

## DOGS IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD OF TRADITIONAL INUIT SOCIETY OF CANADA : WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DOGS IN THE TRADITIONAL NETSILIK INUIT SOCIETY

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# DOGS IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD OF TRADITIONAL INUIT SOCIETY OF CANADA : WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DOGS IN THE TRADITIONAL NETSILIK INUIT SOCIETY

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## 伝統的なカナダ・イヌイト社会の精神世界における犬 — 伝統ネツリック・イヌイト社会の場合 —

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### 1. Introduction

Human beings live in a subjective environment, which has been created through their practice of giving meaning to objects and phenomena, rather than in an objective physical environment (Watanabe 1977; Miyaoka 1987; Burch 1971). For example, a people such as the Inuit who live in the arctic areas of Canada, Northwestern Alaska and Greenland believe that their world is composed of many souls, spirits, ghosts and monsters wandering around them, and a natural environment composed of land, seas, mountains and various kinds of animals. This means that humans do not live within a framework of a natural environment, but in the integrated framework of a natural and social environment where the spiritual world of the human beings plays an important role by integrating nature and society into a whole world.

Although wild animals are a part of nature in Canadian Inuit society, it is believed that animals and Inuit form one society within their spiritual world. In this paper, I will show the relationship between human beings and animals. The focus will be the relationship between human beings and dogs in the spiritual world of the Canadian Inuit during the traditional period, based on a case study of a group of traditional Netsilik Inuit living in the central arctic region of Canada<sup>(1)</sup>. It should be noted that in this paper, I call the period before Inuit's sedentarization the "traditional period" for convenience.

### 2. The traditional Inuit Society of the Netsilik Inuit

Netsilik Inuit are an indigeneous group living in the central arctic of Canada. At this high latitude within the arctic circle, a year in this region consists of two seasons, a short, cool summer and a long, cold winter. According to the studies of Rasmussen (1931) and Balikci (1964, 1970), the traditional Netsilik Inuit society can be summarized as follows<sup>(2)</sup>.

The principal subsistence activities of the traditional Netsilik Inuit were arctic char fishing and caribou hunting during the summer and sealing at breathing holes during the winter. During the summer, each hunting group was generally composed of approximately 25 Inuit or less. The hunters in each hunting group "built stone weirs, which were a kind of dam, across the rivers. They used their weirs to trap arctic char, which they then caught

with their leisters" (Balikci 1970 : 28)<sup>(3)</sup>. This was a group fishing activity<sup>(4)</sup>. Also, there were two kinds of caribou hunting activities during this season. In the former activity, that is, caribou hunting from kayaks, Inuit hunters let the caribou run into the rivers or lakes and chased swimming animals by kayak, killing them with their spears. In the latter activity, stone cairns called "Inukshuk" were employed.

During the winter phase, several hunting groups came together and formed a winter camp which was composed of approximately 60 to 100 persons. In this season, sealing at breathing holes was the Inuit's central hunting activity. This hunting was a kind of group hunting because many hunters at a time were needed to find seal's breathing holes on the huge expanse of sea ice and keep watch over them.

Social forms of the traditional Netsilik Inuit changed cyclically, corresponding to seasonal changes and yearly cyclical changes in their subsistence activities. In other words, group formations in the traditional society depended on the distribution of game animals and the hunting methods employed by the Inuit. There were two main kinds of group formations. One was the group formation for the inland adaptation during the summer and another was that for the sea ice adaptation during the winter. In the former case, a kind of extended family called "restricted ilagiit" (Balikci 1970 : 111-130) based on kinship ties, formed the basic social unit. In the latter case, several extended families or restricted ilagiit came together and formed a winter camp group.

### **3. Cultural Position of Animals in the Spiritual World of the traditional Canadian Inuit**

Canadian Inuit were able to develop cultural devices in order to make good use of animal resources in the arctic tundra environment. Therefore, they have adapted well to their physical environment. Game animals included several kinds of mammals such as caribou, polar bears, seals beluga whales, whales, walruses, etc. Birds included the white goose, Canadian goose and eider duck. Fish included the arctic char, white fish, etc. The Canadian Inuit have made good use of the meat and furs of these animals as food and raw materials for clothing and tools without wasting anything.

