

FAMILY TRAVELS

This family left their winter camp, a long way away, because there was no food. It is a happy time, when the ice is gone, maybe in June or July, because they are moving to where there are more animals and more fish.

All the food they had to bring with them was two seals, tied onto the kayaks. In this time they did not eat any qablunat food, only fish and seal and caribou. They travel in five kayaks made of caribou skin. The parents are in one together, with their dog, and four sons are in the others, the eldest leading, so that the younger sons can watch their older brothers and learn from them.

After travelling for three days they are arriving at the mouth of a dangerous river where they will camp for the summer, because the fast water means good fishing. Already as they approach, the second son is using his kakivak. But the mother is holding onto her husband; she is scared a bit by the current. The youngest son, maybe 23, is having trouble with the current because it is his first year to be in his own kayak. Last year he rode with one of his older brothers.

In three months, after a summer of fishing, the family will return to their winter camp, with the kayak full of dried fish. Then next spring the search will begin again for a good fishing place to spend the summer.

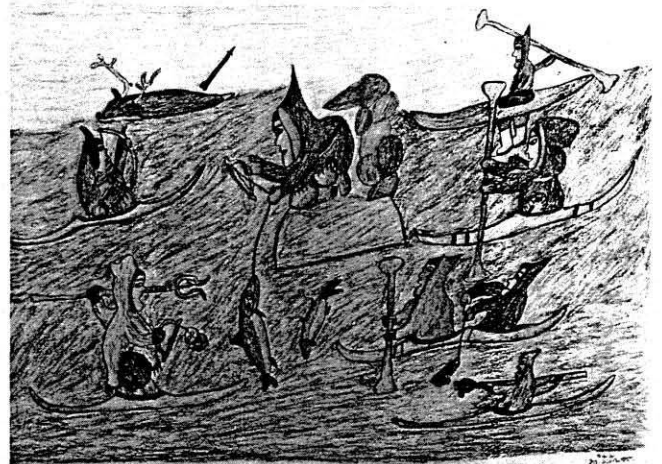


TUKIPQUTAQ

The tukipqutaq is a rock that marks a place where the fishing is very good. It is placed on top of an inuksuk and its special shape points out over the water. If you look along the top of the stone you can see where the fish are. A man from a camp near this inuksuk is out hunting a caribou that was trying to cross the river, while his son fishes from the point.

Another family is travelling with the strong spring current down the river. They know about this fishing place from years past so have planned to stop before continuing the journey. The oldest son, in the lead, has already reached the spot indicated by the tukipqutaq and is readying his kakivak and auladjut. The rest of the family are not far behind in their kayaks, the father accompanied by the youngest son, the mother keeping an eye on the next son. This is his first time travelling in his own kayak and he is having some trouble with the current. So he is walking his kayak through the shallow water. He will soon rest on shore.

The family will be on its way in a few hours, thankful the tukipqutaq has once again provided them with a good supply of fish for the journey ahead.



SUNSET

These three families left their winter camp to travel to a new camp. As evening fell and the sun began to set they came across an old inuksuk. They had never been this way before, so they were excited when they saw the tukipqutaq, pointing to a good fishing place.

Already they have lots of fish. One family is just landing on the beach. Their youngest son has run ahead to start fishing beside the inuksuk, using a bone auladjut for jiggling. His father must explain to him the meaning of the tukipqutaq. The second son waded ashore to help bring the kayak in. Wearing kamik made of caribou skin with all the fur scraped off, he will never get his feet wet. The older brother is guiding the kayak in, while his father stands at the back to help. Both of them are smoking old pipes, a wooden stem with a hollowed-out stone for a bowl. They smoke small green leaves picked from the ground.

Two other families are out in the kayaks fishing. A mother and father are using the kakivak to catch so many fish their son is joyful. They are towing another kayak because there wasn't enough wood to make another paddle. In this smaller kayak are two of three sons belonging to a widow. She is the woman with the big ulu, watching over her sons.

They will stay here to fish. It is a good time while the sun goes down. Then their journey will continue, with lots of fish tied to the kayaks. That will surely be food enough to take them to the next tukipqutaq.

