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## Connecting and correcting : a case study of Sami healers in Porsanger

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### Citation

Miller, B. H. (2007, June 20). *Connecting and correcting : a case study of Sami healers in Porsanger*. CNWS/LDS Publications. CNWS Publicaties, Leiden. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/12088>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

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Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/12088>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

# Connecting and Correcting

A Case Study of Sami Healers in Porsanger

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van  
de graad van Doctor aan de Universitet Leiden,  
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof.mr. P.F. van der Heijden,  
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties  
te verdedigen op woensdag 20 juni 2007  
klokke 16.15 uur

door  
Barbara Helen Miller  
geboren te Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, USA  
in 1949

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**Connecting and Correcting**  
A Case Study of Sami Healers in Porsanger

CNWS Publications  
Leiden

CNWS Publications, Vol. 151

CNWS publishes books and journals which advance scholarly research in Asian, African and Amerindian Studies. CNWS Publications is part of the Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies (CNWS) at Leiden University, The Netherlands.

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[cnwspublications@let.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:cnwspublications@let.leidenuniv.nl)

[www.cnwspublications.com](http://www.cnwspublications.com)

Title: Connecting and Correcting

A Case Study of Sami Healers in Porsanger

Author: Barbara Helen Miller

Leiden: CNWS Publications.

(CNWS Publications, Vol. 151)

ISBN: 978-90-5789-151-9

Subject headings: Sami; shamanism; anthropology; healing; Arctic studies; Laestadianism

Printing: Ridderprint, Ridderkerk.

Cover design: Dolphins on Fire, Wouter Buning, Groningen

Layout: Johanneke Oosten

Coverphoto: Barbara H. Miller

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Research School CNWS, Universiteit Leiden, The Netherlands

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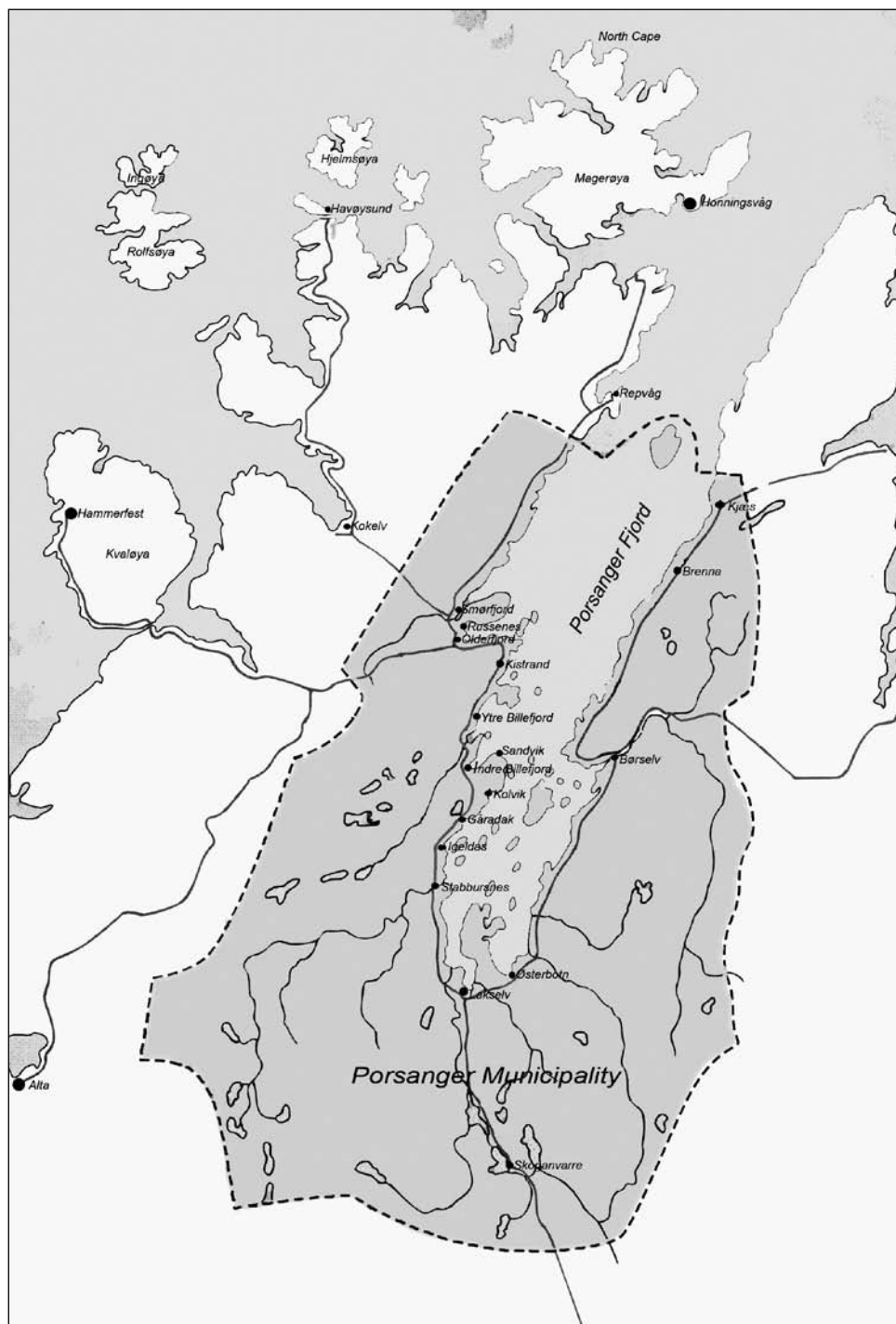
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank those many people who contributed to this research project. My first expression of gratitude is to my former mentor Dr. J. H. Kamstra for encouraging me to undertake research. I am grateful to Dr. Jens-Ivar Nergård for allowing me to join him on a fieldtrip that led to contact with my main informants and to Dr. Jojada Verrips for guiding my initial steps. I thank the Sami healers who generously granted interviews: Mikkell Gaup and Hjalmar Persen. I am greatly indebted to Nanna Persen and Sigvald Persen. Their support and cooperation has been instrumental and basically decisive for this project. They provided me with many interviews, and additionally, gave access to their patients. I want in particular to thank Sigvald for his active involvement. I thank the residents of Porsanger Municipality who shared with me their experiences and insights: Johannes A. Guttorm, Rávdná Guttorm, Karen Rávdná Eira Guttorm, Per Johannessen Guttorm, Nils Persen Guttorm, Anna Guttorm, Ruth E. Forsberg, Solveig Tangeraas, Nan Persen, Åge Persen, Ole Eliassen, Sigrid Alette Eliassen, and Nils Anders Guttorm. Members of the *Research Group Circumpolar Cultures* and the *Research Group Pentecostalism* of the *Hollenweger Institute* commented on earlier versions of this dissertation and I greatly appreciate their help. I am grateful to Pastor Stef de Wit for the sharing of his knowledge; to Willy van Tellingen for many services rendered; to my aunt, Ruth Freeman, for reviewing and editing; and to my mother, Helen Miller, for her availability and support of my work. I am deeply grateful to you all.



*Map of North Scandinavia*



*Map of Porsanger Municipality*



# INTRODUCTION

## The Project

### *Meeting the Sami*

The Sami are an indigenous people of northernmost Europe. They have also been known by other names. Norwegians used the term Finn but perhaps best known is the term Lapp, used especially in Finland, Sweden and Russia. The indigenous word for the area of Sami settlement is Sápmi. For the Sami, the term Lapp carries pejorative connotations and its use has become less frequent. However, the terms Finn and Lapp are still found in place names, so that the area of Sami settlement in northern Sweden bears the name Lappmark and in the northern province of Norway, Finnmark. In addition, there are maps that designate the entire area of northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia as 'Lapland'. The Sami are historically a dispersed and culturally divided people. Today the Sami number approximately 70,000, and are a minority group within Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The Sami population has its highest concentration in the province of Finnmark, Norway.

My interest in the Sami culture stems from 1993 and led to the present research project that explores Sami healers. At that time, I was enrolled at the C.G. Jung Institute in Zürich for Analytical Psychology and also finishing my Master of Arts degree, having studied texts on early Chinese Alchemy. I was intrigued by comments made by researchers that suggested a possible relationship between Chinese Alchemy and early Chinese shamanic practices. I had already probed literature in the English language on shamanism, and I was looking for an opportunity to meet a shaman. Therefore when the opportunity arrived, I was ready to pursue it. This came as an invitation to take part in a fieldtrip offered by a visiting lecturer to the C.G. Jung Institute, Professor Jens-Ivar Nergård, at the Institute for Social Sciences, Tromsø University. The fieldtrip was to be to the most northern province of Norway, Finnmark and would possibly include meeting a Sami who was said to be a shaman by Dr. Nergård. The field trip, comprised of three people, Dr. Nergård, a family member of his and myself, took place in September 1993 and included meeting Mikkel Gaup who indeed acknowledged he was a shaman, and a woman who referred to herself as a healer/helper, Nanna Persen. Dr Nergård had visited these people on previous fieldtrips, and he indicated that it had taken him a considerable time to locate them. The meetings were highly interesting. At the time I was impressed by Mikkel's and Nanna's apparent lack of concern to be validated by my fellow travelers

and myself, but on the other hand, the apparent readiness and willingness to be of help. Our questions and presence as we sat around the dinner table in each of their homes appeared to be viewed by them as due to *our* need. The position of someone in need was most clearly demonstrated during the visit to Nanna. During the visit I was 'diagnosed' by Nanna. This took place while I sat at her kitchen table with the others present. She 'looked' directly into my eyes for a period of twenty minutes. During this time she did not speak or move. After these twenty minutes, which I found difficult to endure, she told what she had 'seen'. Her 'diagnosis' was striking in its correctness.

The literature on shamanism often contains the suggestion that a shaman was possibly emotionally unstable, so one of my questions concerned the mental stability of the shaman. Mikkel and Nanna both had stable constitutions. The question of a charlatan is also contained in the literature; mention is made of the suggestibility of the shaman's public, and the playing of visual tricks or slight of hand. At the time, my assessment could only be subjective. It did not feel that Mikkel and Nanna were posturing and it appeared that the help they gave was regularly employed. Another question I had (prior to the fieldtrip) concerned the relationship of the Sami to what may be called the re-invention of shamanism. Scholars in the history of religion have written on Sami shamanism. Their view was that Sami shamanism was in practice up until the middle of the 18th century in the Scandinavian Sami areas and among the Russian Sami up to the middle of the 19th century (Hultkrantz 1962-1963, 342). In a publication on the Sami shaman drum, I read that the Sami were reconstructing or establishing new forms of traditional local shamanism in workshops and courses (Sommarström 1991, 163). After the fieldtrip and having met Mikkel and Nanna, who were both in their late 80s, placing their activities in the context of a reconstruction of shamanic practice appeared untenable. I presented my impressions of the fieldtrip to my then mentor, Dr Kamstra (Municipal University of Amsterdam), and he encouraged me to pursue a research project. This led me to return to Finnmark on a regular basis. The frequency of these visits increased after I graduated from the C.G.Jung Institute in 1998.

I returned to Finnmark in the summers of 1995 and 1996 and, via translators and hand-written notes, interviewed both Nanna and Mikkel. Upon my return in the summer of 1997, I was informed that Mikkel had become senile. From 1997 onwards I lodged at the Persen Farm, located in the small settlement of Stabbursnes, and conducted interviews with Nanna Persen. After 1998, I was in Stabbursnes four to five times each year. My stays varied in length from one week to three weeks. My translator for the interviews with Nanna, from 1997 onwards, was the son of Nanna, Sigvald. Beginning in April 2000, I recorded the interviews with a video camera. The interviews were conducted in Sami and the translation into English was a joint

project undertaken by Sigvald and myself. We viewed the filmed interviews and worked together on an English translation. The interviews themselves were conducted at Nanna's kitchen table; Sigvald was the interviewer and I attended to the camera. Sigvald has become a close friend. The scope of the research increased by events that took place during the research: Nanna bequeathed her healing gifts to Sigvald and I witnessed the transition. Nanna passed away at 93 years of age on February 26, 2002. From then on Sigvald became my main informant. The many interviews with Sigvald have been alternately recorded on video film or as hand-written notes. The language is English. Further, interviews were conducted with local people, the interviews were video filmed and the same procedure was followed as with Nanna. Sigvald interviewed in Sami and later we viewed the film together and translated the interviews jointly into English. The method gave room for discussion and I often asked Sigvald to elaborate or clarify what had been said in the interview. I am not fluent in Norwegian, which explains why I did not choose the Norwegian language for the interviews.

