crawled into bed with him. While he was still unconscious they made him vomit. His genital area was warmed up by the man placing his leg between my father's legs. He also concentrated on warming up my father's abdomen. He was unconscious for a while. When he started warming up, he regained consciousness. They say you need to pay particular attention to their orifices.

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**Tirisi:** You need to make sure their heads were warmed up as well.

**Tipuula:** I too have heard you needed to pay attention to the orifices. I too have heard about someone with hypothermia being warmed up in the same way.

**Ilisapi:** You have to warm them up first. That way you start warming up their insides.

### *Was there any need to raise the temperature in the iglu?*

**Tipuula:** If a person falls in the water you have to warm their whole body up. Once two people fell in the water and I had to lie down with one of them to help him warm up. I undressed the younger of the two with my mother-in-law. The other person's older brother and sister-in-law lay down with him. The whole body has to be warmed up by another person's flesh. We have to try and pass on our warmth to them.

### *Did you remove all their clothing?*

**Tipuula:** Yes, all their clothing had to be removed. They tend to be really cold. It is hard to give them a drink because their teeth are really chattering and the water tends to drip out of the mouth. My mother-in-law and I would take turns warming him up. When I got cold my mother-in-law would take over. Once he was able to drink, we gave him small amounts of lukewarm water. As he warmed up internally he became more aware of his surroundings, as did his brother. All his clothing had to be removed. We had to take off our own clothing as well. Since there was only our family, we had no one else to turn to.

**Ilisapi:** We would be really scared when accidents happened.

### *What is the meaning of the word angmaniit?*

**Ilisapi:** It refers to the penis and scrotum of a man, or to the vagina of a woman. This also includes the anus. We did not use specific terms for those. They were always generalized.

**Tirisi:** Under normal circumstances the genital area was considered private.

## **Sore throats**

### *Was blubber given to those who had sore throats or colds?*

**Tipuula:** It was given to those who had difficulty swallowing.

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*Is sanittinnaq when someone has an infected mouth?*

**Ilisapi:** *Sanittinnaqtuq* is when it is hard for a person to swallow.

*Is this word only used when a person finds it difficult to swallow?*

**Ilisapi:** It is when a person is making an effort to do something that he finds difficult. Our dialects are different too.

**Tipuula:** It is not easy to say things in a different dialect.

*We don't have that word in our dialect. There are some words that we are hearing here for the first time.*

**Tipuula:** A person who is *sanittinnaqtuq* finds it difficult to swallow meat, so they are given blubber because it is easier to swallow. People who have a mouth infection or a sore throat can become very hungry.

**Tirisi:** Some of them cannot even eat at all.

## Burns

*What would have been done for people who had really bad burns back then?*

**Tirisi:** Burns tend to become infected so you have to remove the infection.

**Ilisapi:** You had to try not to remove the skin when you did this. Even if it was just a small burn, the damage could be severe.

**Tipuula:** We used to apply oil to ease the pain. My son burned his face really badly, to the point where his flesh started sagging. Even the cartilage in his ear was damaged. When his burns got infected, we used a needle to drain them.

**Ilisapi:** Did he burn himself on a Coleman stove?

**Tipuula:** No, on a *qulliq*. There was tea brewing. He fell on the stove and spilled the boiling water on himself. The skin got infected. We used to apply oil so the skin would not peel off. It eventually healed.

**Ilisapi:** Was the cartilage showing?

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**Tipuula:** Yes. This happened to my son Joshua who was named after my brother Qannguq. While his burns were drying up we applied oil. Fortunately, they healed quickly.

**Ilisapi:** I am sure he really cried while you were doing this.

**Tipuula:** For sure! He is named after my brother who drowned. His body was never found. We were living with people who had known my brother at the time my son burned himself. The tea was brewing so we could have it after we finished praying. He ran into the *qulliq* and spilled the tea on himself. I did not catch him in time. When I put him on my back he was in so much pain that he was kicking, biting, and scratching. We really thought that he had lost his eyesight.

**Ilisapi:** He must have been in a lot of pain.

*Did you take him outside?*

**Tipuula:** No, I didn't take him outside. When he wanted to come out of my *amauti* I took him out. At this point he was just crying normally. Before that, he had been crying almost constantly. Then he started to open his eyes a little at a time. I said, "His eyes are fine." One of our visitors, in reference to my brother Qannguq said, "Qannguq has just fallen in the water." We were so relieved that his eyes were fine that we started to laugh. That had been a scary experience.

**Tirisi:** There was one little girl, whom I delivered, who was so badly burned by water that I thought her intestines were going to come out. They had just arrived at a tent where there were quite a few people. She fell onto a *qulliq* that had hot tea on it.

*Did you put oil on the burn?*

**Tirisi:** Yes, we applied oil. Before we did that there had been liquid seeping out of it.

*Could you see the intestines?*

**Tirisi:** Almost. The bottom layer of the skin was intact but the top layers had been burned away.

**Ilisapi:** Was the flesh gone?

**Tirisi:** Yes.

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*Were the intestines almost visible?*

**Tirisi:** Yes. When she was crying and breathing heavily, they were almost visible.

*I hope that never happens to my children.*

**Disabilities and death**

**Tipuula:** We had a grandfather who lived with us, who passed away at our home. He was handicapped. When he was born, they wanted to let him die. They said that he would be of no use as his hands were deformed, but somebody said to let him live as he would die on his own eventually. From what I saw, he ended up being very capable.

*Were some babies killed before they were named?*

**Tipuula:** I have no idea. Babies were not killed in our area. From what I have heard that was done in the Kivalliq area.

**Ilisapi:** This happened because of hardship and hunger.

**Tipuula:** I guess this was because they bore too many children. I don't know this for sure though, as that was not done in our area. There were always only a few of us. It is only quite recently that our population has started to grow.

**Ilisapi:** My grandfather had a lump on his hand too.

**Tipuula:** It was on his left middle finger.

**Ilisapi:** It was said he used to wear a mitten when he was a child.

**Tirisi:** Later on he always wore a covering over that finger, perhaps because it was susceptible to the cold.

**Ilisapi:** I do not remember him at all. I was born in 1931 and he died in 1932. They left shortly after I was born. When he got ill, they returned to the Talluruti area.