Canadian Inuit classified animals, using the habitation space of the animals as the criterion for classification. That is, they separated the animals into the two classifications, land animals (umassut nunamiut) which mainly lived on the land, and sea animals (umassut imarmiut) which mainly lived in the sea or on the sea ice (Oosten 1976 : 75; Oka 1978 : 254). It should be noted that birds living in the space over both the land and the sea were classified as a land animal (Oka 1978 : 254), and that fish such as arctic char fished in the rivers during summer by Inuit were classified as land animals (Oosten 1976 : 75). Therefore, according to the Inuit's animal classification principle, caribou, fish and birds were regarded as land animals and polar bears, seals, beluga whales, walruses and were regarded as sea animals<sup>(5)</sup>.

The main staple foods of Canadian Inuit in the traditional period were caribou and arctic char in summer and ringed seals in winter. The relationship between the Canadian Inuit and those game animals was not one of the hunter and the hunted but rather, in a broad sense, a reciprocal one. This reciprocal relationship is regarded as an ideology most clearly reflected in the world views and spiritual world of northern peoples such as the Yupik and Inuit (Fienup-Riordan 1983 chap 4 and 5; Stewart 1991 : 121-122).

Canadian Inuit in the traditional period believed that almost all the animals had souls (Rasmussen 1931 : 217). After an animal passed away, its soul would not be extinguished.

After its death, its soul would move to the body of another of its kind and be reincarnated. Inuit holding this belief thought of the relation between animals and human beings as follows. Inuit hunters did not simply think that they killed animals such as seals and caribou. Rather, these animals came forth for the hunter to be hunted. Meat of the animals was transformed into the blood and body of the Inuit and kept them alive. If the hunter, respectful of the souls of the game, dealt with them properly, the hunter could catch the same animals again because they would come back to the hunters to be hunted. If the hunter failed to deal with the animal's soul properly or broke taboos, the soul would become an evil spirit and bring harm to the Inuit's life. Furthermore, the sea goddess (Nuliajuk in the Netsilik area and Sedna in the eastern arctic region) who was the ruler of the animal souls was said to get angry at the hunter and keep the animals away from him, and bringing him poor hunting and fishing results. In this case, the hunter had to ask a shaman to reestablish a good relationship between the hunter and the animal's soul and the sea goddess. In this way, a reciprocal relationship was observed between Inuit and their game animals. This relationship formed a basis of the spiritual world of the Canadian Inuit in the traditional period.

Among all the animals, the dog had a very unique existence in the spiritual world of the traditional Canadian Inuit. In this paper, I will show and discuss this cultural uniqueness.

#### **4. Cultural uniqueness of a dog in the spiritual world of the Netsilik Inuit in the traditional period**

Dogs differed from other animals in several ways in the spiritual world of the Netsilik Inuit in the traditional period. Firstly, the dog was the only animal that the Inuit had domesticated. Secondly, only human beings and dogs had individual names. Thirdly, in myths, the dog was the husband of the sea goddess and an ancestor of whites and Indians (Rasmussen 1931 : 227-228). Fourthly, according to the beliefs of the Inuit it was thought that of all the animals only dogs had no soul or that it had a special animal-soul that differed from other animals' souls (Spencer 1959 : 266, 289, 456-466; Gubser 1965 : 239; Stewart's fieldnotes of 1991 and 1992). In this section, I report on these 4 matters within a case study of the Netsilik Inuit in the traditional period.

(A) A dog was the only domesticated animal in the traditional Inuit society

To the Netsilik Inuit, a dog was both the only domesticated animal and thus a good hunting partner for them (Rasmussen 1931 : 148-149).

When the Netsilik Inuit moved in the inland tundra area in the summer, they made their dogs carry heavy loads, such as tents and soapstone lumps, on their backs. Also, in the winter, they used their dogs to pull sleds in order to transport people and their belongings. It should be noted that "the Netsilik Inuit had very little food to spare for their dogs and consequently could afford to keep an average of only one or two dogs per family" (Balicki 1970:56; also see Rasmussen 1931:148). "It was therefore essential for a hunter contemplating a distant winter journey to be able to borrow a sledge and some supplementary dogs if he didn't have enough of his own. For such help the hunter turned to his close relatives. No payment was made for such temporary loans, but the sledge had to be returned in good order" (Balicki 1970:115). However, when the hunter borrowed the sledge and some dogs from non-kinsman, he had to reward him with a small gift (Stewart's fieldnotes of 1992).