### *Central Questions*

Mikkel and Nanna were individuals helping others in their community and it appeared that they had a definite position within the Sami environment. Nergård employed the designation 'shaman', but in the course of my investigations I have found the appellation 'shaman' to be problematic. The questions that its use raises are diverse, not least of which is the question of continuity between past pre-Christian practice and present day practice. Shamanism was an ingredient of pre-Christian Sami culture. One could call this the classical period. The Sami perspective during the classical period valued the knowledge of the ancestors. With the coming of Christianity, God and the devil were introduced. Current perspectives reflect new values of progress and democracy. Today Sami are caught in various ambiguities concerning the past. Some Sami will view the valuing of practices from the past as tantamount to being primitive, while others are convinced of the value of practices considered to be traditionally Sami. Within research circles I encountered two positions that were held on the question of continuity. One was from the discipline of the history of religion by Hultkrantz. He posited that when Christianity entered the Sami area, shamanism eventually retreated. The other was from the discipline of social science posited by Nergård that shamanism did continue past the Christianizing period, and shamans are still present among Sami people. This raises the question if Sami shamanism, or in a broader sense the old Sami religion, is, by now, entirely extinct or if there are still some traces present in modern times. Do we find continuity of concepts and practices from olden times into the present ideas and practices of Sami healers? For this part of my research I consulted literature about the Sami pre-Christian religion and about Sami mythology, while I also questioned my informants about religious concepts and mythical



beings. A thorough identification of past and present practices seems ill advised. To substantiate the relationship hard data would be required and the available data do not support such a massive identification. The Sami have undergone many changes in their society as well as in their discernment of their own cultural ingredients. Moreover there are long standing regional cultural differences. Authors on Sami religion do not always indicate the different Sami groups and some specifically deal with the nomadic reindeer herding Sami. My fieldwork was limited to a small part of the Sami environment. It was carried out among a group of Coastal Sami in the area of the Porsanger Fjord, in the Norwegian province of Finnmark. Coastal Sami lived from fishing and small farming. Subsequent to my interest in the question of continuity, my interest concerns ideas about healing practices and the worldview of people – healers and patients – as the context in which healing functions. Therefore my research deals with questions of continuity and worldview related to healing and healing practices among Coastal Sami in the area of the Porsanger Fjord in Northern Norway. I explore practices of healing and the cultural and historical connections that shed light on current beliefs and practices in which the healers are embedded.

## Introducing the Coastal Sami

### *Social Developments among the Coastal Sami<sup>1</sup>*

Sami culture has often been associated with reindeer herding, but it was only after the 16<sup>th</sup> century that some Sami specialized in reindeer herding. Other Sami combined fishing with traditional occupations. Therefore the Sami speak of Reindeer Herding Sami or Mountain Sami and Coastal Sami. The 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Coastal Sami life-style is posited by Gjessing to have been semi-nomadic. A Sami group that worked and lived together was called a *siida*. The whole *siida* resided at the head of the fjords during the winter and during the summer months households moved more freely from each other residing at the mouth of the fjords. According to Gjessing, the Coastal Sami *siida* organization was influenced during the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the use of the coastal areas by Mountain Sami who were more and more engaging in reindeer herding and were extending their summer migrations down to the coast. Already during the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Norwegians occupied some of the best fishing locations, which restricted the annual migration cycles of the Coastal Sami. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the Norwegians also

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1 My main sources are the works of three anthropologists who have specialised on the Coastal Sami: Gutorm Gjessing, Robert Paine and Harald Eidheim, and in addition, historian Einar-Arne Drivenes and anthropologist Nellejet Zorgdrager. My interviews (hand written) in 2005 with two Coastal Sami are employed. My informants Sigvald and Solveig are both in their late fifties, and therefore they were born shortly after WWII.

entered the inner part of the fjords. During these centuries the Danish Norwegian civil administration was built up<sup>2</sup> and commencing in 1716 the College of Missions organized the Christianizing of the Sami (see Gjessing 1954, 37-38). Prior to the introduction of Christianity the Sami religion included special features of shamanism and a bear-cult. Sacrificial sites were used either by the *siida* or individually within the home or out on the land. Many of the sites are distinguished by striking natural features such as an unusual rock formation or a colorful place on a lake due to a stream of water entering the lake from the bottom of the lake (Sami have called this a double-bottomed lake). The drum was consulted to determine the most propitious offerings and was an instrument of divination. For example, it was consulted to guide the prospective hunt. The head of the family consulted the drum, but on more special occasions, the shaman was asked to officiate, as for example in a case of illness.

In Norway the Sami were Christianized during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In this period Norwegian settlements increased in the traditional Sami areas and the Coastal Sami began stock farming. The traditional Coastal Sami dwelling was a turf-and-wooden hut, called *lavdnjegoahhti*, but commonly referred to by the Norwegian name *torvgamme*. A family group would have several dwellings, one at each of the seasonal locations. The form of the *torvgamme* was circular or oblong. The house had the appearance of a large rounded hillock, covered by turf and supported underneath by a wooden frame. In its original form it was a one-room dwelling, in which people and animals lived side by side. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was often a partition between the people and the livestock. Since the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Coastal Sami had often only one home instead of one for each of the seasonal activities. It was still customary for women and children to take the cows and sheep to the summer pasture some kilometers up a valley, while the men were away for several weeks fishing. The men would scythe the grass at midsummer, making hay that would feed the livestock during the winter. This would include outlying rough fields further from the homestead. According to Paine's research of a small fjord close to Hammersfest, in 1875 the average number of cattle was three and the average number of sheep was twelve per household. The emphasis was on fishing and no household was recorded as having a corn crop or vegetables (see Paine 1957, 64). Social values and organization strongly emphasized collaboration. Sami means of subsistence were based on the exploitation of the natural environment. For the successful exploitation of the territory, by hunting, fishing and reindeer herding, cooperation was required. For example, I have visited in the Stabburs River valley a series of pits lined with stones (undated). It is clear

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2 The border between Norway/Denmark and Sweden/Finland was determined in 1751, and the border between Russia and Norway in 1826.

from their form and location that reindeer were driven so that they fell into these pits. Fishing expeditions required a well functioning crew. Today the reindeer herding Sami are still organized within a *siida*.

The traditional relationship that was maintained between the reindeer herders and the Coastal Sami is called in Sami *verdde*. The relationship was reciprocal between nomad and sedentary people. It could involve help provided by the Coastal Sami by lending and manning boats, which were used for the safe crossing of the reindeer over the Sound during migration and reciprocated with reindeer meat. Notable for the relationship was the delay of the exchange, which fostered continuity, and the social protocol of a chat with coffee (see Eidheim 1971, 37).

The Coastal Sami life-style that is within recent memory was characterized by small settlements of from eight to fifteen homesteads, scattered along the fjord and occupied year round. Farming and fishing were combined. The rivers, lakes, fjords and open sea were fished. Before 1940 farming may have included reindeer owned by the farmer that were herded by Mountain-Sami during parts of the year. Cattle, goats and sheep were held on farms, and an important product was the yearly hay. Hunting and gathering (wood and berries) gave additional products just as handicrafts traded and sold at regularly held markets. The combination of these activities made the life-style viable. Alternatives and challenges to this life-style came with Finnish and Norwegian immigration. Finnish (Kven) immigration into Northern Norway was already occurring at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and increased during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Kvens were the pioneers of the first agriculture in Finnmark and were also enterprising in local trade and commerce. The Norwegian authorities saw Finnmark and Troms as a backward region during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Colonization by Kvens and farmers from southern Norway was seen as a positive development. The Kvens were considered skilful and productive colonizers, whose intensive form of agriculture was preferred by the authorities to the mobile and more extensive resource exploitation of the Sami. A special feature of some fjords became the separate neighborhoods of Coastal Sami, Kvens and Norwegians. In some areas of Finnmark, Kvens rapidly adopted the Sami way of life. For example during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in what is present day Kautokeino and Karasjok, the second generation Kven spoke Sami, wore Sami dress and some became wealthy reindeer-owners (see Paine 1957, 68). The relative ease of assimilation may have been facilitated by language affinity, as the Finnish and Sami languages both derive from the Proto-Finno-Permic branch of the Uralic language family.

From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the orientation of government policies were towards assimilation policies, or, as it is often called, Norwegianization. These policies were directed to the Kvens as well as the Sami. After 1860 the authorities were increasingly concerned about a pro-Finnish

movement among the Kvens (see Paine 1957, 70). Government policies favored the Norwegians and served the objective of increasing the percentage of Norwegians in Troms and Finnmark. Settlement projects, in the 1870s and 1900s and 1930s, recruited Norwegian colonizers from the south. A law was enacted in 1902 that land could only be sold to Norwegian citizens who used the Norwegian language, a condition that made it difficult for Kvens and Sami to obtain land. Measures were also taken to control agricultural labor recruitment, and an attempt was made to limit the presence of Kvens in the Sydvaranger Ltd's iron ore mines in eastern Finnmark (Kven immigrants included miners). A policy of discrimination was also followed in certain occupations such as border guards, foresters, police officers and teachers. The clergymen of the Lutheran Church in Finnmark were Norwegians and Danes (see Drivenes 1992, 208, 213). The tempo of the Norwegian colonization of Finnmark during the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be illustrated by some data on population growth. There were approximately 290 Norwegian fishing families in Finnmark in 1805; by 1891 the total Norwegian population had reached 13,921. By mid 20<sup>th</sup> century the Sami had become a minority population in Finnmark. By 1930 the population of Finnmark almost doubled. Between 1891 -1930 the Sami population did increase, but the increase was only a few thousand (see Paine 1988, 164). After 1930, no census was made in which ethnic or linguistic distinctions are made. Today the total population of Finnmark is approximately 73,000.

Between 1880 -1959 the Norwegian school policy decreed that schoolchildren must be taught in Norwegian, and large boarding schools were built after 1905 to facilitate this policy (see Zorgdrager 1999, 185). Some Sami concealed their Saminess in their dealings with Norwegians, and Sami parents sometimes thought it better to speak Norwegian to their children. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some outer signs of Sami identification were also considered as signs of poverty when used by Coastal Sami, such as turf houses and Sami summer shoes. In the fisheries, after the 1900s the Sami vessels could not keep pace with the large expensive motor vessels used by the Norwegian fishermen. Earlier the Coastal Sami had had times of advantage over the Norwegian fishermen. The Pomor trade was such a situation. The trade grew from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to include the coast of Finnmark and Troms. Every summer, Russian farmers and sea captains from the Kola Peninsula and White Sea area brought flour, timber, iron tools and other products in exchange for fish. During this period, the Norwegian fishermen were compelled to deliver their fish to the commercial houses in Bergen. The Pomor Trade made the Coastal Sami less dependent on the Norwegian trading houses and they were in this way more economically independent than were the Norwegian fishermen. The Pomor Trade ended with the coming of the Soviet Union (see Gjessing 1954, 38-39). Finnmark suffered a financial depression after the withdrawal of the Pomor Trade.

*The impact of World War II as related by my informants*

World War II was a pivotal period in the lives of my informants. Notable elements of the Sami culture such as turf houses, Sami clothes, and language were already undergoing some change prior to World War II with the influx of a monetary economy and Norwegianization. But the War years had a particular impact on the fabric of Sami life. During 1940–1944, German forces occupied Finnmark. This brought new job opportunities to the area and thereby also for the Coastal Sami, and the men found that they were more easily employed when they wore modern Norwegian attire. Solveig from Kolvik remembered her parents' accounts and the change from Sami to Norwegian attire during the occupation:

During the War men wore Norwegian clothes. To be Sami was connected to poverty. To be employed by Norwegians, it was easier to get work when wearing Norwegian clothes. My parents told that the Sami knew the Nazi ideas and knew that they were not Aryans and therefore not the accepted race. Also the Norwegians looked down on the Sami in terms of race.

Solveig's family pictures demonstrate the change in the men's clothing during this period. As mentioned, the men donned Norwegian clothes to better their employment opportunities.



*Two men in modern Norwegian dress and two women in Sami dress in front of the Lakselv boarding school having attended a baptism, 1943.*



*Solveig's father and uncle in 1940. They wear Sami dress.*



*Solveig's grandmother's funeral in 1941: Her father and uncle wear Norwegian dress. Her grandfather wears Sami dress and hat, and the women are all in Sami dress.*

*We can note that her father and uncle changed their attire from 1940 to 1941, but that the women did not change, nor did an elderly man.*

In October 1944, during the retreat of the German forces a scorched earth policy was applied, and many buildings in Finnmark were burnt. The English destroyed the city of Kirkenes (which is close to Russia) due to the large presence of German forces, and it was devastated further when the Germans retreated. The Russian troops pursued the retreating occupying forces up to the Tana River. Their pursuit left no time to apply the scorched earth policy to the area between Kirkenes and the Tana River, which is the Varanger peninsula. The German forces then continued their application of the scorched earth policy as they retreated westward. Along the way they reached Stabbursnes, located on the Porsanger Fjord and the Stabburs River, some two hundred kilometers west of the Tana River. The occupying forces informed the local population that they would be burning all the buildings as they withdrew. Sea transportation was provided to transport everyone to a 'safe' port further south in Norway, Trondheim. The Sami were not eager to leave, and many tried to avoid transport. Solveig related that during the evacuation Sami men returned to their Sami clothes (the expediency was reversed, prior to the evacuation they had donned Norwegian clothing for employment) because the Germans refused boat entry to a man dressed in Sami clothes. She said, "If a man came in Sami clothes the German said, 'you can stay.' So the men put on their Sami clothes in order to stay. They were not sure what the boat would bring, but staying they knew. The Sami took this advantage to stay."



Since 1945 the economic development of Finnmark has been State-planned and financed. The area was rebuilt after World War II, and integration within the Norwegian welfare state meant further breaks with the past. All together this led to a shedding of Sami identity in the public sphere of interaction (see Zorgdrager 1999, 185-186). Most people in Finnmark now live in two-story houses that have cemented foundations. Paine stated that not until after World War II were Norwegians in Finnmark prepared to include Coastal Sami into their society. However, they were willing to include them as Norwegians and not as Sami (Paine 1988, 164).

The shedding of Sami identity in the public sphere can be noted in the following pictures that illustrate the change in the woman's clothing. Prior to and during the War women wore Sami attire, during the evacuation period many women changed to modern Norwegian dress and after the War modern Norwegian attire dominated.