*What preparations were made after a person died?*

**Ilisapi:** When people lived in small family groups they had no choice but to deal with the body themselves. They would wrap the body and bury it.

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**Tipuula:** Pitsiulaaq's wife, Alaralak's mother, walked around with the help of a cane because she was so bent over. We thought she had a dislocated hip but it turned out she had had an infection as a child and was unable to walk without being bent over after that. An old woman told me, after a person died they can't feel any pain. When Alaralak's mother died, they laid her on her back and as they straightened out her body you could hear the tendons ripping.

**Ilisapi:** Before I was married my mother-in-law got an infection and was unable to straighten up anymore as well.

### *What did you mean by nuqaqtut?*

**Tipuula:** When the muscles are no longer able to straighten out, they are said to be *nuqaqtut*.

**Ilisapi:** When my mother-in-law lay flat on her stomach, her leg remained bent upwards and her husband would press it down until it became too painful. He continued to do this every evening, until eventually she was able to straighten it herself. At first when he let go, it would tighten up again. Sometimes it hurt and sometimes it did not. It was just a bit shorter and a bit bent afterwards. She could walk much better after her husband exercised her leg.

When she had her legs extended, she would press down on her knee. When she let go, it would tighten up again. That is the type of thing they used to do before there were doctors.

**Tipuula:** When my mother-in-law died there was just the family to bury her. I dressed her body and her son made her a coffin. Since there was just our family, we carried her across a river to where there were rocks to bury her. We had no choice but to let go of her.

### *What did you use for a coffin?*

**Tipuula:** We used wood as it was not too long ago. Sometimes the deceased were dressed in new clothing if it was available.

**Ilisapi:** Because they were our loved ones, we put on new clothing.

**Tipuula:** Their *kamiik* and mittens were put on securely.

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### *Did their clothing have to be new?*

**Ilisapi:** If it wasn't possible to put on new clothes, they would just put on their best clothing. When a relative of yours died you felt alone, even though you were not. That is how it used to be back then.

**Tipuula:** Tirisi's mother was all alone when her husband died.

### *Did they say prayers for a person after they died?*

**Tipuula:** No, we did not know we were supposed to do that back then. This is a fairly recent practice. I am asked to pray for those who are dying these days, but before it was not like that. Tirisi's father crawled out of the tent and tried to head down to the coast. He had to turn back. When he returned he lay down where there was no bedding, faced the wall and died. His wife tried to remain with him contrary to his wishes, but the dogs started howling so she decided to follow his advice, even though she did not want to leave him behind. She cut their tent in half and wrapped her husband in part of it.

**Ilisapi:** He made sure he was already dressed so his wife would not have to dress him.

**Tipuula:** He was even wearing his mittens.

### *Was he just waiting to die?*

**Tipuula:** Yes. He had given up struggling against his sickness.

**Ilisapi:** Did she just wrap him up and leave him there without covering him with rocks?

**Tipuula:** She put rocks around the body.

**Ilisapi:** She probably did not even cry. Those who are going through extreme hardship are unable to cry.

### *Pittailiniit, ritual prohibitions; and angakkuuniq, shamanism*

#### *Our ancestors had their own ways to treat a person who was really ill.*

**Tipuula:** Back then, there were *pittailiniit* and the *angakkuuit* would take care of the sick. My grandmother Nattiq helped take care of sick people, even though she was not supposed to because of a *pittailiniq*. She would remove the bottom part on the sleeves of her *amauti* before she dealt with anyone she wasn't supposed to, so nothing ever

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happened to her for breaking the *pittailiniq*. She helped those who had nobody else to help them. There were some people that nobody wanted to help because they were *tiringnaqtuq*. There was a *pittailiniq* attached to them, so others were afraid to deal with them. My grandmother did not let fear stop her from assisting those who needed help. There were some individuals that one was not allowed to approach or help but she assisted them anyway. She would remove the bottom of her sleeves prior to helping them, which allowed her to be untouched by the consequences. It was said that anyone who helped those who were *tiringnaqtuq*, would not have very long to live. She helped people like that anyway. She would say, "If I am to have a short life, then so be it." She would go ahead and help these people anyway.

### *If I broke a pittailiniq, would Nattiq have come to help me?*

**Tipuula:** If you were sick and unable to take care of yourself, and you had no one else to help you, she would have come. She would remove the bottom of her sleeves first as she was not supposed to deal with those who were sick because they had broken a *pittailiniq*. This was before they became Christians. They were following what they believed in back then.

My grandmother did not die from helping those who had broken a *pittailiniq*, even though it was a risk for her to do so. She eventually passed away when it was her time to go.

**Tirisi:** She removed the *pittailiniq* from herself by taking off the bottom of her sleeves.

**Iisapi:** Back then when babies were born, they would predict the child's future. They would endow the child with certain characteristics, and protection from those who would cause the child harm. We don't do this anymore today.

### *What do you mean by piggusiqtaujuq?*

**Iisapi:** This was when we would endow a child with certain characteristics through speaking to him. For example, when some babies are baptized it seems they gain protection. They become a member of the Christian faith. Back then, although they weren't using Christianity they would endow a child with certain characteristics and protection.

### *What exactly did they say to the child?*

**Iisapi:** They used to say different things. For example, they would say they wanted the child to be a good hunter, and to be able to endure hardships. There was one baby who was told that he would outlive all his relatives and that came true. Qannguaq is still

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around, even though all his relatives have passed away. There were different predictions made for each child. The grandparents were the ones who did this most often.

Sometimes I think that we should start doing this again. For example, saying a child will become a fast learner or that a child will turn anger into laughter or whatever.