The Netsilik Inuit made good use of dogs in seal, musk-ox and polar bear hunting during the winter season (Balicki 1970 : 51 73, 78). Sealing at breathing holes on the sea ice was the most important subsistence activity during the winter season. The Inuit hunters were

able to locate breathing holes below the snow surface, which were scattered over the huge area of sea ice, by depending on their dogs' sense of smell. They did not give a lot of food to their dogs before the seal hunting because they wanted their dogs to use their noses (Rasmussen 1931 : 148). Also, when they engaged in the hunting of large game such as polar bears or musk-oxens, they made their dogs chase and attack the game. After the dogs, attack against the game, the hunters killed the weakened game with special spears or bows and arrows.

As has been shown, the role of the dog was of crucial importance in seal and large game hunting and as a means of transportation in the Netsilik Inuit society.

(B) Names were given to dogs by Inuit in the traditional Inuit society of Canada

Personal or individual names were very important to most of Inuit groups in Canada during the traditional period (Guemple 1965; Rasmussen 1929 : 58-61; 1931 : 219-223; Kishigami 1990a, b, c). This was because the Canadian Inuit believed that personal names had souls, which were associated with the personality, character, abilities and other qualities of a social person. The bestowal of a name on a new born baby meant to give a name soul to the baby and to recognize his/her social existence. In the case of the Canadian Inuit, several names were generally given to the baby. In the majority of naming cases, new born babies were named after the dead or their grandparents. It was believed that the name giver and the name receiver were symbolically to be recognized as the same person because they held the same name. Also, people who shared names that originated from the same person, established a special namesake relation such as a fictive kinship relation, and the namesake relation has social and economic functions in the traditional Canadian Inuit society (Kishigami 1990a, b).

As Rasmussen (1991 : 219) already reported, in the case of the traditional Netsilik Inuit, it was believed that they gave a name to a new born baby not only to give the baby a real social existence associated with particular human qualities but also to protect the new born baby from misfortune and to keep and promote its health. The Netsilik Inuit believed that it was desirable for the young to hold many names. This was because they believed that a person with more names would be healthier and live longer than those without. In other words, to the Netsilik Inuit, name souls were guardian spirits. They gave several names to a new born baby as an amulet (Rasmussen 1931 : 220)<sup>6</sup>.

Names were given also to dogs by the Netsilik Inuit. Other than human beings only dogs were allowed to have names. Because the Inuit needed to distinguish their dogs in order to use them, they needed to give them individual names. However, those names did not only function as classifications. In general, dogs' names, which were mostly names of colors or patterns on their skins, differed from human names. However, it was known that dogs were sometimes given human names by their owners. They were named either after dead dogs or after living people. Also, they were given several names by their owners (Rasmussen 1931 : 150). A dog was the only animal holding a name in the traditional Inuit society, and this clearly separated the dog from other animals.

(C) A dog was the husband of the sea goddess and ancestor of whites and Indians in Netsilik myth

A lot of animals such as polar bears, crows and whales play various important roles in the myths and old tales of the Canadian Inuit. Especially, the dog was given a special position in Netsilik Inuit myths. That is, the dog was a husband of the sea goddess and ancestor of whites and Indians in their myth "a woman who married a dog". And it was the guardian of the house of the sea goddess at the bottom of the sea (Rasmussen 1931 : 227-228).

Allow me to cite and introduce a Netsilik myth called "a woman who married a dog", although it may be a little bit long. This story explains the origins of whites, Indians, sea mammals and the sea goddess.

"The story goes that a father one day in anger said this to his daughter :

"You won't have a husband. I wish you had a dog for husband!"

When evening came, and they had lain down to sleep, the man's dog came in, but in human form. He wore a dog's tooth on his breast as an amulet. As soon as the others had fallen asleep he lay down beside the girl and embraced her; and then it hung fast with her and dragged her out into the entrance passage. In that way they became man and wife. After that the dog used to come every evening. The woman became pregnant, and when she had got "a big stomach" and she would soon be confined, her father rowed her over to an island, as he was not going to have all the trouble there would be with the children she was going to have. On the island the woman gave birth to a litter of young that later on were to become white men and Indians. The father, it is said, used to go to them in his kayak and take meat to them.