*Solveig's mother and aunts, 1930, in Sami dress.*

Sigvald commented on a significant lack of recognition from Norway for the Sami's participation in World War II resistance. He thinks that this lack of recognition is still felt by local people as unfortunate and effectively alienating. He attributes this silence to suspicion by Norwegian officials as well as their distrust of Sami sympathies that would invite Soviet, Finnish, and communist influence. Additionally, he refers to a Norwegian national pride. He concludes that the ongoing nature of this distrust is shown by the fact that pro-Sami movements were, until recently, monitored:



*From Solveig's album, the visit to Lakselv of King Olaf V and Princess Astrid in 1960. One woman wears Sami dress and the rest are in modern Norwegian dress.*

There has not been recognition of the Sami resistance during World War II. There is a feeling about all this War activity [the resistance] that there is silence when it concerns people in Finnmark. It is not told and not spoken about. So when you speak to old people it is obvious that there is a need to write that history because they were really participating. For example, there was a front at Narvik, I think the Norwegian 6th battalion needed a lot of good skiers. It would have been almost impossible without Sami skiers. Also, there was a lot done by Sami along the coast following the traffic – the traffic crossing the ocean here. It concerns all partisans participating and giving support and this includes both Sami and Kvens. There is the feeling that the history is not written and what is written concerns only the Norwegian part – what was going on south. When we talk with older people, this subject comes up very soon and is still important for many people. Why this history is not yet written? It would appear that Norwegian nationalism plays a role. The whole population here was involved, they had to leave [the population was evacuated] and everything was burned. There is a feeling here, it is not cleared up, it is not told. [Another possible reason why the history has not been written is that] there was a fear of Russia after the war that Russia would take over. And of course what started was suspicion, because traditionally people in Finnmark have contact



with Russia, and a lot of people from Finnmark also lived in Russia. It looked like Norway was a bit scared of this situation – too many people in Finnmark had a good relationship with Russia. So what was started was an anti soviet attitude and communist fear. After the War there were jobs in the rebuilding and also with the military activity. If you were communist or had relationship to communism, you could not get these jobs. And what has happened even up until today is that the secret service keeps records. I think it was this year that you could apply to see your dossier, if you thought that the secret service was keeping track of you. Because they were monitoring all the Sami activities, like during the Alta demonstration. It was all mapped.

Sigvald does not have a positive view of Norway's role in the reconstruction following the evacuation; the government did not heed the wishes of local people:

After World War II and the evacuation, the Norwegian government had an idea where people should live, to be more efficient. But what happened, after the peace came, people started to move back to the area where they had always been living. The government was planning some few villages – it was known – it was not allowed for people to move back to Finnmark and a travel permit was required to travel back. But all these plans the government had, the people could not accept. And people just traveled back and had the life they knew. What they came back to, it was just ashes. And they started to build up. The help and organization for rebuilding came very late from the Norwegian government. The first help was for only provisional houses – small houses. The next program was for permanent houses and Swedish help came, like my house, the timber in my house is Swedish.

According to Sigvald, Norway has been negligent in acknowledging the Sami's positive role during World War II, and after the War the Sami were excluded from a positive role in the decision making for the rebuilding of their communities.

### *The situation after World War II*

After World War II, the State continued a policy of assimilation but indigenous people's rights became a relevant topic in European countries, and eventually also entered into the Norwegian government's concerns. After 1870, Social Darwinism had been the dominant ideology in the Norwegian policy towards the Sami. In this view Sami culture was bound to succumb to the dominant Norwegian culture, an inevitable result of the modernization

of the nation (see Zorgdrager 1999). This ideology also had its influences on the ethnographic and folklore research concerning the Sami. This research was strongly influenced by theories of diffusion emphasizing that in Sami culture and folklore much was borrowed from the Scandinavian neighbors because they were more advanced. When the social anthropologist Harald Eidheim started his research on the social situation of the Sami just after World War II, he thought the research situation concerning the Sami was disappointing. He found that “those who were active in Sami research were writing about culture and about the past. In their research they showed no real interest in the conditions of the contemporary Sami people – in post-war Norway – they were not interested in their living conditions....I had gained the impression that these scholars looked at what they called the Sami culture as certain traits that were more Sami before, and that certain traits were more genuinely Sami than others, and therefore more interesting. Cultural loans and modernization had destroyed Sami culture, Sami culture was not that Sami anymore” (Mathisen 2000, 103-119, Eidheim’s quotation Mathisen 2000, 119).

In the second half of the 20th century, political views of cultural assimilation began to change and the Sami position was finally recognized in the Sami Act of 1987 and the Finnmark Act of 2005. The need to clarify the State’s relationship to Sami culture and the legal position of the Sami people came to a head during a dispute about the hydroelectric development of the Alta-Kautokeino river system in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In Stilla on January 15, 1981, six hundred policemen cleared a Sami encampment and forcibly removed a ‘chain gang’ of demonstrators protesting against the building of the Alta Dam. During the Alta conflict the National Association of Norwegian Sami and the Sami Reindeer Herder’s Association in Norway made requests to the Norwegian government for a government commission to look into Sami land rights. World attention was focused on Norway’s treatment of its own indigenous people through protests and hunger strikes outside the Norwegian Parliament building in Oslo. The Sami Rights Committee was set up in 1980. Responding to the recommendations of the Sami Rights Committee, the Norwegian Parliament passed the Sami Act on June 12, 1987. Paragraph 1.2 states, “The Sami People shall have its own national Sami assembly, elected by and among the Sami people.” The aim of the Act is “to ensure favorable conditions to enable the Sami people of Norway to maintain and develop their language, culture and social life.” On 21 April 1988, the Norwegian parliament adopted § 110a of the Norwegian Constitution. Together with the Sami Act, § 110a recognized the Sami as a separate people with a long history of settlement in Norway. Article 2.1 of the Sami Act concerns the administrative duties, power of initiative and authority of the national Sami assembly (Samediggi, also called Sami Parliament): “The business of the Samediggi is any matter that, in view of the Samediggi particularly concerns the Sami people. On its own

initiative the Samediggi may raise, and pronounce upon, any matter within the scope of its business. It may also on its own initiative bring a matter before public authorities and private institutions. The Samediggi has the power of decision when this follows from the other provisions of the Sami Act, or is otherwise laid down” (nettredaksjonen@samediggi.no, 27.09.2001, by Pål Hivand).

The Sami Rights Committee set up in 1980 embarked on many years of deliberations. One of the results is the present Finnmark Act, which the Norwegian Parliament passed on 8 June 2005. The Finnmark Act became operational in July 2006. The intention behind the Act is to ensure that those who live in Finnmark have a bigger say in how the land in Finnmark is utilized. Ninety-six per cent of the land was previously state owned in Finnmark. This land has been transferred to the new Finnmark Estate to be owned on behalf of Finnmark’s inhabitants. The Finnmark Estate, effectively a private landowner, must comply with a number of laws and regulations that govern the management of natural resources. Certain aspects of the Finnmark Act are as yet unknown. The board elected for the Finnmark Estate, comprised of six members, will make choices. Further within the Finnmark Act (in the Act’s Chapter 5: “Survey and recognition of existing rights”) is the provision for the Finnmark Commission, which was appointed 1 January 2007. The Act states that inhabitants of Finnmark may have acquired a special right to use or to own a particular area by their use or occupation of this area over time. Such corresponding rights elsewhere in Norway were already recognized a long time ago. Due to the fact that the use of the natural resources in Finnmark have overwhelmingly taken the form of hunting, fishing, trapping and reindeer husbandry, a natural process of evolution of ownership and rights of usage did not take place in Finnmark. Elsewhere in Norway there is long standing recognition; agriculture was the preferred form of land usage and a natural process of ownership and rights evolved. The Finnmark Commission will look into such rights, and in cases of disagreement will refer the matter to the Uncultivated Land Tribunal (*Finnmarksloven – en orientering*. Published by Justis-og Politidepartment, Kommunal- og Regionaldepartement, 2005).

From a Sami perspective there is a long history of discrimination and experience of cultural loss most clearly expressed in the area of language. The identification of the Sami with reindeer herding is a modern construction, an essentialist assumption that a culture has a homogenized content and presents a static image, which does not do justice to the complexity of its social composition and history. Scholars of Sami culture have often focused on the study of shamanism and created another modern construction presenting a static image in the identification of Sami culture with shamanism. However, the Sami adopted Christianity a long time ago, and today Christianity is part of their cultural heritage. Additionally, Laestadianism, a

revivalist movement within Lutheranism, has been a significant factor in the lives of my informants. Present Sami healers stand in a complex cultural tradition of change and continuity.

## Construction of this book

This book is a case study of Sami healers. In the first part of the book I will examine cultural traditions that organize the worldviews and practices of healers today. In the second part I discuss the beliefs and practices of two present day healers. *Chapter One* looks at the scholarly discussion of Sami shamanism and the definition of shamanism in connection to the Sami practitioner and the earlier employed epithet, *noaidi*. I am not primarily concerned with Sami shamanism in a comparative perspective; my focus is on the dynamics of Sami culture. Within this context I examine how the literary sources depict the roles and functions that have been assigned to the *noaidi*. Out of the discussion three areas emerge for further exploration, and they form the content of the subsequent three chapters. *Chapter Two* presents Christianity on the coast of Finnmark, with special attention to Laestadianism and its importance to my informants. *Chapter Three* explores the worldviews concerning various mythical beings and the world of the unseen forces. I explore if these beings and forces still play a role in the present worldview of my informants. I present stories told by local Sami, but I do not attempt to cover all Sami stories. Nor do I include earlier practices that are no longer spoken about. The current stories express experiences of ghosts, underground people, good and bad luck, the casting and releasing of spells. These experiences either directly or in relationship, organize elements found in the concepts of healing. In *Chapter Four* I examine ethnographic descriptions to show what is presently understood by the Sami term *noaidi*. To sufficiently explore the local understanding of *noaidi*, two individuals who have been so designated, and who were active during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, will be discussed. In this chapter, other 20<sup>th</sup> century healers will also be considered to show the scope and context of Sami healing practices in the area. I extensively rely on interviews that reflect the perceptions of the participants and show the variety of local opinions. *Chapter Five* presents Nanna Persen, her life and healing practices. Nanna helped many people in her environment. The chapter is exclusively based on my interviews with her and with some of her patients. *Chapter Six* presents her son, Sigvald Persen, his life and healing practices. I explore the transfer of the ability to heal and the instructions Sigvald received from Nanna. I also discuss Sigvald's establishment as healer within his social environment. In the concluding *Chapter Seven* I return to the most important questions raised. How are the concepts of healing valorized within Sami society? The assumed relationship between

Laestadianism and earlier shamanic practices is questioned. To what extent are healers seen as coming from a Laestadian environment? Is there evidence to suggest that healing concepts may have been carried into present times through this avenue? Do healing concepts reflect (east) Laestadian categories of thought? Finally we consider the healing tradition in the wider context of the dynamics of Sami culture.

# 1 STUDIES ON SAMI SHAMANISM

Investigations of the indigenous Sami religion are mainly based on archaeological material, the pictorial motifs on the drums and written sources, such as books by travelers, preserved minutes of courts of law, material in the missionary archives in Oslo and Stockholm, and the accounts of the missionaries. The missionary accounts are the most important category of texts containing material about Sami religion and folklore from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, even though the material has certain limitations. Obviously the missionaries' views of the Sami religion were not impartial. They wanted to understand the Sami worldview in order to be more effective in their mission. Important sources are the scholar Johannes Schefferus, the missionary Thomas von Westen, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the minister Lars Levi Laestadius.

The missionary accounts were written predominantly during three short periods: the 1670's, the period 1715-1731 and the 1740's and 1750's. The most important texts from the 1670's were written by clergymen in the Swedish Lappmarks at the request of the Swedish Chancellor. The Swedish Chancellor instigated the gathering of material in order to refute the idea that the Swedish army during the Thirty-Year's War had used Sami sorcerers. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, sorcery was understood as a pact with the devil, which together with malediction (magic that brought physical harm) were punishable offences that might receive death sentences in Sweden and Denmark-Norway. Johannes Schefferus (1621-1679), philologist and professor at Uppsala University, was asked by the Chancellor to write a monograph on the Sami. Schefferus used the collected source material to write his book *Lapponia*. Written between 1671 and 1673, *Lapponia* is considered today to be the oldest trustworthy book on the history and culture of the Sami. When taking into account the time in which it was written, it is an exceptionally objective monograph.

Thomas von Westen (1682-1727) led the Danish-Norwegian missions during the 1720's and his accounts are the most influential for that period. His material was used extensively by other clergymen, so that most of the missionary accounts written in connection with the missions in Norway in the 1720's depend on the material collected by Thomas von Westen. Von Westen's original material is however lost and his writing is only available through the hands of his copiers.<sup>3</sup>

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3 The majority of Von Westen's material was taken over by Hans Skanke (1679-1739), but Skanke's manuscript remained unpublished until 1945. Erich Johan Jessen-Schardebøll (1705-1783) copied Skanke's manuscript and it was published in Leem's book in 1767. It functioned for a long period (prior to 1945 and the publication of Skanke's manuscript) as a source for the study of indigenous Sami religion (for an interpretation of the sources, see Rydving 2000).

Lars Levi Laestadius (1800-1861) was a Swedish minister, botanist, mythologist and theologian. After 1850 he was best known for his role as religious revivalist. Laestadius composed *Fragmenter i Lapska Mythologien*, a manuscript on Sami mythology, employing Jessen-Schardebøll's material, other missionary accounts, *Lapponia*, as well as his own field research (folklore collected from the Swedish part of the Sami area). Composed between 1839 -1845, his manuscript was not published before 1959. Lars Levi Laestadius was not only an ethnographer but also a central figure in processes of religious change among the Sami. He lived at a period when the Sami were considered to be Christian but his research demonstrates that the earlier religious concepts were still present. He set in motion a revival-movement that bears his name.