The predictions that were made were all good-natured. There was one child that was *tuigisaqtaujuq*. Men used to punch each other on their shoulders until one gave up. They would try to outdo each other. One man would get sore sooner than the other. Children that were *tuigisaqtaujuq* had stronger shoulders because a caterpillar was put on their shoulder at birth so that they would excel in this game when they got older. Even if they did not appear strong physically, they could outdo those who were stronger than they were. Their challengers would give up before they got sore. This person didn't know he had been endowed with this quality at birth, until someone told him that the reason he would win these games was because he was *tuigisaqtaujuq*.

### *Do miqquligiat, caterpillars, suck blood?*

**Ilisapi:** I don't think they do anything, but some people believe if a caterpillar was placed on a baby's shoulder, he would grow up to have strong shoulders.

### *We have heard that angakkuit used to kill dogs when there were too many sick people in the camp. Have you ever heard that?*

**Ilisapi:** I have never heard that. I have heard that when dogs were dying from distemper, that people were relieved that it was the dogs that were sick and not them. I have never heard of dogs being slaughtered. I have heard that if a child was attacked by dogs and was seriously injured but still alive, the dogs were not supposed to be killed. They had to wait for the child to recover and only then could the dogs be destroyed so they wouldn't attack again.

**Tipuula:** I have heard exactly the same thing. People were relieved when it was the dogs that died instead of them. It was said that if it wasn't the dogs that were sick it would have been humans instead, so they were relieved. It was better if the dogs were dying instead of people.

It has also been said that if the dogs attacked a person, the owner should not beat or kill his dogs, or the person that was attacked would die. The dogs were not to be killed until the person recovered.

**Tirisi:** That happened with my daughter. It was only after she recovered, that the dogs were shot and killed.

**Tipuula:** That is the way it is supposed to be.

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### *What happened if the person that was attacked died?*

**Tipuula:** The dogs would be killed.

**Ilisapi:** Otherwise, they might attack another person.

**Tipuula:** Even if the owner or a relative of the owner felt badly, they should not do anything to the dogs behind everybody's back. Kupaaq from Mittimatalik was attacked, and the owner felt really badly about it. He was told not to beat or kill his dogs so that the person that had been attacked would recover. He used a knife handle to hit the dogs on the muzzle until they bled. He did not realize it at the time, but because he had done that Kupaaq's stitches broke open.

Someone went to ask the owner if he had beaten his dogs and he said that he had. He was advised not to do anything more to the dogs for the time being, even if he felt angry with them. He only killed his dogs after the person who had been attacked had fully recovered. If an owner had to destroy all his dogs, he would be given puppies to replace them. That is how dogs were dealt with when they attacked someone.

### *What do you mean by kiluarijuq?*

**Tipuula:** It is when a wound breaks open while it is healing. When this owner attacked his dogs, Kupaaq's stitches broke open.

**Tirisi:** This also happened to someone whose head I stitched up.

**Ilisapi:** Had this person been attacked by a dog?

**Tirisi:** After we left to go find help, the owner started to throw rocks at his dogs, even though he had been advised not to harm them. The wounds were healing but then they opened up again.

**Tipuula:** Although nobody wants their dogs to attack anyone, you should know how to deal with the situation if it occurs.

**Tirisi:** That is the way this type of situation has always been dealt with.

*Now that there are qallunaat around, when a person has been attacked, the nurses report this to the R.C.M.P. and the dog is destroyed right away.*

**Tipuula:** The R.C.M.P. have now been informed about how these situations were dealt with in the past.

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**Ilisapi:** There was a young girl in Mittimatalik who was mauled and killed by the minister's dogs. Back then, the minister, the R.C.M.P., and the H.B.C. had their own dogteams. The girl was saved from the dogs right away, but she was no longer breathing.

**Tipuula:** Had her windpipe been severed?

**Ilisapi:** Yes. Even though the minister's son killed the dog right away, it didn't matter because the girl was already dead. The ways of the *qallunaat* are very different from ours. We follow what has been passed down to us.

*Have you ever heard of people wearing aarnguat, amulets?*

**Tipuula:** I have heard that people used to wear *aarnguat*. They were not just used as mere decoration but as something to empower them.

**Ilisapi:** My father had an *aarnguaq* made out of a rabbit foot. It could be made from any part of an animal such as a rabbit foot hung on the clothing. The purpose of an *aarnguaq* was to help the person live a long life. After we became Christian, I realized I had had an *aarnguaq* myself. That too was a practice we had to discontinue. We found out how powerless they really were. I think if we have information about these things we should talk about them.

If we follow God faithfully we cannot mix good with evil. Some things that we followed in the past were not true. We realize this now from reading the Bible. Today some people claim to be Christian and yet they do not refrain from doing bad things. There were different types of *angakkuit* in the past, those who told lies and those who were very committed to helping others. That type of *angakkuq* was looked up to and the people relied on them. The other type that lied were relied upon too but they weren't trusted as much.

**Tipuula:** Only people who were honest could be *angakkuit*. If a person wanted to become an *angakkuq*, his values were examined. If he had a bad temper, or could not keep a confidence he was not allowed to become an *angakkuq*. Only a good person who was honest and patient was permitted to become an *angakkuq*.

*Could a woman become an angakkuq too?*

**Ilisapi:** If she wanted to, she could.

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**Tipuula:** If she said she wanted to be an *angakkuq*, her request would be considered.

**Ilisapi:** One of the *pittailiniq* was not to eat raw meat. If a person followed this *pittailiniq* from the time they were young and was a good person then they could become an *angakkuq*.

**Tipuula:** Those that wanted to become *angakkuit* could not have a short temper. They had to be patient even if someone was angry at them. They could not take revenge against another person. A person like that would try and help someone else in a time of need. They would not seek revenge right away if someone did something against them. Even if harsh words were said to them, they should not have bad feelings towards that person. That is the type of person that would make a good *angakkuq*. That is what I have heard.

*Do you know if children became angakkuit as well?*

**Ilisapi:** The elders would observe children to see which ones had the ability to become *angakkuit*. Once they were old enough, they became *angakkuit*, even though they didn't go by age back then.

*Did it depend on wisdom?*

**Ilisapi:** Yes. It was based on what they knew. It was almost like a religion in itself. I believe what we are telling you is true. *Angakkuit* did not have a spiritual guide but they had powers.