But when the children had grown up, the woman said to them one day :

"Your grandfather was not wise that time he wanted me to have a dog for a husband. Throw yourselves upon him when he brings you food".

The story goes that the girl's young started to lick the kayak for blood the next time her father came with meat, and then they threw themselves upon him and tore him to pieces.

After that the woman sent her young out into the world. To those who were to become Indians she gave them her inner kamiks for boats and let them go away, saying that they were to be hostile to all men. But those that were to be white men she exhorted to be of a friendly disposition, and set them out in her outer kamiks; these were to be their ships. But when she tried to go on board to them the children threw her into the water. She seized hold of the edge of the boat, but they chopped off the first joint of her fingers. After a little while they came up as seals. Again the mother got hold of the edge of the boat, but they chopped off the next joint of her fingers. It was a little while before anything came up out of the water, and then her finger joints came up as bearded seals; again she caught hold of the gunwale, and again they chopped a joint off her fingers. It was some time before anything came up, and then they came up as walruses.

After that the woman sank to the bottom of the sea, where she became Nuliajuk, the mother of the beasts". (Rasmussen 1931 : 227-228)

This sea goddess "Nuliajuk" was believed to be capricious and a bad spirit to the Inuit. Furthermore, she was regarded as a ruler of not only sea animals but also land animals (Rasmussen 1931 : 228-229).

I remind you of the following point. In the Netsilik myth, the dog was originally owned by the father of the woman who became the sea goddess, and later on became the husband of the goddess and the ancestors of men such as whites and Indians<sup>(7)</sup>.

(D) The dog did not have an animal soul

The dog in the spiritual world of the Netsilik Inuit had a very unique existence in terms of Inuit beliefs in spirits and souls. Rasmussen defined the soul as "an invisible but tremendous force" (Rasmussen 1931 : 214) and thought that "for all powerful and supernatural forces, good and bad" were souls (Rasmussen 1931 : 214) Although Rasmussen gave some misleading descriptions in his ethnography (ex. Rasmussen 1931 : 214), he

reported that all the living creatures had their own souls in the spiritual world of the Netsilik Inuit as well as in that of the Iglulik Inuit (Rasmussen 1929 : 58; 1931 : 217).

On the other hand, Spencer who conducted his research in an Inuit society in north-western Alaska, pointed out that the dog, of all the animals, was the only animal without a soul (Spencer 1959 : 266; 289, 456-466). Also, Stewart, who engaged in his field research in the contemporary Netsilik Inuit community at Pelly Bay, obtained new information that dogs had no special soul and that the Inuit did not treat dogs specially (Stewart's field notes of 1992). As to this matter, I asked some questions about dog's souls of several Inuit of the Pelly Bay community. Some elders over 70 years of age told me that dogs had no souls. However, some people under 60 years of age affirmed that dogs had souls. In sum, I got contradictory information about dog's souls from my informants. It seems to me that these different views in the community came from historical changes in the relationship between the Inuit and their dogs, possibly caused by the Inuit's sedentarization, their use of snowmobiles and their general acceptance of Christian ideas. However, the reasons for or causes of the emergence of the two different views in the village are not clear.

Rasmussen reported that all living things had their own soul (Rasmussen 1931 : 217). On the other hand, Stewart found that in the spiritual world of the Netsilik Inuit in the contemporary Pelly Bay community the dog did not have a soul or that if it had a soul, its soul was different from those of all the other animals (his field notes of 1991 and 1992). As Remie points out (Remie 1988 : 120-121), Rasmusen's data on soul and spirit are probably incomplete.