## Lapponia<sup>4</sup>

Schefferus was born in 1621 in Strasbourg and in 1648 he was appointed professor of philology at Uppsala University. He composed his book employing earlier written accounts, which include the accounts of travelers and clergymen who were active at that time in Sami parishes; his main informants were Tornaeus, Rheen and Niurenus. Furthermore, he employed information supplied by the few Sami who were studying at Uppsala University such as Lundius. Schefferus states that after a long time in darkness and paganism the Lapland nation was enlightened by the Christian religion, but that it is not an easy task to determine the time of their conversion. He thinks that it could have been in the preceding century (Scheffer 1704, 60). He notes that there are still remainders of superstitions and paganism in Lapland which presume that the Sami worship their former gods in conjunction with the true God and Christ (Ibid., 92). According to Schefferus, the worship of Lapland gods was idolatry and superstition. He describes these practices but explains that one would need to be a witness of the sacrifices to describe them more fully. However, it is highly improbable to be a witness because the Lapps are very careful to hide these practices from others. The difficulty to learn anything of that kind from the Lapps applies as well to their magical arts (Ibid., 118). In Chapter XI he discusses the magical ceremonies and arts of the Laplanders.

Schefferus referred to the conclusions reached by “the Ancients” with respect to magic among the Sami.

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4 *Lapponia* was written in Latin. An abridged English translation was published, in Oxford in 1674. A more complete English version was published, in London in 1704. The abridged 1674 version did not consistently include the source indications made by Schefferus. The 1704 version includes the source indications and is the version I have quoted. The English edition writes the author's name as John Scheffer; Johannes Schefferus is internationally known and therefore I employ this version of his name.

There is scarce a Country under the Sun, whither the Name of Lapland has reached by Fame or otherwise, which does not always look upon this Nation as greatly addicted to Magic.... And to begin with the Ancients, Jacob Ziegler has already in his time, given them this Character; That they are great Artists in Sorcery. And Damian a Goes gives us the same Description of them. They are so well instructed in Magic that by their Enchantment they are able to stop Ships, when under full Sail, not to mention here several other strange Effects of their Art....says Olaus Magus, [they] are very expert in Witchcraft. For, either by their Looks, certain Words, or some other diabolical Arts, they know to bewitch People so, that they take away the use of their Limbs and Reason....Saxo gives us an Instance of this kind, when he says: the Biarmi [the Sami] instead of Arms, having recourse to Art, did by their Enchantment raise a Storm, the brightness of the Sun being soon overcast by the Darkness of thick Clouds and Rains (Ibid., 119-120).

### *Helpers and songs*

Schefferus writes about the specialists in these arts. They excel in their studies and become famous, especially when they happen to be apt scholars. He quotes Tornaeus, "As the Laplanders are naturally of different inclinations, so are they not equally capable of attaining to this Art" (Ibid., 121). The specialist in this art is distinguished by his *degree* of expertise. The distinction is one of degree because they are all trained in this science: "every one thinks it the surest way to defend himself from the injuries and malicious designs of others.... Upon which they have teachers and Professors in this science" (Ibid.). The important component in this art is the employment of a helper. Schefferus calls this helper variously 'Familiar Spirit', 'Demon', and 'Genius' and states that the Lapps (Sami) themselves use the term *Sveie*, which means 'Companion of their Labour' and 'Helpmate'. He provides examples of how the helpers were acquired. One explanation is a route through inheritance. Another is that they are acquired through effort. Schefferus first quotes Tornaeus and then gives his own opinion:

They bequeath the Demons as part of their Inheritance, which is the reason that one family excels the other in this Magical Art. [Schefferus concludes] From whence it is evident, that certain whole Families have their own Demons, not only differing from the familiar Spirits of others, but also quite contrary and opposite to them. Besides this, not only whole Families, but also particular Persons have sometimes One, sometimes more Spirits belonging to them, to secure them against the



Designs of other Demons, or else to hurt others.... Some of those they acquire with a great deal of Pains and Prayers, some without much trouble, being their Attendants from their Infancy (Ibid.).

The helpers can be acquired through effort in a form of singing.<sup>5</sup> Both the initiator and the initiate sing the same song in this account from Schefferus, provided by information supplied by Lundius:

Lundius observes that some of the Laplanders are seized upon by a Demon, when they arrived to middle Age, in the following manner: Whilst they are busy in the Woods, the Spirit appears to them, where they Discourse concerning the Conditions, upon which the Demon offers them his assistance, which done, he teaches them a certain Song, which they are obliged to keep in constant remembrance. They must return the next Day to the same Place, where the same Spirit appears to them again, and repeats the former Song, in case he takes a Fancy to the Person, if not he does not appear at all. These Spirits make their appearance under different Shapes, some like Fishes, some like Birds, other like a Serpent or Dragon, others in the Shape of a Pigmee, about a Yard high; being attended by Three, Four or Five other Pigmees of the same bigness, sometimes by more, but never exceeding Nine (Ibid., 122).

Schefferus concluded that the spirit who calls the Laplander into service later came to his assistance when the same song was sung.

Whenever a Laplander has occasion for his Familiar Spirit, he calls to him, and makes him come by only singing the Song, he taught him at their first Interview; by which means he has him at his Service as often as he pleases. And because they know them Obsequious and Serviceable, they call them *Sveie*, which signifies as much in their Tongue, as the Companions of their Labour, or their Helpmates (Ibid., 123).

Singing is an ingredient in the initial contact with the helper, and then is employed to enlist the helper. Singing is also important when men and women gathered and a specialist in the arts performed a ceremony. There is singing during the performance, and, also, drumming. Schefferus makes mention of two different songs that are sung during

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5 Schefferus writes *Joiike*, the modern spelling for this form of singing is *joik*.

the performance, one sung in a loud voice by the drummer and called *Joiike* and another sung by those present, men and women, in a soft voice called *Duura* (Ibid., 143).

### *The drum and drum performance*

The drum was composed of a wooden frame. Stretched over the frame was a piece of reindeer skin on which figures were painted in red (the red dye was made from the bark of the alder-tree). Schefferus notes that the drums varied and that the few drums that he has personally seen were not painted with the same figures. An image of the sun often occupied the central position among the other images painted on the drum's surface. The catalogue of the figures provided by Tornaeus is as follows:

About the middle of the Drum, they draw several Lines, quite cross, upon which they paint those of their Gods, that are most revered among them, viz. *Thor* the supreme Ruler of the rest, with his Attendance; then *Storjunkare* with his: these are placed on the Top of the first Line. Then they make another Line parallel to the former, but reaching only half cross the Drum; here they place the Picture of Christ and his Apostles. All the Figures above these Lines, representing Birds, Stars or the Moon. Below them, in the Center of the Drum, stands the Sun, as the middlemost of the Planets, upon which they put the Bundle of Brazen Rings as often as they intend to beat the Drum. Under the Sun they place the terrestrial Things, and various Sorts of living Creatures; such as Bears, Wolves, Reindeer, Otters, Foxes and Serpents; as likewise Marshes, Lakes, Rivers and such like (Ibid., 126).

The variation in the figures, Schefferus speculates, may be due to the fact that some drums are intended for more malicious designs than others and are therefore adapted to accomplish their magical art. Depending on the nature of the employment of the drum, the different drums contained additional or fewer figures and other alterations were made (Ibid., 129). The drum was consulted for inquiring into things that were happening at a far distance, such as the success of hunting and business undertakings. It was also used to inquire into the cause of an illness, followed by an inquiry which sacrifice the gods would receive with favor. We can conclude from Schefferus' account that most households had a drum, and the head of the household consulted the drum on questions of hunting and other exercises of divination. The drum would be used on more special occasions when the correct sacrifice, required to remedy an illness, must be determined. Then the drummer was engaged in a performance with an audience. Schefferus describes the divination technique used to assess the success of an undertaking. In order to know coming events, first a bundle of rings employed as a pointer was placed on the drum and,

while beating the drum and singing, the direction taken by the rings was noted. When the direction was the same as the course of the sun (depicted in the center of the drum) this was considered to promise good fortune. When the direction was against the course of the sun, this was considered to indicate misfortune. Schefferus quotes Samuel Rheen:

When they have a Mind to enquire after the good or bad Success of Things, they place the same Bunch of Rings on the Picture of the Sun, upon the Drum. If the Rings move about the Drum according to the Course of the Sun, they promise themselves good Fortune, Health and Prosperity, both to Men and Beasts; but if they turn about otherwise, contrary to the course of the Sun, they expect nothing but ill Luck (Ibid., 146).

When the success of a hunting expedition was to be assessed, the direction taken by the rings was considered to indicate the direction that the game would take. Then the hunter would look for game on this day in the direction that was indicated. When illness was concerned, the drum was consulted twice, first to know if the illness stemmed from a natural cause or whether it stemmed from a magical charm from an enemy. And secondly to find out the appropriate treatment, which could include a sacrifice. The beater of the drum inferred his conjectures from the motion and position of the rings. According to Samuel Rheen:

When they pretend to Cure any Distemper by the help of the Drum, it is done in the following manner: The Patient must present the Drummer with two Rings, as a Reward for his Pains, one of Brass, the other of Silver; both which he ties to his right Arm. The Drummer, after having put those two Rings in the same Bunch which commonly is made use of, as often as the Drum is employed for these Purposes, beats the said Drum, singing all the while, as do likewise all the Men and Woman there present (Ibid., 147-148)....The Drum-beater is thereby satisfied, whether the Disease proceeds from any Disorder in the Body, or whether from Magical Charms....Whatever the Drummer orders the Patient to do, says the same Author, he must perform, and either Sacrifice immediately, or at least promise to offer such a Sacrifice at a certain appointed Time (Ibid., 147).

The nature of the sacrifice also has to be assessed.

For it is the Business of him, who beats the Drum, to inquire (as I told you before) which of the Gods the Sacrifice is to be offered to, and what

kind of Sacrifice will be acceptable to him; for the same Sacrifice is not pleasing to every one of their Gods, neither is the same God satisfied with one kind of Sacrifices at all times; so that the choice of it depends on the Manager of the Drum, whose direction the sick Person is to follow (Ibid., 147).

Lundius indicates that sacrifice preceded the performance:

If a Laplander happens to fall Sick in the Lapmark of Ulma, they send for the next Neighbour, whom they think most expert in the management of the Drum. The first Thing to be done after his coming is, to Sacrifice one of the best Reindeer, belonging to the sick Body, or to his best Friend; then he begins to beat his Drum, and falling on the Ground, remains there for some time unmoveable, his Body being as hard as a Stone. In the mean while the rest there present sing a certain Song, which they have been taught by him beforehand, till he recovers his Senses, arises, takes up his Drum, and holding it up to his Head, beats it softly for some small time. After which he sits down very pensive, and begins to give an Account of his Transactions; he tells them, that he has passed through the Body of the Terrestrial Globe, where he has met with Antipods, being conducted by his Genius, among a People of very handsome and venerable Aspect; those People, he says, being advertised of his coming, had shut their Gates against him, but that by the assistance of his Genius, he got among them through a Hole, where he had seen something belonging to the Sick Person, either his Hat, his Shoe, or perhaps his Mittens, or some such like Thing, which he was either able or unable to bring away. Their general Opinion is, That if the Drummer did bring it away, there is great Hopes of the Patients recovery, but if not, that he will Die, and endure a great deal of Pain. And because they are fully persuaded that the Soul of the Drummer does actually leave his Body and is carried to the Place he Names to them; they say that his Soul is brought back by his Genius over the great Rocks and Mountains, with such swiftness, that the Sand and Stones do fly about like Hail (Ibid., 148).

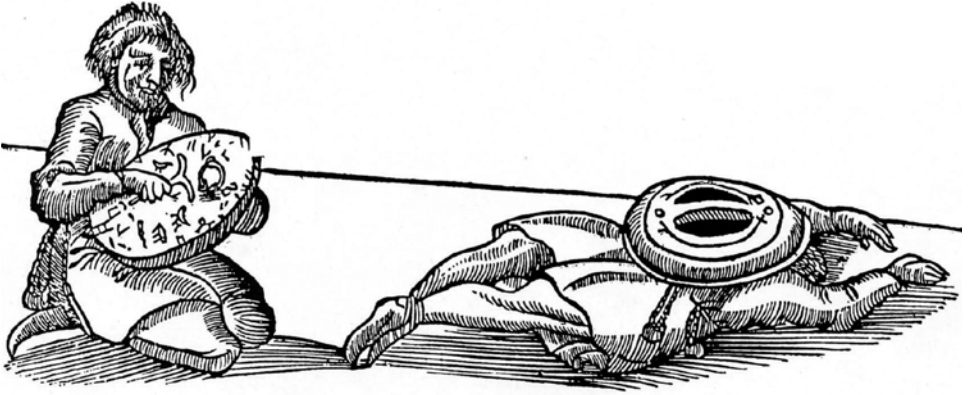
Some clergymen considered the use of the drum exclusively a means of consulting with demons and to cause harm. Schefferus notes different opinions in this regard since there were others who thought that the drum was not exclusively an instrument employed by one who did magic and 'mischief'.

Some Laplanders, says Samuel Rheen, but not all, make use of the drum to do mischief....Those, says Johannes Tornaeus, who make use of the drum [and do not do mischief]....take it amiss, if you account them to be of the same Stamp with those, who employ it to damnify others....[Schefferus concludes that] This has questionless, moved Lundius to affirm, that those among the Laplanders, who use the Drum, have no commerce with evil minded Spirits, and that they have recourse to the Drum, upon no other Account, than for the conveniency of Hunting, to know which way they are likely to meet with good Game, or to satisfy their curiosities in some other Points (Ibid., 149).

Schefferus records several different accounts of performances from his sources, indicating that they could vary in particulars. Thus the drummer did not always fall down lifeless.