*Did the angakkuit exist before they knew about God?*

**Tipuula:** Very much so.

*I guess that was when Satan had more control.*

**Tipuula:** It has been said that God helped them because he loved them, even if they were *angakkuit*. Even though they did not rely on God, he still helped them.

**Ilisapi:** They were aware that there was a higher power than themselves. They knew that we were created by someone and they sought help by creating *pittailiniq*. They would look for different ways to help. They would think: "Maybe we should do this and refrain from doing that." That is how the *pittailiniq* were created. They were also aware that we each have a *tarniq*, a soul.

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*We heard that people used to believe that you needed a tarniq in order to live. We have also heard when a tarniq was removed the angakkuq would go and try and retrieve it.*

**Tipuula:** It is impossible for a person to live once their *tarniq* has been removed.

**Ilisapi:** I have heard that the *angakkuit* could see other people's *tarniit* as bubbles. If the *angakkuq* became angry, he would get even.

*What did he do?*

**Ilisapi:** He would *itinniaqpauk*, pretend that he was paddling and would push the bubbles aside. These bubbles could not be seen by ordinary people. If he pushed the bubble aside the person would live, but if he burst it, the person would die. That is what they would do. When an *angakkuq* did this, people considered that he had removed the *tarniq*. *Angakkuit* that were quick-tempered and were powerful just wanted to kill people.

**Tipuula:** They would murder people.

**Ilisapi:** They would also use their *tuurngait*, their helping spirits, to attack animals. Once the *tuurngait* had done this they wanted to do it over and over again. My in-law's father had a *tuurngaq* that was like that. When he was out caribou hunting, one got away and he told his *tuurngaq* to go and get it. He did not just use this *tuurngaq* against animals, he used it against humans. Even if there are no longer *angakkuit* today, there are still two forces of power, one evil and one good. The power of evil is still alive today in people.

*We used to hear that there were still angakkuit in Pangniqtuuq.*

**Ilisapi:** Yes, that is a possibility.

*When I was a child, other children used to tell me that my father was an angakkuq and I used to get angry. But if someone said that to me today, I would be quite proud.*

**Tipuula:** Some people were good *angakkuit*. Today, you might say, "I wish that person might pray for me. There could be some change if he prayed for me." Sometimes when one person prays for you you feel better and yet if another person prays for you you feel

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worse. Even today there can be good *angakkuit*. You had to give a gift to the *angakkuit* if you wanted them to help you. I do not really have very much information. I know this only from what I have heard. I have never seen this practised, so I might be giving the wrong information.

*We are even less informed than you are.*

**Ilisapi:** We know that you aren't going to follow shamanism but you should be informed about it.

**Tipuula:** When I was born, my mother was sweating and people saw that as a bad sign. Do you know what *kiangiqtuq* means? It is sweating so much that you dehydrate really quickly. When I was born, my mother was very dehydrated. Because of this they decided to convert to Christianity.

They gave their lives to God, and turned away from Satan. They turned away from shamanism. When I was born, my mother was at the brink of death. That was why they repented and gave themselves to God.

**Ilisapi:** It was not as if they were following Satan. They were searching for a means of control.

*Do you think that it was because your mother converted, and recovered that you are very strong today?*

**Tipuula:** Yes. She recovered and they started to believe in God. She almost died when I was born. They did not want her to die so they gave themselves to God. It was quite a long time ago that they turned themselves over to God. I am sure they did not forget their way of life immediately, but that was the beginning of their new life.

*That was certainly a long time ago for us.*

**Ilisapi:** I think it took longer for the people in Mittimatalik to convert to Christianity. I was born in the Kivalliq area. The people around Naujaat, Igluligaarjuk and Arviligjuaq continued to practise shamanism for an even longer time. The people around Pangniqtuuq were the first ones to convert to Christianity.

**Tipuula:** Yes, they gave themselves to God a long time ago.

**Ilisapi:** They were the ones who introduced Christianity to our community.

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*Was it Uqammak [Rev. James Peck] who introduced them to Christianity?*

**Ilisapi:** He baptized them. The people in our community learned about Christianity from other Inuit, not from *qallunaat*.

## Dreams

*I want to ask if some dreams have special meaning. I dreamed of my great-grandfather shortly after he died. This was when I only had one child. Actually, I had had another one, but he was adopted out. I was told by an elder that we shouldn't name a child after someone after they become old enough to sing. Have you ever heard that?*

**Tipuula:** I have never heard of that so I cannot answer. People often dream. I believe if the mother dreams of a dead person, that person wants the baby to be named after him. When a dead person was asking for water in the dreams of a mother-to-be, it was seen as a sign that the baby must be named after him. So when the baby was born, he was named after the deceased. It seems to make sense in a way.

**Ilisapi:** We have slightly different traditions depending on which family we are from. In our family, it was uncommon for a baby to be named after someone who had just died. We can name a baby after a dead person but we cannot bring the person back through the baby. They do not have the same *tarniq*, soul. They are different people. Our grandmother, even though she was an elder, did not really want us to name our babies after someone who had just died and who was not close to us. Our children were named after our own relatives but rarely after those outside of the family. I am not saying that the way we do things is better. We just have a slightly different tradition.

**Tipuula:** It seemed to me that my child returned to me in my dreams. I lost a child who was about nine months old. I dreamed about holding and hugging him. He was wearing clothing that was all white that was different from the clothing we wear. I dreamed about this baby who was quite big and chubby while we were still living the traditional way. I dreamed that I was kissing him on his cheek. I was told from above that the child would return in the near future and that I should expect this. I was told the child was concerned that I was worrying about him. Shortly after this I became pregnant. Some dreams have a meaning. They happen every few years or so. I have never had a dream like that again. I was told that he was in the kingdom of God and after that, I felt healed.