I hope to point out a high possibility that Stewart's report on dogs' souls is much more accurate than Rasmussen's. This is because there are still clear differences between dogs and other animals in terms of Inuit's treatment of and attitude towards their corpses. For example, the following cultural norm is quite valid among the contemporary Netsilik Inuit : souls of the dead game animals such as caribou, ringed seals and polar bears have to be respected and dealt with properly. On the other hand, there is no such cultural norm in the case of a dog. Because dogs did not have animal souls or had special souls that differed from those of other animals', the Inuit did not hold any death ceremony or ritual for their dogs and usually just left the dead bodies at the place where the dogs died. Also, it is known that the Inuit did not grieve over the death of their dogs and were apparently indifferent to their death<sup>(9)</sup>.

There are still unclear aspects of the Netsilik's views on a soul and spirit. At this present moment, I can not discuss dogs' and other animals' souls in more detail due to a lack of adequate information. However, depending on Stewart's findings on a dog's soul of the spiritual world of the Netsilik Inuit, I will argue that a dog had a very unique existence in the traditional Netsilik culture because it did not have the same kind of soul as other animals had<sup>(9)</sup>.

As already pointed out, dogs were the only domesticated animals and good hunting partners of the Inuit, in addition to being a means of transportation. Furthermore, according to their myth, a dog was the husband of the sea goddess and forefather of Indians and whites. In spite of the social and cultural significance of dogs in the traditional Netsilik Inuit society, they were regarded as the only animal without an animal soul and were not given any death ceremony or ritual by the Inuit.

In the following sections, I examine the position of dogs in the spiritual world of the Netsilik Inuit, in relation to the anthropological theory of taboo. Then, I will discuss why only a dog is believed not to have any animal soul or soul, using a case of the Netsilik Inuit. It should be noted that in this paper I employ the culturalogical position that cultural phenomena

must be explained in terms of other cultural phenomena (White 1949) in order to analyze the Netsilik data. That is, I try to explain the uniqueness of a dog in the traditional Netsilik culture in terms of the coherency of the spiritual world of the Netsilik Inuit.

## 5. Discussion

Firstly, I will examine the cultural position of dogs in the spiritual world of the Netsilik Inuit. Oosten (1976 : 49) emphasizes a point that the dog acted as mediator between animals and human beings in the spiritual world of the Inuit of the Central Arctic of Canada. It was because the dog was the only domesticated animal in the Inuit culture. It was also the only animal that had a name and thus had a cultural identity. Therefore, the dog could mediate in the transition from nature to culture. The dog was an intermediatory existence related to both nature and culture (diagram 1).

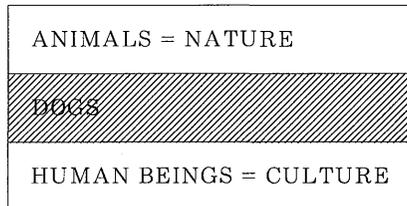


Diagram 1 . Cultural Position of the dog

The cultural world of the Canadian Inuit was constituted on the basis of the binary opposition in the traditional period (Mauss 1904; Oka 1978; Oosten 1978; Balikci 1984 : 426; Stewart 1991). That is, the binary opposition such as summer against winter, land against sea, sun against moon, man against woman, land animals against sea animals, etc. formed a basis for the native cognition of their life world. Oka carried out a structural analysis of the world view of the central Inuit of Canadian arctic through examining Rasmussen's ethnography (1931) as primary data. He, noticing a clear opposition or separation between sea animals and land animals in the traditional Central Inuit society of the Canadian arctic, points out the following. "Inuit hunters go hunting both on the sea and on the land with their dogs. --- the dog which is not a game animal but the only domesticated animal of the Inuit makes a basic categorical separation between human beings and animals ambiguous. At the same time, as it is related to both land and sea areas, its existence throws doubt upon the Inuit's classification principles of animals. Thus, the Inuit regard their dogs as a category of impurity and carefully tries to make the dogs avoid contacting with sacred animals such as caribou" (Oka 1978 : 255). That is, Oka concludes that the dogs' ambiguous existence is an impure existence like a taboo. However, this conclusion seems to be an interpretation based on Leach's theory of taboos (Leach 1964)<sup>00</sup> rather than an inductive conclusion from his field research or his examination of the data of Rasmussen's ethnography (1931).

Although I recognize that the dog was unique in contrast to other animals in the spiritual world of the traditional Netsilik Inuit society, I cannot agree to Oka's view that the dog belongs to a category of impurity. I hope to give two examples in order to make objections to Oka's view that a dog belongs to a category of impurity in the traditional Inuit society of the central arctic of Canada.