After the Drummer, says the same Author [Samuel Rheen], has for sometime thus beaten the Drum, he falls on the Ground, as if he were asleep....Peucerus says thus; After the Sorcerer has with his usual Ceremonies called upon his Gods, he falls down and sounds away on a sudden, no otherwise than if the Soul had left the Body. There being not the least appearance of Life, Sense or Motion. Peter Claudius says, Their Spirits and Soul leave them, [Schefferus states his opinion on the above conclusions concerning the soul saying] there being not a few, who are of the Opinion that the Soul really leaves their Bodies, whilst they lie in this Condition, and returns afterwards, which makes Olaus say, That the Soul (of the Sorcerer) under the Conduct of the evil Spirit goes to bring back certain tokens from most remote Places. Tho' I cannot but look upon this as very erroneous. One, it being not in the Power of the Devil to restore the Soul to the Body, when once departed; so that this Drum-beater lies only dead in appearance, the Soul having not left his Body, but her active Faculties being only stifled, which makes him lie in a Trance, and appear as if he were asleep, his Face being Black, with a most horrid Aspect (Ibid., 143-144).

Schefferus did not agree with the explanation that the apparent lack of life in the drummer occurred by the temporary loss, or travel, of the drummer's soul, and he argues that the drummer lies only dead in appearance, the active faculties only stifled. Schefferus uses his sources with great care, weighing the various opinions. His Christian background clearly affected his conclusions.



*Scheffer 1704, 144.*

Concerning the continuation of the performance, Schefferus quotes the account from Samuel Rheen and from Olaus Petri, who was a clergyman who lived at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In the mean while all there present, both Men and Women, continue their Singing without Intermission, till the Drum-beater be awakened from his Sleep; to put him in mind, of what is desired to be known....At the Ceremonies requisite to this Work being thus performed in a little time, the Drum-beater comes to himself again, and gives them a satisfactory Account, of what they desired to know....Olaus Petri says positively; They give you an Account of whatever is proposed to them (though at some hundred Leagues distance)....And to take away all Objection, to what the Drummer relates....he shows them certain Tokens, such as are proposed by the Person, who asked him the Question....Olaus Petri does confirm this by his Testimony, when he says: As Confirmation, that what they have said is really true, they bring to him, who hired them, a Knife, Shoe, Ring, or some other thing, as a Token, that they have performed their Business well (Ibid., 144-145).

When the drummer returns to life he gives a report and exhibits an object. The performance was employed to discover what has transpired in a distant place and as proof an object retrieved from that place is exhibited. Schefferus informs us that although this may be the principle use of the drum:

If we believe Lundius, there are some among the Laplanders, who without the use of the Drum, are able to discover Things, tho at the greatest distance; by the help of their Genius, with whom they have contracted such a Familiarity that they send them before-hand to the Places, where their Fairs are to be kept, to bring them Word....if they are a considerable distance from their Habitations, they dispatch their Genius to see what passes there, how their Wife, Children and Reindeer do in their absence (Ibid., 145).

Thus the helper may be used instead of the drum.

Similar components can be found in the performances to remedy a disease and to discover what has transpired in a distant place: (1) upon waking the drummer gives a report, and (2) supplied an object. Lundius' account informs us that during the performance to remedy a disease the drummer is (1) laying lifeless, (2) needs to outsmart those that shut their gates to him, and (3) would retrieve a token of the patient when possible. When he writes "their opinion", Lundius refers to the views of Sami informants, and in their opinion "the Soul of the Drummer does actually leave his Body and is carried to the place he Names to them", and this is accomplished by his helper or "Genius". Schefferus also described some activities that would appear not to take place at a performance such as (1) the stopping of ships, (2) bewitching or the casting of a spell, and (3) making weather.

## Fragmenter i Lapska Mythologien

Lars Levi Laestadius (1800-1861) laid the foundation of a religious movement within the Lutheran Church, which bears his name. Laestadianism has been referred to as the religion of the Sami. Prior to his period as a revival preacher for which he is best known, he wrote between 1839-1845 *Fragmenter i Lapska Mythologien*, a study of the mythology of the Sami. In composing *Fragmenter i Lapska Mythologien*, Laestadius makes use of *Lapponia* by Schefferus and the accounts of ministers who worked with the Sami after Schefferus' time. He added what he heard from various sources and his own experience. Whereas Schefferus did not employ the Sami term *noaidi*, Laestadius uses the Sami term *noaidi* interchangeably with the Norwegian *trollkarl* (sorcerer/magician) and *spåmann* (fortune-teller).<sup>6</sup>

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6 I am indebted to Zorgdrager's treatment of *Fragmenter i Lapska Mythologien* in an unpublished article, and to Pentikäinen, 2000. I have consulted a new edition of *Fragmenter i Lapska Mythologien* from 2003, which however only contains the part on Sami pre-Christian deities.

### *The gods*

Laestadius writes that Christian missionaries classified and placed the Sami gods in a hierarchy from the information provided by the *noaidi*, but that the *noaidi* himself had probably not classified them (§. 3). In this hierarchy there were gods above heaven (classified as the highest gods), gods of heaven, gods of the earth and gods of the underworld. To the gods of heaven belong the Sun and the '*Ailekis*' beings. According to Laestadius the '*Ailekis*' beings are not mentioned by the missionary accounts on the Swedish Sami, and he thinks they probably originated from early contacts of the Sami with Catholicism. The gods I will mention belong to three classes: the highest gods, the gods of the earth and the gods of the underworld (not mentioning further the gods of heaven).

Laestadius states that the missionary Erik Johan Jessen in his account on the heathen religion of the Sami published in Leem (1767) gave as the highest god, *Radien atzhie*.<sup>7</sup> This god was not active himself but gave assignments to *Radien kiedde* and this arrangement was understood by Jessen as *Radian atzhie* 'god the father' and *Radien kiedde* 'god the son' (§. 4, 8, and page 56). Jessen wrote, "Other *Nåider* said that *Radien Attje* and *Radien Kiedde* are one, namely *Jubmel*" (as quoted by Laestadius §. 20).<sup>8</sup> According to Laestadius, *Jubmel* could have originally been the name for a special god, for example, the thunder god. He concludes that the use changed so the understanding of *Jubmel* among the Sami became god in general rather than a specific god (§. 45). After the Sami became Christians the meaning of the name *Jubmel* changed again and became the proper name of the one and only Christian god (§. 46).

Laestadius writes that *Radien atzhie* had a wife, *Sergve-Edne*, who was given the authority to create spirits. To form a child the spirit was given to *Madder-Akka* who created the body for the spirit. *Madder-Akka* was conceived to be active on earth together with her three daughters. *Madder-Akka*'s first daughter, *Zarakka*, gives body to the child in the womb, and she suffers the pain of birth together with the mother. Her second daughter is *Juks-akka* and she can change in the womb a daughter into a son. Her third daughter is *Uks-akka*, she receives the child at its birth and cares for the child protecting it against accidents (§. 20 and 21).

Laestadius commented that as one moved from the realm of the sky to the realm of earth the Sami tell of what lives underground. This underground world is called *saiwo*. Here live underground people, gods, fish, birds and reindeer. The life underground is similar to the Sami's own, but they are happier and richer there (§. 71). The *noaidi* used the *saiwo-loddeh* (birds) because, just as the *saiwo* people were richer and better, the birds were stronger. The birds could be used by the *noaidi* to harm other people. Although, different types of birds are mentioned, it is difficult

<sup>7</sup> The verb '*ráddet*' means to govern, be dominant; *atzhie* means father.

<sup>8</sup> Translation by author.



to define which birds were used as *saiwo-loddeh*. Laestadius relates that some of the names were possibly “trollnames” only known by the *noaidi*. Some of the birds were migrating birds (§. 76, 78). Laestadius recorded that it was considered bad luck if during springtime one heard these birds for the first time on an empty stomach. The saying for this occurrence was “being shitted on” (*paikataallam*). To help against this kind of evil it was important to eat a bit of food as soon as possible upon waking and the breakfast eaten to keep the evil from happening was called “the birds piece” (*lodde-pitta*) (§. 78). Laestadius demonstrates interest in both Sami culture and Christianity. Speaking in the Sami language to his Sami congregation, he employed the name *Jubmel* for the Christian God. In his sermons he deplored what he considered to be the error of their forefathers to worship idols, and also spoke of the ‘underground people’.

### *Prophecy*

The third part of the book “Notorious Magic of the Lapps”<sup>9</sup> deals with the Sami art of prophecy, which Laestadius also calls magic. Laestadius considers many accounts that speak of the Sami prophetic practice. When discussing the credibility of the practice of prophecy, Laestadius refers to accounts from the Bible, in particular the Book of Revelations. Because prophecy is mentioned in the Bible, he considers prophecy to be possible. The Bible mentions individuals who had the capacity to be in contact with the spirit world. In this context, Laestadius indicates that he is referring to contact with the world of the dead. He notes that the Bible testifies to similar phenomena, as the temporary separation of body and soul. He discusses the trance-state of the *noaidi* during a séance, but he does not embark on answering the question where the soul might be during the state of trance. He thinks this to be a meaningless question, implying an entry into a situation outside of time and space. For Laestadius the separation of body and soul is located in the brain of the *trollkarl*, and he sees the explanation for what happens during trance and the practice of prophecy as subjects for psychology and physiology. Laestadius accepts that the *noaidi* has extraordinary capacities. He sees these capacities as generally humanly possible and not specific for the Sami, as they are already spoken about in the Bible. Laestadius states that he has restricted his task to the historical demonstration that “*Spåmanneren* really did fall asleep and swam, and that in this condition he was subject to fantasies, visions and dreams” (as quoted by Pentikäinen 2000, 60). Laestadius thinks a distinction should be made between a charlatan and an authentic *trollkarl*. ‘Authentic’ to him are only those who have been regarded as *trollkarlar* by the Sami and “who have through their witchcraft been able to do something good or bad” (as quoted by Pentikäinen 2000, 59). He reports that he has heard of *trollkarlar* who can

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9 Not included in the 2003 edition.

cause a thief to be held at the scene of his crime. But he observes that during his travels around Lappmark in the year 1844, he never met a person that gave him proof of the existence of an authentic *trollkarl*. Like Schefferus Laestadius mentions the features of (1) prophecies, and (2) stopping a thief in his tracks.

## Recent studies in traditional Sami shamanism

Bäckman and Hultkrantz' (1978) aim to contribute to a more adequate understanding of Sami shamanism.<sup>10</sup> Their intent is a reconstruction of Sami shamanism in a meaningful way, based on early sources of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The authors assume that shamanism was still a functioning part of Sami religion and culture at that time. They resort to the folklore material from later times with the utmost caution, because in their opinion "this recent material contains so many transformations, innovations and supplements from migratory traditions" (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978, 5). Bäckman states, "We have cause to believe that there exists a common basic structure in the religion of the whole Saami area, in which shamanism and sacrifices to the life-giving powers are dominant factors" (Bäckman 1987, 497). Hultkrantz summarizes pre-Christian Sami religion: "The religion of the Saami is an Arctic religion. Its major elements, which are also ecologically important, include a basic animal ceremonialism, connected in particular to the bear; belief in the existence of masters of the animals; belief in rulers of specific regions symbolized by stones and mountains; and the presence of an extensive Arctic-type shamanism" (Hultkrantz 1994, 348).

Defining shamanic activity in general, Bäckman and Hultkrantz see healing as one central activity over the whole of Eurasia. It was the domain of the shaman to diagnose the cause of the disease as either soul loss or intrusion. In the case of a diagnosis of soul loss, the shaman would travel to the other world and retrieve the soul from the spirits who held it. In the case of intrusion, the shaman called his assistant spirits to help withdraw the intruding agent (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978, 15-16).

When writing about the Sami, Bäckman and Hultkrantz employ the cross cultural term shaman interchangeably with the Sami term *noaidi*. They conclude that the pre-Christian occupations of the *noaidi* agree with the diverse social roles assigned to the shaman by scholarly circles. Åke Hultkrantz (1962-63) connects shamanism to the pre-Christian 'old' religion. He finds that the Sami *noaidi* represents genuine shamanism in which healing of the sick plays a central part. "The sickness is caused

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10 In addition to *Studies in Lapp Shamanism* from 1978, also other publications of Bäckman and Hultkrantz are employed in the following as well as publications of other scholars. For these publications the reader is referred to the bibliography.

by the absence of the soul, or rather the free soul, from the body; it has gone astray somewhere, or even more likely, has gone to the Kingdom of the Dead, perhaps been stolen by the dead. By going into a trance, the shaman is able to obtain contact with this supernatural world in his own form, or in the form of an animal, fish or bird, his free soul travels there to release and bring back the free soul of the sick person” (Hultkrantz 1962-63, 335). Bäckman describes the *noaidi* as a religious functionary: “...according to Nesheim, [*noai'dot* can] be interpreted as ‘to practice wizardry, magic’. This is only a part of the explanation ... for the word *noai'dot* also contains an element which we could translate as ‘to shamanize,’ i.e., to come into contact with the world of the gods and spirits through certain preparations. It is thus also connected to the religious sphere” (Bäckman 1978, 69). She concludes that, “although material on the Saami shaman is scanty, it is evident that there are many similarities but also differences between Saami shamanism and the shamanism of other regions” (Bäckman 1986, 257). Bäckman states that the sources do not indicate that the *noaidi* fulfilled the function of psycho-pomp, a social role that a shaman may encompass elsewhere (Ibid., 258). The sources also do not mention that the *noaidi* wore a specific shaman's dress; he is shown during the séance with a bare upper body and covered by his own sweat (Hultkrantz 1992, 141).

According to Bäckman and Hultkrantz Sami shamanism thus differs from the Siberian shamanic in the lack of any special attire. Also the initiation period did not contain the experience of dying and dismemberment, and the *noaidi* did not use the central world tree/pillar as a channel of communication with, or transportation to, the beyond. In comparison to his confrère further east where the trance-state was less heavy, the *noaidi* entered a particularly heavy and complete state of trance (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978, 36).