**Ilisapi:** Long before Christianity arrived in Akukittuni [Greenland], two children were sliding outside. While they were sliding the ice broke and the children fell into the

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water. This happened when everyone else was indoors. When the people went out they were unable to reach them. The two children who drowned were cousins. Their relatives were really crying. The grandmother of the children, who was very traditional, told her son and daughter that they should not think about the children anymore. She said that she had heard a voice saying, "Stop crying," and that the children were in a very happy place now. She did not see anything, but she heard this voice. I read that in a book. I think that is true. Here these people had never heard about God and yet the grandmother claimed she had heard a voice.

### ***Aqtuqsinniq, paralyzing nightmares***

*How can a person who is uqumangiqtuq, experiencing a paralyzing nightmare, be helped?*

**Tipuula:** I have heard two different things. Some say to wake them up, and others say to leave them be. I wonder what others have heard?

**Ilisapi:** In our dialect we don't use the word *uqumangiq*. We use the word *aqtuqsi* for this.

*Ducks aqtuq, freeze. I wonder if the word aqtuqsi is derived from this?*

**Tipuula:** No. The body becomes *aqtuqsittuq*.

**Ilisapi:** The person is aware but probably the body is asleep.

**Tirisi:** It is probably because we are asleep that we cannot move.

**Tipuula to Ilisapi:** Yet we recognize our surroundings. What have you heard? Should you wake up these people or not?

**Ilisapi:** I haven't heard. I have only heard about when a person is *aqtuqsittuq*. I had an *aqtuqsiq* and nobody woke me up. I do not think one needs help if it is not too severe. My mind was awake and yet my body could not move. There was a bear coming right at me. It was really scary, as if I was awake.

*Were you told to move your toes when you experienced this?*

**Ilisapi:** Yes. Even the toes feel heavy. I attempted to move my toes and I almost woke up. Another time I was nursing a child that was not my own, even though I had my own

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children. In my dream the child I was nursing became heavier and heavier. All of a sudden I felt scared and threw him up in the air. I wondered if that meant that someone was going to die. Why were we not supposed to wake a person up?

**Tipuula:** There are two types of *uqumangirniq* and *aqtuqsijq*. With the first type, if a person is dreaming about having sex with a non-human that abused him/her this might be a repressed memory that is resurfacing so they shouldn't be woken up. Some of them block the abuse and it comes back in dreams. Some of them remember those who have traumatized them in their nightmares. They haven't talked about it and have tried to forget about it. A person like this should not be awakened so they can remember on their own in their dreams.

With the second type, you also shouldn't wake them up. The person might be trying to speak or be trembling. You have to let the person wake up on their own. They have to remember the nightmare in full in order to let it go, so it won't cause them to become ill. If one kept a secret, this could cause them to become ill.

*Could you tell if a person was having an ordinary nightmare or something more serious?*

**Ilisapi:** I guess the person would be mumbling a lot.

*When you are aqtuqsijjuq, it is impossible to say anything. Is that one way you could tell?*

**Tipuula:** A person who is *aqtuqsijjuq* and someone who is having a nightmare because of a repressed memory are completely different. Sometimes, if a person is awakened, they regret that because they are not able to remember the nightmare. It is like they had an illness that could have been released if the person had not been awakened.

*Were you advised to put a Bible under your pillow?*

**Tipuula:** Yes, when we were going through this, we were advised to do that.

*In my region I have heard that if you put an ulu, a knife, or an ipiksaut, a sharpener, under your pillow, it would stop you from having nightmares. I guess they are used as protection.*

**Tipuula:** I have never heard of putting other things under a pillow, just Bibles.

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*The reason why I asked this question is because of someone who found out they had experienced uqumangirniq after being told about it afterwards. They wanted to know why the other person hadn't helped them.*

**Ilisapi:** You cannot tell if someone is having an *aqtuqsiq*, unless you are sleeping with the person and he starts mumbling.

*I have heard that if a person is constantly uqumangisuuq it is because there is an evil force in their house.*

**Ilisapi:** That is a possibility. An invisible force has power too. We have to tell it to leave.

**Tirisi:** It is also alright to have the house exorcised.

*When one is living in fear, it is not good for the body or the mind. If one has the same thoughts over and over, or regrets something, could this be the cause of uqumangiq?*

**Ilisapi:** That could be the case.

*That happened to me because I was experiencing so much grief and remorse after someone died. I experienced uqumangiq every night. This death was constantly on my mind. It was only when I started talking about my nightmare, it stopped.*

**Tipuula:** If you know what is bothering you, you should talk about it. We do not always know the reason.

**Ilisapi:** If we are constantly thinking about a close deceased relative, we can let our grief get the better of us. It can even affect our sleep. Even if we feel a lot of grief, we have to tell ourselves that that is in the past and his life is finished. Some people can make themselves sick or age prematurely from grieving too much over a deceased relative. Look at us for example, we have no parents, no spouses and we have lost children. We are surviving, even without our loved ones. You can tell yourself you can do that too. We are all going to die. No matter what, the deceased person will not be coming back. You have to tell yourself that.

**Tipuula:** Yes. Grief does not have to carry on forever. It is hard to forget the year a certain thing happened.

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**Ilisapi:** You try not to remember but that is impossible.

*I really blamed myself for what happened, to the point where I was making myself seriously ill.*

**Ilisapi:** We tend to blame ourselves when a person dies from sickness. We tend to say if only I had done this, or if only I had done that.

## Beliefs

*I have heard that if you constantly think about a deceased person, their spirit cannot rest?*

**Ilisapi:** I haven't heard that. We have no idea where the *tarniq* the soul goes. I think it is bad for your health to think like that.

*I have heard that if you grieve too much after somebody dies, the tarniq comes back to earth. Have you heard that too?*

**Tipuula:** I have heard, if we lose a blood relative, we have to make sure our hair isn't tangled for three days.

**Ilisapi:** We shouldn't just let ourselves deteriorate.

**Tipuula:** It is a real shock when we lose a blood relative. It is said that we have to comb our hair to make sure it is not tangled. This has something to do with the *tarniq*.

*Some say if we grieve too much that the deceased will not go forward to their resting place.*

**Tipuula:** A person's *tarniq* doesn't die. It is just the body that dies. For that reason, we have to go on and try and live a good life. After some time has passed, we have to go on living. When the earth comes to an end, we will see our loved ones again. We have known about this, even before Christianity arrived.