Rasmussen described a taboo of the Netsilik Inuit: "no man may eat dog flesh, and their skins must never be used for clothing or sleeping rugs" (Rasmussen 1931 : 150). However, the Netsilik Inuit ate dog flesh in the event of food shortage and they used skins of dogs as

well as wolves to fringe parka hoods. I do not think that the taboo existed in the traditional Netsilik society.

There is another taboo that dogs might not chew bones of fish and caribou (Rasmussen 1931 : 178-181; Oosten 1976 : 74). However, this taboo did not exist because the dogs were impure. Because souls lay in the bones of caribou or fish, any animal including a fox and wolf must not chew the bones. The taboo was related to not only the dog but also any other animals which could possibly chew bones.

I argue that the dog did not have a taboo existence, but a culturally and practically important existence in the spiritual world of the traditional Netsilik Inuit society. Although I agree that the dog's role was an ambiguous one existing in the middle between animals and humans, I do not think that it belonged to a category of impurity. Therefore, I, questioning the Leach's theory on taboo, argue that ambiguous existence is not always related to taboo and an ethno-category of impurity. It should be noted that this hypothesis must be carefully tested with more other cases.

Finally, I will examine why only the dog of all the animals did not hold an animal soul. It was believed that all animals except dogs, whether they were land animals or sea animals, were governed by the sea goddess "Nuliajuk" in the spiritual world of the Netsilik Inuit (Rasmussen 1931 : 228-229). This means that souls of the animals were under control of Nuliajuk. On the other hand, dogs did not have an animal soul. This means that there was no supernatural spirit ruling the dog. I believe that this difference was very important to make a clear distinction between dogs and other animals. Taking a position that cultural phenomena must be explained in terms of cultural phenomena, I propose the following interpretation concerned with why the dog did not have a soul in the world views of the Netsilik Inuit. According to a myth of the Netsilik Inuit, a dog is owned by the father of Nuliajuk. This means that the dog is under human control. On the other hand, the dog is a husband of Nuliajuk and symbolically, in a social position, equal to or superior to Nuliajuk. In this sense, the dog being different from other animals is not under control of Nuliajuk. In sum, the dog is under control of human beings and all other animals are under control of Nuliajuk in the spiritual world of the Netsilik Inuit. In other words, the dog is the only animal ruled by human beings (Diagram 2).

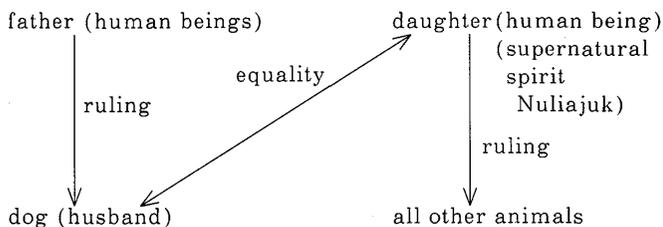


Diagram 2. relationships between human beings, dog, Nuliajuk and all other animals in the Netsilik Myth "a woman who married a dog"

I, considering the world view of the traditional Netsilik society, think that the dog was thought not to have an animal soul because it was ruled not by a supernatural spirit "Nuliajuk" but by human beings. At any rate, the Netsilik myth implies an especially significant and long term relationship between Inuit and their dogs.

## 6. Conclusion

In traditional period, Canadian Inuit lived in a subjective environment where, they believed, good and evil souls were wandering around. Especially, the relationship between Inuit and their game such as seals, caribou and polar bears was not one between the hunters and the hunted, but a symbolically interdependent and reciprocal one. According to the Inuit belief, animals came to the Inuit to be hunted for them. As long as an Inuk hunter paid homage to the animals he killed by observing a number of special taboos and dealing with souls of the animals he hunted properly, the souls of the animals would reincarnate in other animals and reappear to the same hunter. On the other hand, in a case when an Inuk hunter failed to pay respects to the game he killed and to deal with it properly, a soul of the game turned into an evil spirit. The evil spirit would attack human beings. Also, Nuliajuk, a ruler of animals' souls, would get angry at the hunter, and might keep game animals away from him.