### *The Sami noaidi*

Bäckman writes that distinctions emerge from the source material between persons considered by the Sami to have special capacities and the great *noaidit* (plural). According to Bäckman one should not place all those with special capacities under the heading of shaman:

[But] there were also other individuals, both men and women, who were capable of knowing coming events through some method of divination. Like the great *noaidit* they could also harm others through their occult powers. They could not, however, it seems, put themselves into a state of ecstasy nor had they spirit helpers at their disposal. In my opinion, then, they cannot be considered shamans. A shaman can be defined foremost in terms of two fundamental criteria: ecstasy with

soul-journey and aid of spirit helpers. There is evidence which indicates that the Lapp shaman fulfilled these conditions. In the oldest account of a séance among the Lapps we are told that a “wizard” went into a state of ecstasy, as we can term it nowadays, and journeyed with help of spirits to a supernatural world in order to reawaken an apparently dead woman to life again (HN:Koht, p.17.) Eighteenth century sources, too, describe séances with ecstasy and spirit helpers (see JK 139 f. for an example) and that the man’s “soul” seemed to go far away from his body. In the late traditional accounts especially, however, the role played by the “wizard”, “seer” or “seeress” has been given such prominence that it has coloured the general view of the *noaidi*, thereby completely obscuring his other religious and social functions (Bäckman & Hultkrantz 1978, 86).

Bäckman describes the *noaidi* as a mediator:

The *noaidi* was regarded as the soothsayer and diviner, but above all he was associated with what was looked upon as *passe*, the sphere of the spirits and the gods, the “sacred” one might say. He was the true mediator between man and the supernatural powers on which man was dependent. Like his colleague in Siberia, the *noaidi* was the talented one, who learned and taught the mythological traditions and functioned as the “mytho-poet”, that is, he renewed the religious traditions by means of his poetic talents. He was an ordinary member of his group, but when needed, he acted on behalf of his group members. By means of his knowledge and by the technique he had acquired – thanks to a long apprenticeship – he was able to fall into a trance and of his own volition direct his “free-soul” wherever it was necessary – to the *passe* world, or elsewhere. He was a *guovdi ilmni vazzi*, a wanderer in two worlds, and thus he lived up to the expectations of the members of his own community and fulfilled the religious tradition (Bäckman 1982, 123).

According to Bäckman, the Sami assumed that the *noaidi* was chosen by supernatural beings. “To be a *noaidi* was to accept a heavy burden of responsibility, and only those who were chosen by the supernatural beings and approved by the members of the community were qualified for the role” (Bäckman 1986, 259). She deduces from the account by Lundius in the 1670’s that acquisition of the spirit helpers rather than heredity through the family was the chief factor in determining a *noaidi*’s calling. She also refers to Olsen, a missionary from the 1710’s working in Norwegian Finnmark, who related that the powerful

*noaidit* are former pupils of the “sub-terrestrial” people (Bäckman 1986, 261). Olsen also wrote that the *gáccit* (followers, comrades) appear in the candidate’s visions and offer him knowledge and skills, such as “how to prolong life, how to be a good healer, how to predict coming events, how to transform himself into an animal, how to bring tangible benefits to himself and the members of the group” (Olsen as translated by Bäckman 1986, 264).

Bäckman and Hultkrantz used the Sami term *noaidi* and the cross-cultural term ‘shaman’ interchangeably. However, the activities of the *noaidi* for the pre-Christian Sami may have covered more than Bäckman and Hultkrantz defined as the activity of the shaman. Bäckman and Hultkrantz underscore the *noaidi*/shaman as acting on *behalf* of his group members and exclude alternative anti-social activities. To what extent the *noaidi* was determined in exclusively positive moral terms is unclear and we can not exclude that ambiguity was a structural feature of the Sami *noaidi*. Bäckman speaks of two types of individuals who have special capacities: (1) those who were capable of knowing future events through divination and could harm others through occult powers and (2) the ‘great’ *noaidit*. Bäckman considers the ‘great’ *noaidit* as shamans (we note though that they also may harm others) and states that the distinction can be made because they have spirit helpers and put themselves in a state of ecstasy, whereas the others do not. She concludes that after the 18<sup>th</sup> century the accounts of wizards and seers obscured the earlier religious and social functions of the *noaidi*. Through these distinctions, Bäckman and Hultkrantz construct an ideal type of the *noaidi* as a shaman following Eliade’s model of the shaman, who considers the shaman primarily as a religious functionary. Constructing such an ideal type may obscure the distinctions made by the Sami. Another problem is constituted by Hultkrantz’s employment of the term ‘free-soul’. As seen above, Hultkrantz argues that, “The sickness is caused by the absence of the soul, or rather the free soul, from the body.... By going into a trance, the shaman is able to obtain contact with this supernatural world in his own form, ... his free soul travels there to release and bring back the free soul of the sick person” (Hultkrantz 1962-63, 335). Hultkrantz (1953) coined the term free-soul himself in his influential study *Conceptions of the Soul Among North American Indians*. In this book he developed his theory of soul dualism, that of free-soul and body-soul:

[T]he free-soul – i.e., the human being himself, from the psychological point of view -... [Prominent characteristics] are its Proteus-like changes of shape, its tendency to appear when the subject is in a twilight state. The free-soul has, however, precisely through its peculiar nature, become a notion that oscillates between innate soul, personal consort and guardian spirit acting independently (a number of American ethnologists refer to it also as spirit or spirit-soul). On the whole, and

in light of what I have gleaned from the North American material, I am more inclined than Arbman [1927] to stress the tendency shown by the conception of the free-soul to approximate towards the conception of the guardian spirit.... The characteristic feature of the dualism of the soul lies in the fact that the body-soul manifests the life of the waking individual, whereas the free-soul is the spiritual principle which is active while the body is in a passive state (Hultkrantz 1953, 26 and 27).

To what extent do notions such as ‘trance’ and ‘free soul’ help us to understand Sami conceptions? Bäckman writes:

The shamanistic complex of beliefs has its foundation in the dualistically (pluralistically) apprehended conception of the soul, i.e. man has several, or at least two, souls: body-soul(s) and free soul. In man’s inactive state, in dreams, in trance, in coma, the free-soul can detach itself and take shape outside of the person. It may then be understood as the guardian spirit of the individual person. In the sources pertaining to the Lapp religion there is some evidence that the individual was conceived as having his own guardian spirit (Bäckman 1975, 148).

Bäckman makes a distinction between the guardian spirits that could be inherited by everyone, not just the shamans, and the helping spirits that were reserved for the shaman. The helping spirits were theriomorphic and the guardian spirits anthropomorphic (Bäckman in Hultkrantz 1987, 112). Guardian spirits were passed on from one generation to the next and Bäckman states that for the *noaidi*, “Among the guardian spirits were included the deceased *noajdieh*” (Bäckman 1975, 148). Bäckman (1975) summarizing the conceptions of guardian spirits among the Sami:

In the Lapp area farther north (approx. north of 69°) sacred mountains were called *passe varek*, and the local inhabitants were referred to as *passe varek olmak ja neitak*, the men and women of the sacred mountains. There is full agreement between these *passe varek* and their inhabitants and *sájva* and its inhabitants in southern Lapland. In the same way we are from Norwegian Lapland (Finnmarken) told of beings who had the same great importance in the conceptual world of the Lapps as had the *sájva* beings farther south. These spirits of Finnmark are, however, related to the *noajdie* and act through him. They were called *noajdie gaz’ze*, the shaman’s followers, comrades.... Without these auxiliary spirits he [the Siberian shaman] could not function. The Lapp *noajdie*

summoned his theriomorphic beings from *Sájva-ájmuo*, the abode of the spirits: the bird, *sájva-láddie*, to carry news, the fish, *sájva-guölie*, to accompany his free soul to worldly or extrawordly places, and the bull-reindeer, *sájva-sarvá*, to fight, as the *noajdie*'s alter ego, for power with another *noajdie*. If the bull-reindeer was killed in the fight, the owner also died (Bäckman 1975, 144).

Thus the distinctions between the notions of free soul, guardian spirit, auxiliary spirit, are by no means clear, and notions such as *sájva* do not fit clearly in one of these categories. The discussion about the nature of the Norwegian concept of *gand* also illustrates the problem of the relations between Sami categories, Norwegian concepts, and the theoretical concepts of the researchers.

## *Noaidi* and shamanistic activities moving into modern times

### *Gand*

The *Historia Norwegiae* (HN), written in Latin by an anonymous author in approximately 1180, contains the oldest account of a Sami *séance*.<sup>11</sup> The scene begins with a visit to a Sami dwelling by Norwegian merchants, and an explanation is given concerning the Sami practice of magic.

For there are some of them who are venerated as prophets by the ignorant populace, since by means of an unclean spirit that they call a *gandus* they predict many things to many people, both as they are

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11 Sunt namque quidam ex ipsis, qui quasi prophetæ a stolido vulgo venerantur, quoniam per immundum spiritum, quem *gandum* vocitant, multis multa præsagia ut eveniunt quandoque percunctati prædicunt; et de longinquis provinciis res concupiscibiles miro modo sibi alliciunt nec non absconditos thesauros longe remoti mirifice produnt. Quadam vero vice dum christiani causa commercii apud Finnos ad mensam sedissent, illorum hospita subito inclinata expiravit; unde christianis multum dolentibus non mortuam sed a gandis aemulorum esse depraedatam, sese illam cito adepturos ipsi Finni nihil contristati respondent. Tunc quidam magus extenso panno sub quo se ad profanas veneficas incantationes præparat, quoddam vasculum ad modum taratantarorum sursum erectis manibus extulit, cetinis atque cervinis formulis cum loris et ondriolis navicula etiam cum remis occupatum, quibus vehiculis per alta nivum et devexa montium vel profunda stagnorum ille diabolicus gandus uteretur. Cumque diutissime incantando tali apparatu ibi saltasset, humo tandem prostratus totusque niger ut Aethiops, spumans ora ut puta freneticus, præruptus ventrem vix aliquando cum maximo fremore emisit spiritum. Tum alterum in magica arte peritissimum consuluerunt, quid de utrisque actum sit. Qui simili modo sed non eodem eventu suum implevit officium, namque hospita sana surrexit et defunctum magum tali eventu interisse eis intimavit: gandum videlicet ejus in cetinam effigiem inmaginatum ostico gando in præacutas sudes transformato, dum per quoddam stagnum velocissime prosiliret, malo omine obviasse, quia in stagni ejusdem profundo sudes latitantes exacti ventrem perforabant; quod et in mago domi mortuo apparuit (quoted by Tolley 1994, 136).

happening, and when delayed; and they draw desirable things to themselves from far off regions in a wonderous way, and amazingly, though themselves far away, they produce hidden treasures. By some chance while some Christians were sitting at the table amongst the Lapps for the sake of trade their hostess suddenly bowed over and died; hence the Christians mourned greatly, but were told by the Lapps, who were not at all distressed, that she was not dead but stolen away by the *gandi* of rivals, and they would soon get her back. Then a magician stretched out a cloth, under which he prepared himself for impious magic incantations, and with arms stretched up lifted a vessel like a tambourine, covered in diagrams of whales and deer with bridles and snow-shoes and even a ship with oars, vehicles which that devilish *gandus* uses to go across the depths of snow and slopes of mountains or the deep waters. He chanted a long time and jumped about with this piece of equipment, but then was laid flat on the ground, black all over like an Ethiopian, and foaming from the mouth as if wearing a bit. His stomach was ripped open and with the loudest roaring ever he gave up the ghost. Then they consulted the other one who was versed in magic about what had happened to them both. He performed his job in a similar way but not with the same outcome – for the hostess rose up hale - and indicated that the deceased sorcerer had perished by the following sort of accident: his *gandus* transformed into the shape of a water beast [whale], had by ill luck struck against an enemy's *gandus* changed into sharpened stakes as it was rushing across a lake [deep water], for the stakes lying set up in the depths of that same lake had pierced his stomach, as appeared on the dead magician at home (translation from Tolley 1994, 137).

The whale in the HN séance story has often been interpreted to be a spirit helper. The Latin text employs the word *gandus*. Hultkrantz states in a note, “The translation of the word *gandum* in the Latin text is difficult. It is a Norwegian word meaning “magic shot,” also “spirit-as-missile.” It is uncertain whether it is an assistant spirit or a soul that is referred to in HN” (Hultkrantz 1978, 108 note 27). Hultkrantz, giving attention to the missionary sources and the oscillation found among their accounts of the function of the shaman's soul and the helping spirit writes, “[This] once again testifies to the close connection between both....The oldest notice will be found in *Historia Norwegiae*, where it is narrated how, during the shaman's ecstasy, his assistant spirit or his soul (*gandum*) removes itself from the body in the shape of a whale” (Hultkrantz 1978, 100).



Whereas Hultkrantz employs the term assistant spirit or soul, Uno Holmberg [Harva] translates *gandus* with the term “shadow”:

The closeness of the connection between a man's body and his “shadow” is shown by an account of Lapp shamanism....during a shaman's journey in the nether world a hostile “shadow” struck out the stomach of his “shadow,” the mishap being clearly visible in the magician's real body, which was lying in the tent (Holmberg 1927, 6).

The term *gandus* (Norwegian *gand*)<sup>12</sup> is also used in other sources. According to the missionary Olsen writing in the 1710's, when the *noaidi* has not received an adequate payment he “shoots them [his clients] with his ‘gand’ arrows so that they fall down dead, and therefore they fear him like the plague, and they dare not do anything bad to him so that he will not be angered in the slightest.” Olsen continues, “[even] if the Noid does not think ill of a person with whom he has become angry the Noide-gadze immediately carries out his thoughts without his commanding them, and the Noid is unable to control or direct them ” (Olsen as translated by Hultkrantz 1978, 56). From Olsen's account, we note that the *noaidi*'s *gand* and the *noide-gadze* (*noaidi*-companion, modern spelling is *noaidegázzi*, pl. *noaidegáccit*) are the agents through which the *noaidi* activity flows.