*My baby died at ten months of age before he was baptized. He spent his entire life in the hospital. I was told that he would not be able to enter the kingdom of God because he was not baptized.*

**Ilisapi:** The person who told you this gave you the wrong information. We have heard that all children are without sin.

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**Tipuula:** If a child has not committed any sins, it is said he will enter the kingdom of God.

**Ilisapi:** Anybody can say anything! Saying that a person will not go to the kingdom of God is just nonsense!

**Tipuula:** We have no control over where our *tarniit* end up.

**Ilisapi:** We do not have control over which *tarniit* will be allowed to enter the kingdom of God. That is up to our Creator. We have no right to say that individuals who commit suicide go to Hell. That is not for us to decide.

**Tirisi:** Definitely. We do not know.

**Tipuula:** I have heard from a former minister that some people recover from sickness, if they are prayed for before their *tarniq* has left them. Some do not recover even when they are prayed for, because their *tarniq* has left them while they are alive. That is the reason prayer does not revive them. That is what I have heard.

*When the dead are buried, which way do they have to face?*

**Tipuula:** They should face outwards, towards the day [sun].

*Did you follow that in the old days?*

**Tipuula:** People have always done that.

**Ilisapi:** In our community, we are running out of space in the cemetery. There are two graves at Qilalukkut facing the wrong direction because of the terrain there. Those two people had requested to be buried there. It does not really matter to me which way they face. People drown or die in a fire who do not face any particular direction. Whenever possible though, we should follow the custom.

*Why do they have to face that direction?*

**Ilisapi:** This is probably a man-made rule. We are not told anywhere in the Bible that the dead have to face a certain direction or it would be impossible for them to be with God.

*We are connected to the earth. It has been said that the weather tends to turn bad when someone is about to die. Do you think that is true?*

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**Ilisapi:** I know myself that after someone dies, the weather either becomes very calm or it gets stormy. I do not know why. It may be because of the death, although people who die have no control over the weather.

**Tipuula:** There was this one old man who said that he really liked the spring. He said it would rain slightly when he died and that is exactly what happened. He liked that kind of weather. He said that when his body was laid to rest that it would be a nice day with a light rain.

*When someone arrived and the weather turned bad, did they say it was because the person who arrived was not a nice person?*

**Ilisapi:** That was meant as a joke.

**Tipuula:** People back then used to joke around too. They were not always serious.

**Ilisapi:** They used to say not to go out without a coat or the weather would turn bad.

**Tipuula:** If that person is *silaluktuq*, someone with the propensity to make the weather bad, then it would turn bad.

*People also said if a person was wearing their underwear inside out, they had to stick out their bum. We were also told not to go out of an iglu backwards.*

**Ilisapi:** In the past, women who were pregnant really had to follow things like this. If a pregnant woman's husband or another person was on their way in to the camp, the pregnant woman had to stick out her bum towards the people who were arriving.

*Did she have to do this on the top of a hill?*

**Ilisapi:** Yes, she did. Women had to do this embarrassing thing so that they would have an easy delivery when they went into labour.

## Old sayings

*I heard from an elder in Kuujjuaraapik that if you want to catch a lot of fish, you should kiss somebody's big toe. Have you ever heard this saying?*

**Ilisapi:** I heard that for the first time in a song. It is sung by people from Kinngait. This song is not from our community but I can sing it.

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I think people sing that song when there are a lot of northern lights out; I forget the beginning.

The beginning starts with, '*Unikkaaqtuanguakainnalauriarama.*'

**Unikkatuanguakainnalauriarama unikkausituqarnik, piusituqavinirnik**

I'm going to pretend to *unikkaaqtuaq* about old sayings, about the old ways.

**qilalugaqattalaaravit amaaqtuaqattarit angutaugaluarlutit**

Carry other people's babies even though you are a boy, in order to have success whale hunting.

**aqsarnilijualuutillugu nasaingatuaruvit niaquiqtugaqajutit**

If you are out without your hood on and the Northern Lights are out your head will be removed.

**siutaijaqujaunnginirmut taimailijauvuq ukiuraalummat**

They were told this because they didn't want them to suffer cold and because it was winter time.

**kunigiaqasuungulaurivut iqalutsugumamut isigagijaujunik**

They had to kiss someone's foot to have success in fishing.

That is how it goes but I do not know the rest. It is suggesting that if you kiss someone's toe you will catch fish. Even if we have no desire to kiss a person's toe, it was said that if you did you would catch fish.

I heard some people from Kinngait sing it at a teachers' conference. I learned it from them. I have not sung it for a long time so I have forgotten some of the words. I have never known of anyone from our area kissing a person's toe.

*At one place where we go fishing, we are advised to leave an offering at the grave of a man who burst after eating fish, so that we can catch fish. When we go fishing there, we have to leave something at his grave. It is not where people from Pangniqtuuq go fishing. Do you think that people did this long ago?*

**Ilisapi:** If you want to believe this, you can but this is just a *maligannguaruluk*, not a rule you really have to follow.

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*It was said that he burst because he considered the fish too small and was punished for saying so. Were you told not to say fish were too small?*

**Iisapi:** We were told never to say that about any type of food. We were told to be thankful. If a child was visiting when we were eating, he would be given a bite even if it was small, even if it was all we had. Even if it was *palaugaq*, or caribou fat, we would give him a mouthful like candy.

*We grew up hearing that we should not eat while someone was watching, without offering them some.*

**Iisapi:** We were supposed to share. We were told there was always going to be more. Also, we were told not to say that something we were given was not enough, even if it was money.

**Tipuula:** A child and a very elderly person are both to be treated the same way. We have to give each a piece. An elderly person will not ask for something even if he wants it, so we have to offer it to him. It is not like you don't give him any just because he did not ask.

**Iisapi:** We should also not scold children who have wet their bed or their pants. They are unable to control their bladders, so we were advised just to clean things up without getting angry.

*We tend to hurt children's feelings if we do that.*

**Iisapi:** Yes, even now we have to be aware of that. Some babies are in wet diapers for a long time because the mother doesn't feel like changing them.