Although in the traditional period the Netsilik Inuit believed that almost all the game animals had souls, they thought that only dogs did not have the animal souls. Dogs had been an important transportation means as well as a good hunting partner of the Netsilik Inuit until snow mobiles were introduced into the Netsilik Inuit society. Furthermore, names, sometimes, even human names, were given to dogs by the Inuit. Also, as the Netsilik myth "a woman who married a dog" shows, the dog is the husband of Nuliajuk (the ruler of animals) and ancestors of Indians and whites. In other words, dogs were different from other animals and occupied a very unique position in the spiritual world of the traditional Netsilik Inuit society.

In this paper, paying attention to some relationships between Netsilik Inuit, their dogs and other animals, I point out that while the dog had a unique and ambiguous existence in the traditional Netsilik culture, it was not associated with a concept of taboo or impurity. Then, I throw doubt on the universality of Leach's theory on taboo and argue that his theory needs to be tested with more data. Also, I, through examining the Netsilik myth, propose the following hypothesis. Dogs did not hold souls but all other animals held them. This difference can be explained by the fact that while dogs were governed by human beings, other animals were ruled by the supernatural spirit "Nuliajuk". It is thought that what we have seen here in the spiritual world of the traditional Netsilik Inuit society may apply to other traditional Inuit societies of the central and eastern arctic of Canada.

## Acknowledgments

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## Notes

- (1) Data used in this paper are primarily from Rasmussen's ethnography (1931) and secondarily from some parts of Stewart's field notes of Pelly Bay research conducted in 1990, 1991, and 1992 and the author's data gathered at Pelly Bay, N.W.T., Canada in 1992. It should be noted that in the research in Pelly Bay carried out by Stewart and Kishigami, they collected their information from the contemporary Netsilik Inuit mainly through formal and informal interviews and participant observation.
- (2) As to the contemporary society of the Netsilik Inuit, see Kisigami (1991).
- (3) For further information about the fishing at stone weirs, see Stewart (1992, 1993).
- (4) For further information about the caribou hunting with "Inukshuk", see Stewart (1990).
- (5) According to Stewart who recently conducted field research in Pelly Bay, some Inuit elders of the contemporary Pelly Bay community, did not know whether they should classify fish as a land animal or as a sea animal. This report differs from that of Oosten's. Also, Oosten points out that, "Caribou and fish were often caught in great numbers, while sea animals were usually caught one at the time" (Oosten 1976 : 75). On the other hand, according to Stewart's fieldnotes of 1992, "There are some differences between dogs and other animals: dogs are helpers of Inuit's hunting and controlled by human will. Other animals in general do not belong to Inuit. But dogs are owned by the Inuit".
- (6) As to naming and personal names of the contemporary Netsilik Inuit, see Kishigami (1990 c).
- (7) According to Kretschmar (1938), the conception of the dog as a guardian of the underworld and ancestor of human beings was spread widely in North and South America, Siberia and Europe. Also, Dr. Shinko Ogihara points out that a dog has a unique position in the spiritual cultures of the northern people in Siberia. A comparative study on a dog as a cultural existence in the circumpolar regions is regarded as one of the most important research topics.
- (8) I had an unforgettable experience with the death of a dog in Akulivik, northern Quebec of Canada in 1986. One day, a dog, which my host family owned and took loving care of, suddenly disappeared. When I asked about it to the family head, I was told that it was bitten to death by a big dog of the neighbour. I was astonished at the fact that all the family members including children and grandparents behaved as usual without deep grief over the death of their pet dog. I've got an impression that the Inuit were very indifferent to the death of their dogs.
- (9) It is known that among some Inuit groups in Alaska dogs were believed not to have their souls and that among a Yuit group in Alaska they were believed to have their souls (Oswalt 1967 : 220). Also, Dr. Hara who conducted her field research among the Hare Indians of Canada reported that they did not seem to believe in the existence of a dog's soul (Hara 1989 : 316).
- (10) Leach (1964) explains emergence or origin of taboos in human societies. Through name-giving practices, human beings classify natural phenomena into several systems of difference or cultural categories. However, some parts or phenomena can't be clearly distinguished and are regarded as ambiguous or mysterious by them. Therefore, these natural phenomena come to be recognized as taboos by them.

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