The Sami of today use the word *bijat* when indicating a spell. The word *bijat* stems from the verb *bidjat*, “to put,” “to place.” The gloss in the Nielsen dictionary states, *bijat* (*bijag*), “a spell which is put on someone”(Nielsen 1979, Vol. I, 173). Sigvald related that “*gand* and *bijat* are from two different languages so they are not quite the same but sometimes there can be the same understanding. When *gand* is used by Norwegian-speaking Sami in my area, they mean *bijat*.” The Finnish scholar T. I. Itkonen (1891-1968) related the use of the terms, *bijat* and *gopmi* (ghost) by the Inari Sami. An innocently injured person will visit the sorcerer and can be offered the choice of using the bad (*bijat*) or a ghost (*gopmi*) to punish the one who injured him.<sup>13</sup> Should he opt for a ghost, the sorcerer will employ the shadow of the ghost (*ovdasaš*) in the form of a bear to kill the one who injured, or, in the form of a wolf to kill his reindeer. Itkonen continues that one must be sure of one's business because *bijat* and *ovdasaš* will not harm an innocent person. In that case it will return to the one who sent it, to the person who asked the sorcerer for his help or even the sorcerer himself (Itkonen 1946 as related by Paulson 1958, 36). Itkonen's presentation of the Inari Sami, corroborates the independence of the agents - an independence

12 For a historical overview of the term *gand* see Steen 1969, 55-62.

13 “Einsatz von Bösem (*pijah*, *pahapijah*) oder durch ein Gespenst (*kobmi*).”

also mentioned above by the missionary Olsen - and their predilection for justice in returning to the one who sent it if the intended receiver was innocent.

Sigvald expressed disbelief in Itkonen's assessment of the Inari Sami notion that an *ovdasaš* can be sent by the sorcerer. For Sigvald, an *ovdasaš* is not sent. It is an experience, which is not limited to the *noaidi* and it is through this experience that one can know the future (for *ovdasaš* see Chapter Three). Obviously one source cannot account for the variety in the Sami notions due to the differences between individual informants, to regional group differences, and to different time periods. Variation may also be due to the interpretation and/or translation of the researcher as suspected by Sigvald. Sami concepts today are subtle and full of nuances. A ghost and *bijat* are not seen as identical, and *bijat* and ghost are not seen as equivalent to a *noaidegázzzi*. The *noaidegáccit* are conceived to be the companions of the *noaidi* that can be discharged to help in a variety of ways. A spell can be placed (*bijat*) by attaching a ghost to a person or his materials. No distinction is made between soul journey and spirit helper. It appears that they are not viewed as separate categories. The *noaidi's* will is not the only determinant of the success of his efforts because when the action is not 'just' the helper will not carry it out but will turn against the sender. There is a moral or equitable distinction made, but it is not the *noaidi* who is the final arbitrator of justice. They are in grave danger when they are mistaken. The spirit employed by the *noaidi* makes the assessment.<sup>14</sup>

### *Categories of Sorcerer and Shaman*

Hultkrantz distinguishes between sorcerer and shaman: "Witchcraft is anti-social and cannot therefore, strictly speaking, be considered part of the shaman's undertakings *qua* shaman." And "Whereas in later folkloristic records the existence of evil sorcerers among the Lapps is taken for granted our old sources inform us occasionally how the *noaidi* could become transformed into one. He turned, of course, into an evil opponent to his shaman competitor, if there was one; the combat in the *Historia Norwegiae* rendered above is one proof of this" (Hultkrantz 1978, 56). Hultkrantz assumes that the 'combat' is not the rule and is occasional, but that assumption can not be substantiated.

Håkan Rydving has argued that words used in shamanistic context underwent change after the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. During this period the Sami were Christianized and Rydving postulates that the Sami themselves did not continue to view the *noaidi* as a religious functionary but more as a diviner and magician in accordance with the

14 In Hultkrantz' assessment of earlier times, he wrote, "This was the way in which a shaman became a wizard. He was potentially dangerous, because he had dangerous, morally indifferent helping spirits" (Hultkrantz 1978, 57). However, I would question if the assessments, 'shaman becomes wizard' and 'helping spirits are morally indifferent', were made by the Sami themselves.

outside – Scandinavian – understanding of the *noaidi*. This change in meaning over time is supported by developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but, as Rydving himself has noted, the Sami have not been homogeneous in their views. Rydving writes that the *noaidi* concept in the 19<sup>th</sup> century included a wicked and a good *noaidi*: a good *noaidi* who released men from sorcery and a wicked *noaidi* who used magic to harm other people (Rydving 1987, 202). Rydving utilizes the account of Lars Jacobsen Hætta (1834-1897). Hætta, during his imprisonment after his participation in the 1852 Kautokeino revolt (see Chapter Two), wrote of the religious and moral conditions in Kautokeino. Hætta distinguishes between two main types: *noaidi* and *geaidu* (wizard, witch). The word *noaidi*, is employed as a name of one of the types, and also, is the generic term, which then includes *geaidu* as a subtype. The main difference is that the *noaidi* could do evil, while the *geaidu* could perform wonders but could not do evil to another person. The strongest of the *noaidit*, called *bora-noaidit* (eating-*noaidit*), could make another person die “while lesser ones, who could harm persons and property but not kill, were called *guwlar*’s or *goanstasæg’gje*’s. A third group was according to Hætta the *juovsahæg’gje*’s, who’s task it was to divert the evil of the other *noaide*’s” (in Rydving’s English translation 1987, 200). Rydving concludes that Hætta’s distinctions between the different types are due to their different attitudes to and capacities concerning evil, *baha* (Rydving 1987, 199-200).<sup>15</sup>

Hætta writes that sometimes a *noaidi* was also called *juovssaheaddji* (modern spelling). That was when a *noaidi* had threatened someone and this person went to another *noaidi* to request his help. The helping *noaidi* must then, providing he was stronger than the first, deflect the evil or return it to him who sent it, and this was called *juovssaheapmi* (returning). *Juovssaheapmi* could also work when there was a theft. In that case, the *noaidi* caused the thief to return what was stolen, the thief being unable to control his own movements. Should the *noaidi* be able to deflect the evil that another *noaidi* had threatened with, or could heal the one the other had injured, he must be stronger than the first *noaidi*. Without being the stronger, he could not begin anything, and there was the additional problem that the evil he could not return would be directed at him. There were therefore not many *noaidit* who dared to busy themselves with sending back (*juovssahit*) (see Hætta 1923, 75-6). Turi, a Sami writing in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, relates about the ability to send back a ‘haunting’:

And *noaides* see things in brännvin, they see everything.... [H]e sees how the haunting was sent, and then he can turn it away once. But if the one (who sent it) was much stronger than he, then it returns, but

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15 I consulted L.J. Hætta’s text in response to a suggestion from the expert on Hætta, Nellejet Zorgdrager.

then it often goes to haunt the relations of the haunted person....but if the *noaide* is very much the stronger, then the spectre goes to haunt the one who sent it. And if he is stronger still, then he sends it back to the churchyard. But that must be a *noaide* of God, or a *noaide* who works with God's power (Turi 1966, 168).

We find here the concepts of 'turning away' and 'sending back', as described by Lars Jacobsen Hætta in the 1850's. 'Returning' (*juovssaheapmi*) the sent evil is performed by a *juovssaheaddji-noaidi*. According to Hætta's account, a *juovssaheaddji* can return evil, loss and hurt. The notion of *juovssaheaddji* denotes that an especially capable person can turn the course of events and correct an evil. Thus 'returning' or 'correction' is an important element in the worldview as related by Hætta. Even though Hætta's description of the activities of the *noaidi* suggests that the *noaidi*, except for the *juovssaheaddji*, was mostly connected with hurt and doing evil, I find this inconclusive for positing a change in the concept of the *noaidi*. Turi's account testifies to a continuing association of the *noaidi* with 'returning'. Therefore, I cannot agree completely with Rydving's conclusions that the term *noaidi* changed its meaning in a "post-shamanistic" society:

The pre-Christian Saami religion, with its special anthropology and cosmology, was a necessary prerequisite for the *noai'de*. Without this context, the *noai'de* could not function and only some minor elements of curing and divining could survive the religious change. This change of reality changed the meaning of the word *noai'de* in Saami consciousness. The new meaning came in accordance with the outside understanding of the meaning of the word, and *noai'de* became, in postshamanistic terminologies, one term among many others for 'diviner,' sorcerer,' etc. (Rydving 1987, 203).

Even though change may have occurred in the use of the term *noaidi*, the more basic definition of the *noaidi* as the one who did *noaidut* (deals in the supernatural) may not have changed in the perception of the Sami. The term *noaidi* for the pre-Christian Sami may have included (as the generic term) the activities of diviner and sorcerer. If one employs Hultkrantz's definition of shaman, as Rydving does, anti-social undertakings are excluded from the domain of the shaman. But the early missionary accounts do not exclude anti-social undertakings from the domain of the *noaidi*. One might employ the category shaman only as a subtype, that is, when the *noaidi* is in rapport with the supernatural world on *behalf* of his group members, under the broader term *noaidi*. However, such a dichotomy would be a construct of anthropology that may well obscure a structural ambiguity in the position of the *juovssaheaddji* that is essential to an adequate

understanding of Sami perceptions and practices. Obviously the *juovssaheaddji* is a Sami concept and not an anthropological ideal type. In the concept of the *juovssaheaddji* the 'returning' *noaidi* is exposed to danger and must be able to assess if his action is indeed the one that corrects an injustice. The morality of his action depended not only on intentions but also on results.

The Norwegian anthropologist Gjessing (1954) suggests that among Sami in remote areas, shamanism appeared to have been preserved up until very recently. Gjessing states, "The sea-Same, Anders Larsen (born 1870), has supplied valuable information on the shaman profession, the preparation during isolation, and the trance. There is no doubt that there were active *noai'des* during his childhood among the sea-Sames in large areas of the coast of Troms and Finnmark" (Gjessing 1954, 27). In addition he observes, "important is that these *noai'des* are recognized and accepted by the social group... in any event up to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century probably even today, shamanism and the *noai'de* have been regarded as "covert" social institutions," (Ibid.) the overt social institution being Christianity. Like most researchers Gjessing uses the terms *noaidi* and shaman interchangeably. He lists as distinguishing features of the shaman the preparation during isolation, the trance and the recognition received by the social group. These features are central to classic shamanic models. Some scholars simply accept that historians of religion have established that the earlier *noaidi* was a shaman, and identification between the earlier practitioner and the healer today is taken as self-evident. Nergård (1994) considers the modern 'helper' (healer) to be the modern form of the old *noaidi*, stating that as the term *noaidi* is no longer employed, the Sami terms in use today that can mean shaman are *guvlár* and *buorideaddji* (helper and improver). He thinks there is continuity between the earlier shamanic and present day practices. If, as Louise Bäckman stated, shamanism 'orders' the Sami culture, he finds it inconceivable that such a basis would be missing from the present day culture. Nergård notes that there are presently two health care systems functioning side by side: one is modern and public, and the other is the 'old in a new form', which is covered in silence. He states that the lack of publicity of the 'old in a new form' is due in a certain extent to the law against the quack salver and to the fact that in the Sami conceptual system one must not speak openly about being able to help (Nergård 1994, 111-115). When Nergård states that the term *noaidi* is no longer employed, he is acknowledging the local level of discourse.

The anthropologist Robert Paine considers the local discourse but does not provide the locally employed term for the practitioner. Paine did extended fieldwork in the 1950s on a Coastal Sami village (south of Hammerfest) in Western Finnmark. He reviews material that he collected fifty years earlier in a 1994 article. In this article he presents aspects of the supernatural world related to him by the villagers.

His heading reads “Wizards (Saami *noai'de*; Nwg. *trollkar*)” (Paine 1994, 356). He is not clear whether the locals actually employ these terms for the ones they consult. He compares the wizard to the earlier shaman. Paine writes, “He (sometimes she) is prescient and can will persons to do his bidding, and most extraordinary of all, he (like the Saami shamans of an earlier century) can be in two places at the same time” (Ibid.). He notes that the most common occasion for a wizard to use his powers is to abort theft. A wizard is able to render a thief immobile until the wizard releases him. At other occasions a wizard is consulted to put a curse on someone felt to have caused an injury; others go to a wizard to have such a curse removed. Paine reports being told that one must not answer ‘like with like’ when confronted with evil, because those who use evil will, sooner or later, themselves be destroyed by the powers of evil. Paine suggests that the power of the wizard is of the kind whose roots are in the Sami past (Ibid., 357). Paine does not make the leap to call the wizard a shaman; neither does he give the word shaman as the English translation of *noaidi*. He notes as one of the important defining features of the shamanic complex that the shaman could be in two places at the same time, a thing equally true for the wizard.