**Tipuula:** It is exactly the same with the elderly. Some cannot control their bladders anymore because they are so old. You shouldn't tell them that they smell awful. Elders are very thankful for any help they get.

**Iisapi:** We know that an elderly person can have a very strong stench if they are urinating and defecating in their pants, but you shouldn't say that they smell awful.

*We have been told never to leave babies alone or they might be nagliktaujuq, taken away by unseen beings. Have you ever hear of that?*

**Iisapi:** I guess if we abuse them then that is possible. If a baby has not been abused, then it is okay to leave them alone for short periods. I often left my babies when they were asleep, as we were always busy. I made sure I was within ear shot. We would do

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a chore or fetch water while our babies were not on our backs. I often left my babies alone, but they were close enough so that I would hear them if they were crying. I would not go far and leave them behind though. I guess nothing would happen if you were not abusive towards them.

**Tipuula:** I have heard that we should not make children do things that they are not old enough to do.

**Ilisapi:** I guess one might return to a dead child. It is okay to leave them if you don't abuse them. Someone from Kangiq&ugaapik couldn't believe I left my children behind! This woman was not shy to speak her mind. I heard from her that a child could be taken away by unseen beings. I never heard that from my parents. I told her that if that were to happen, how nice it would be not to have to have a baby to carry on my back!

*When elders get sick we are advised to go and visit them. My mother used to tell me to visit sick people so that I would know how to deal with her when she became sick but I never did that. I did not know what to do when she became ill. It was quite hard not knowing what to do. Is this how people would learn to care for the sick?*

**Ilisapi:** We were advised to go to places where it was not pleasant. We cannot always be in a happy place. Poor people's houses were really stinky. The ones who had no fathers, who lived on handouts, would be like that. We would be advised to visit these families. Our dwelling was better than most. We had an elder named Karlak in our camp who had toes missing from having frozen his feet. He also had a daughter who had a bad arm.

**Tipuula:** His daughter was like that from birth.

**Ilisapi:** His toes were missing from having frozen his feet. I would go to visit them. I was not ashamed to be with them. I used to pick their lice. Poor people had more lice. My sister often told my parents that I picked their lice. Although my parents did not scold me very much, they told me not to pick their *kumait*, lice. They told me I could continue bringing them food whenever I felt like it. I would ask first if I could take something over to their place, like tea, sugar or *palaugaq*. Because my parents did not always have things to give away, sometimes I was scolded for doing this. I often gave them oil as their place was colder than our place. This was very helpful later in my life, even though I did not think of the future back then. I often felt protective towards those who were less fortunate than I was. Although we weren't constantly told to help others, we were reminded about it once in a while.

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**Tipuula:** When we were growing up we were surrounded by love.

**Ilisapi:** People should be more willing to help out when they can, even if they are not going to be paid.

*We have so many excuses today for not helping others.*

**Tipuula:** It is like that today because we have so much to do. The day is too short to try and get everything done.

*I was told to try and help someone but I was scared of the person. It was embarrassing.*

**Ilisapi:** You will get more experience as you grow older. You will be able to do more of the things that have been asked of you.

*There was a person with mental problems in our community and I never wanted her to come to my house. I was scared of her.*

**Ilisapi:** Why? Did she try to come into your house?

*Yes. She kept asking to come over. I did not want her to know where we lived.*

**Ilisapi:** Well, you should not feel too bad as your place was not the only place that she could go. If your place was the only one available and you didn't let her in, that would be different. I do not like intoxicated people coming to my house. Once I heard some people talking outside when I was asleep, so I got up and looked through the window. I saw some people walking and they looked drunk, so I went to the door right away to lock up. Before I locked the door, I looked outside to see if they had passed by. There was a man right there, so I did not lock the door and I asked him why he was there. He said he was cold, so I told him to go home. He said he had no place to go and because he was not dressed warmly I told him he could warm up in the porch. I did not even let him in. He said he would lock up once he warmed up. I could not go back to sleep because I was so sorry that I did not even let him in to warm up. When I saw him after that, I told him I was sorry that I did not let him in. I would not have been sorry at all if he had not been an orphan. Sometimes, we do not do what we should.

**Tipuula:** Sometimes we do things we don't mean to.

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**Ilisapi:** You will learn to do things as you grow older. As you gain more experience, you will be able to voice your knowledge. Even if you don't have professional credentials, you have abilities. I am sure you are here because you want to learn. There are some people who don't pursue their education because they are unwilling to listen and don't want to learn things. You are here because you want to learn.

**Tirisi:** Even if you forget something, you will eventually remember it later.

**Tipuula:** You forget things if you are not dealing with something regularly. Then when the time comes, you remember what you had forgotten. That is the way it is.

**Ilisapi:** Yes, one day you will teach others the things you have learned.

*Have you ever heard that when people became sick, they thought it was because the land was warm, so they moved to a new location?*

**Tipuula:** Yes. We lived at the same winter camp for about three years. Then we would have to move to another location so the land we were living on would cool off.

*Did the land become warm because of sickness?*

**Tipuula:** I do not know what the reason was. I guess, when there was too much sickness occurring we would move to another location. After having waited for the camp to cool down for a while, they would go back. They would return some time later, but it would be left for a while so it could cool off.

**Ilisapi:** The land did not actually get hot.

**Tipuula:** The land didn't get hot at all. If there was a lot of sickness occurring, they thought this was from living in the same place for too long. They would move to another location for a while and would return later. I wonder how they knew about this.

**Ilisapi:** I guess they knew it was best to move for a while, while the land cleansed itself.

## Premonitions

*When people felt twitches or their ears were ringing, did they expect something to happen?*

**Tipuula:** The term for this is *niriujaaqtuq*. It means you are expecting something to happen, such as expecting someone to arrive.

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**Ilisapi:** I know that someone is going to catch an animal when I hear ringing in my ears. For someone else, hearing a ringing in their ears might signify that they were about to receive good news. When one heard a crackling in the ear, this was said to be sign that it would be windy. My parents didn't believe this, but that is what I have heard. If your eye was twitching, it was a sign that you would see someone that you didn't normally see. When someone's eye twitches because they are going to see someone, this is called *takusiut*. *Sajuktuq* means twitching. If your flesh was twitching, it was said to be a bad sign if you were a person who received premonitions in that way. That was called a *tuqusiut* and it meant that someone would be dying.

### *That happens to my younger sister.*

**Ilisapi:** When someone received a sign, it would happen without there seeming to be any reason for it.

### *If your hand twitched, did that signify something?*

**Ilisapi:** It could signify something if that was how the person received a sign. We all have twitches, but a twitching eye is not necessarily a *takusiut*. My parents did not really believe in that and yet my mother often said if her eye twitched, it was because she would see someone she didn't see everyday. It didn't always happen. When our ears ring and when we know something is going to happen we tell people that something good will occur. Some people would think they had had a premonition, when it was just ordinary ringing in their ears.

My mother-in-law would have dreams and visions after sitting still for awhile. She really believed in God. When our men were out hunting, sometimes they would be gone for a long time. We lived far from where there were *qallunaat*. One day when I woke up I felt the men would be arriving and I asked my mother-in-law if she had had a dream. Although I knew that the missionaries didn't like us believing in these things, I had become used to her having dreams that came to pass, so when she said she hadn't had a dream about them, I became depressed. She said they would arrive home eventually, even though she hadn't dreamed about them. I was feeling lonely because there were so few people in our camp. My mother-in-law lay down for a while. Then she sat up, and told one of my children that she thought the men were going to be coming home soon. I asked her why she had said this. She said she didn't know if she had just been lying there or if she had been dreaming.

I knew they would not be arriving till late evening. I dried my *kamiik* because I was going to go and get some meat from the cache. I was feeling energetic because I knew the men would be coming home soon. That night they arrived shortly after we had gone to sleep. My mother-in-law told about the dream she had had. She said that in her dream

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she was in a boat in foggy weather. There was something that appeared to be ice around her and she was facing in the direction of our camp. Whenever she had that dream it would mean that the men would arrive soon. The boat would be facing our camp from whatever direction the men were located. She would have this dream and it would come true. It didn't happen every single time but it happened a lot. Then it stopped. Eventually her dreams stopped being precise. When she said the men would be arriving at a certain time this wasn't so. My mother-in-law did not want to believe in this as she thought it was related to shamanism.

*Were there also people who could tell there was bad weather coming because their bodies were in pain?*

**Ilisapi:** The ones who had chronic illnesses could feel if there was bad weather coming.

**Tipuula:** Those with chronic conditions could tell. For example, if someone had a chronic pain in their arm, when the weather was going to turn bad their pain worsened.

*People who had broken bones could feel changes in the weather too.*

**Ilisapi:** They feel the pain more when the weather is going to turn bad.

**Tipuula:** Those who have been extremely ill are also able to feel changes in the weather.

*Did those who had physical or mental disabilities get worse during the full moon?*

**Ilisapi:** Yes. People believe that they can feel the change.

**Tipuula:** I am going to add something more about *sajunniq*, twitching. The lower eyelid is called *quvvik*.

**Ilisapi:** The *quvvik* area is not wet.

**Tipuula:** Yes. We used to hear of people dreading having a twitch in that area, as it was a sign that they would hear that someone had died. They would say, "Oh no, I had a twitch under my eye, I will be hearing bad news." We would then expect someone to arrive and tell us that somebody had died in another camp.

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*I do not like dreaming about bears or about teeth.*

**Ilisapi:** When one dreams of losing teeth, then it is a sign that a relative has died. When I dreamed that I lost a tooth, I was afraid that a relative of mine had died. I didn't tell anyone about the dream. Later, I heard that one of my relatives had died. I had no control over this. Later on, I had other dreams of losing teeth but nobody died. Sometimes, when one dreams of losing teeth, it is not a sign that someone will die. I have a surgical scar but it never itches when there is bad weather.

**Tipuula:** It has been said that if a person's eye is constantly twitching, the person may have Bell's Palsy.

**Ilisapi:** When one side of the face is sagging they are said to be *ijittuq*. Some lose their muscle control, even though it may come back later.

*If someone lost their muscle control was there anything that could be done to help them?*

**Tipuula:** The muscle control eventually comes back on its own. You can't really do anything about it. When whatever is causing it has passed, the muscle control returns.

**Ilisapi:** Some people get their muscle control back and some do not.

*If the mouth is twitching does it mean that someone is talking about you?*

**Tipuula:** That is just a saying, "When your mouth is twitching someone is talking about you."

*For me it is a sign that I will get money. It is a sign that I just made up. I use it just to joke around, just for fun.*

**Tipuula:** Yes. These signs are not always serious.

**Ilisapi:** When someone had a twitch and said something was going to happen, when others had a twitch they would also think the same thing would happen to them. The ones who had signs were copied. If a baby that was not able to talk yet said *uquuquq*, when his father was preparing to go out hunting that would be good luck. If the child said *uquuquq* the hunter would catch something.

**Tipuula:** In baby talk *uquuquq* means "animal."

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**Ilisapi:** They would say the father would catch something, if the baby said *uquuquq*.

*Someone would jokingly ask, “How many?”, if a child was nodding off to sleep. A game called najangajaq was played with them.*

**Ilisapi:** I used to play solitaire with cards. I would say, if I won the game then the men would come home. I was always busy doing something. If I took a break, I would play cards. I guess I am really hyperactive. I would say that the men would come back, if I won the game. One of my sons would beg me to play cards to see if his father would come back if he was really down, or he missed his father.

*My father used to do that too. I used to copy him. Do you know if adolescents were said to be adults once they finished growing?*

**Tipuula:** Yes. The word *iniqtut* means their bodies have finished growing.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> See the story collected by Boas in South Baffin Island of the first two Inuit ancestors Akalookjo (Aakulugjuusi) and Owmirneto (Uummaarniittuq). A chrysalis once became hungry and started sucking their blood (Boas 1901: 178-179; 1907: 483).