The self-proclamation of the ability to help has been employed as a determining element by the anthropologist Marit Myrvoll (2000) to delineate non-local healers, who appear to be self appointed and claim an inheritance from the Sami shamanic tradition, from current local healers. The non-local individuals are active outside of the Sami cultural environment, for example, in Oslo. In Finnmark the use of the term shaman is not prevalent; most people are unfamiliar with the term. Educated Sami may be familiar with the term shaman for *noaidi*, as used by historians of religion. According to my survey, however, the term shaman is not widely known. For example, an elderly well read Sami answered to my question, “What do you know about the shaman,” with, “That is a word I have never heard. From what language is it and where does it come from?” I mentioned in the introduction that Mikkel Gaup called himself a shaman but this may be due to the fact that Nergård assigned him this term. The local newspaper will occasionally employ the term shaman when covering an event in Oslo. The term employed by the locals for the local healer is often the Norwegian ‘*leseren*’ (reader). The anthropologist Britt Kramvig defines the term: “Reading and reader are local concepts: reading is used in the ritual healing process and readers are ritual healers that use words from the bible as one of their healing methods” (Kramvig 2003, 179 note 59). Myrvoll argues for a distinction between non-local and local healers. An individual who is called a shaman by the media, may actually represent the Sami tradition less than an individual who does not receive media coverage and is called by locals simply healer or reader.

Myrvoll addresses the question what elements demonstrate continuity. She posits differences between the local healer and the non-local shaman suggesting applying

the term 'new-shaman' to non-local practitioners. She suggests that different contexts frame the practitioners as follows,

- the *noaidi* was the pre-Christian shaman in the pre-Christian context;
- the traditional healer or '*leseren*' (reader) may be placed within the Christian context; and
- 'new-shaman' placed in a new-religious context.

She argues that the pre-Christian Sami shaman was the central person for religious practice; the roles filled being complex and manifold such as medicine man, diviner and priest. She thinks that in the second context (the traditional healer within the Christian context) the rituals involving the drum and sacrifice are gone but that the roles of healer, diviner, advisor and exorcist are still there. The third context, resulting from a new religious impulse after the State Church has lost influence, follows after a general secularization. Within the third context the knowledge is found in oral and written traditions, and the individual is responsible for his/her own spiritual development. The difference between the first two and the third group of 'new shamans' includes that the 'new-shamans' are not chosen by an elder; they chose themselves; they are not necessarily embedded in a community in Northern Norway, and they are active in giving workshops on shamanism. Myrvoll calls the giving of these workshops a public administration of the practices, thus emphasizing that the 'new-shaman' practices in a public way. Myrvoll explains that this public administration contrasts with the edict for the pre-Christian *noaidi* and the current healer/reader, that it is imperative for keeping the power to maintain silence about it. She acknowledges the view of those who practice as 'new-shamans': their view that the content of the knowledge does not change by the administration. But she is aware that their view does not agree with locally held views. The new-shamans assume that knowledge is available for all and that the knowledge can be developed. In the context of the traditional healing the knowledge is secret, one is specially chosen because it is from God, and in addition it is strong and dangerous knowledge (Myrvoll 2000, 35-46).

Myrvoll states that an important difference between the 'new-shaman' and the traditional healer is to be found in the transference of the role. In the community known by Myrvoll, the reader is seen as a tool for God's power, while using *gand* is seen as serving Satan. The reader is in the first place a healer, and '*a bli lest pã*' (to be read on) is the expression used when one visits a reader to be healed. She sees the continuity between the earlier shaman and the reader in the transference of the role. Both are chosen to assume the function and the knowledge is taught; both are alone with the knowledge and the promise of silence concerning the knowledge is absolute. The secret knowledge is only for the few. They may make use of dreams, visions of ghosts and underground people. Noting a specific case, she writes that when the



reader for the area was approaching an advanced age, there was speculation as to who would become the reader after his death. When he passed away, everyone knew who his successor was (Ibid., 41-42). Myrvoll emphasizes that the determining element for the traditional healer is the social environment, stating that there are no healers without those who need them. Human need is the base for their existence, “as long as there is a need for a healer, they will be found” (Ibid., 45).

The distinctions Myrvoll makes between the ‘new-shaman’ and the traditional healer are useful. They provide a clear argument to distinguish between the locally active, traditional healer and those who claim to be connected to a tradition but are not active in the locality of the tradition. Myrvoll finds continuity between the roles filled in pre-Christian times and the roles filled today, which include healer, diviner, advisor and exorcist, and continuity in the transference of the role. Comparisons are hazardous, but I have also observed these roles (see Chapter Five and Six) and the transference of the role is still in practice.

Even though some shamanic traditions may still play a part in the modern healing methods, they can not be identified with it. How researchers identify the practitioner is important for the recognition of traditional patterns in present day practice. It is of particular importance to note the context in which the practices are viewed. Does the knowledge employed in the practice come from the ancestors, from the devil, from the Christian God, or can it be developed by mental techniques? When does the lack of continuity in the context make further comparisons futile? A defining element of the shaman mentioned by Gjessing was the shaman’s recognition by the social group and indeed recognition would be important for the continuity of the context. The performance of the role of shaman is by assignment of the social group. The group views the activity within a certain context, which may entail that they did not choose this individual but that the spirits or ancestors did. Between past and present there may be change in the function and the practitioner may become more marginal having moved from the public sphere to the private. However the element of being chosen rather than self-chosen may still be relevant. Nergård has noted that within the Sami conceptual system the practitioner may not speak openly about the ability to help. The practitioner may not be a self-proclaimed or self-chosen practitioner (see also Myrvoll).

### *Trance – ecstasy*

The ecstasy/trance of the shaman stimulated interest and speculation already from the earliest foreign observers. Both Schefferus and Laestadius ponder over the lifeless state of the drummer. They are not restricting themselves to reporting the Sami worldview and speculate about ‘objective truth’. Schefferus gives ample room in *Lapponia* for the opinions of his sources stating that there were many who were of the opinion that the



soul really leaves the body of the drummer whilst he lies 'lifeless', and returns afterwards. Schefferus does not specify exactly who these 'many' were, whether Sami or clergymen who had accepted the concept of body and soul separation as related by Sami informants. In his opinion the concept is erroneous. The soul has not left a person but only the active faculties have been stifled, which makes the drummer lie in a trance. Already proceeding from 1673 there is a discussion of what 'actually' is happening during the lifeless state.

Laestadius' sermons after 1845 led many Sami in his congregation to elated emotional expressions, which were characterized by exalted joy or intense regret, ecstatic phenomena that could be accompanied by visions. This heightened emotional expression was called *liikutuksia*, a Finnish term for movement. Laestadius saw *liikutuksia* as an expression of deep religious experience, thereby giving the experience a positive value. He viewed it as a general human potential, rather than typically Sami, noting that such experiences were mentioned in the Bible.

Many researchers have posed the question of continuity between past and present practices of ecstasy. Gjessing (1954) noted the important role played by ecstasy in the Sami shamanism of the past, and suggested that a relationship can be made between the ecstasy of the shamans of the past and the expression of ecstasy (*liikutuksia*) during the Laestadian meeting. He stated that within Laestadianism ecstasy was sanctioned and could be openly expressed, positing within Laestadianism persistent covert cultural and social phenomena continue to work underground (Gjessing 1954, 27-31). In 1962 Hultkrantz firmly posited a connection between the *liikutuksia* during Laestadian meetings and the shamanic ecstasy. He concluded that even though the former Sami religion is only a memory, something of its spirit is active in the religious observance of present day Sami and can be found in the Laestadian *liikutuksia*. Hultkrantz: "Man braucht in diesem Zusammenhang nur an die ekstatischen Äusserungen, *liikutuksia*, zu erinnern, die durch die Predigt hervorgerufen werden und zweifellos auf die Schamanenekstase zurückweisen" (Hultkrantz 1962, 300). Later, in 2000<sup>16</sup>, he modified his position stating that different religions exhibit different forms of ecstasy and that he does not consider the ecstasy of the Sami shaman and the Laestadian ecstasy to be the same. He would rather connect the historical tradition of pietism to the Laestadian *liikutuksia*, because the pietistic movement that entered the whole of Scandinavia from 1700 onwards manifested ecstatic phenomena. He acknowledges that the first Laestadians that exhibited ecstasy were Sami (Hultkrantz 2000, 107-116).

Is *liikutuksia* comparable to pietistic or to the earlier shamanic phenomena? Is it comparable to the state entered into by the shaman or by the audience? Jens-Ivar Nergård (1994) notes that the pietists exhibited ecstatic phenomena. Bäckman

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16 See Hultkrantz' discussion of Gjessing's interpretation in "Lars Levi Laestadius och samisk schamanism".

compared the response of the ‘audience’ during the shamanic séance rather than the ecstasy of the shaman, with the Laestadian *liikutuksia* (Nergård 1994, 106). The comparisons remain inconclusive and basically unsubstantiated. The anthropologist Wiebe Bergsma (1982) finds that treatment of Laestadianism by social scientists is often marred by premature conclusions and sweeping generalizations. He considers the connection made by Gjessing between pre-Christian Sami shamanism and the religious ecstasy within Laestadianism to be lacking in empirical evidence and considers it “anthropological wishful thinking” (Bergsma 1982, 120-121). In his article, *The Sami Shaman*, Pentikäinen (1984) does not employ *liikutuksia* to show continuity between the ecstasy of past and present in Sami shamanism. He states that the ecstatic technique based upon the use of the shaman drum eventually died out during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the wake of Christian missionary work, but that some continuity can be found. “Nevertheless, features of the rite-techniques involved in inducing the shamanic trance are still present in Sami society.... In addition, there is still a rich narrative folklore based upon ecstatic shamans and their skill.” He argues that the healing ceremony he witnessed “was also accompanied by an ecstatic episode as well as a baptismal rite, through which the patient acquired a new, more powerful name and thus a new, more robust soul” (Pentikäinen 1984, 128). Pentikäinen’s identification of name and soul is not supported by ethnographic data, more over, instances of providing a new soul as part of a healing process are not found in the available data.<sup>17</sup>

In his article Pentikäinen quotes from *Turi’s Book of Lappland* (originally published in 1910), a work authored by Johan Turi a Sami reindeer herder from the neighborhood of Kautokeino. Pentikäinen does not cite the comparison Turi himself makes between the ecstasy during the exorcism of a spectre and the Laestadian *liikutuksia*.

[When people] do not recognise folk’s sicknesses, then they are apt to think that it is a fatal sickness, or that spectres or ghosts have been set upon the sick person, and that it is the work of *noaide* folk.... And he who is about to exorcise a spectre from some person, he talks a strange tongue, and then he reads to the sick person some words in a strange tongue (and the sick person must repeat the words). And when the person talks the strange tongue when he is exorcising a spectre or a devil, it is so wonderful that it is impossible to describe it. He gets in a

17 Scholars have recorded that the Sami concept of ‘renaming’ was, in some cases, the understanding that the new name eluded the sickness demon (Qvigstad 1932, 10), and it was further understood that to every name a certain identity was tied (Rydving 1993, 127).

state of frenzy (Note 52) when he sees spectres or devils upon folk, and he sees all such things and he is able to drive them out. And such folk can do harm as well, if they want to, but such folk will never do harm unless wicked people begin to press them too hard, but if they are in dire need, then they too have permission to show their strength (Turi 1966, 164-166).

Turi's book contains notes written by the editor Emilie Demant Hatt. She includes in her Note 52 a conversation she had with Turi in which he likened the frenzy of the exorcist to *liikutuksia*:

Turi likens this state to that called *liikutuksia* (literally 'movement'). The state into which the Lapps are thrown by the revivals held by Læstadian preachers. They proclaim their sins aloud and, with sobs and shrieks and cries and the most extra-ordinary noises, they beg God for forgiveness (Ibid., 246).

The *noaidi* 'who works with God's power' is in a frenzy when he sees the 'haunting', and sends it back to the *noaidi* working 'with the Devil's power':

And then he talks in a strange tongue, and he acts as if he were drunk; he is in a frenzy, and he sees all the *noaide* sendings. And he always wins, however strong is the *noaide* who has sent it [that is] the *noaide* who sent it with the Devil's power (Ibid., 168).

In the early sources as well as for present day Sami an equivalent Sami term for 'trance' and/or 'ecstasy' is not represented. Læstadianism may have functioned as a cultural preserver, linking the past and present through *liikutuksia* and other features. Obviously there is continuity in Sami tradition but unfortunately the hard data to substantiate the relationship are sparse.

Roberte Hamayon (1993) raised the question whether trance, ecstasy, and similar concepts are appropriate in the study of shamanism. She notes that these terms are used in "many definitions of shamanism to mean both a culturally defined form of behavior and a specific correlative physical and mental state." In the shamanistic societies themselves the shaman's ritual behavior is the mode of direct contact with his spirits (Hamayon 1993, 3). She states that shamanistic societies do not make use of native terms corresponding to 'trance'; the notion of 'trance' appears to be irrelevant for them. She wonders whether the concept 'trance' is appropriate to its object, as it does not belong to the system of representations (Ibid., 7). I agree with Hamayon

and would argue that the employment of these terms only creates distortion. The individual who has taken on the role of shaman has received a great deal of attention. Travelers to shamanistic societies were for the most part forming opinions about individual shamans. These opinions were often concerned with the psychological functioning of this individual. Hamayon has noted this emphasis and quoted Arnold van Gennep's statement in 1903 that shamanic religion "does not designate a set of beliefs expressed in a set of practices, but asserts only the existence of a certain kind of man" (Van Gennep 1903 in *Ibid.*, 5). The trance performance has received so much attention that finally the state of trance - in and of itself - was confused with acting as a shaman, but the trance performance does not designate the shaman, designation is via the role.



## 2 LAESTADIANISM ON THE COAST OF FINNMARK

The church in the Nordic countries is Lutheran, and in Norway there is a union between State and Church. The foundations for this union were laid during the Reformation. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, religious movements outside of the State Church did not have an opportunity to spread, but movements within the Church were tolerated. The Laestadian movement was a revivalist movement within Lutheranism and became a distinctive form of religion for the northern part of Sweden, Finland and Norway. Laestadianism has been called the religion of the Sami. It is a complex phenomenon with elements of acculturation. Authors have suggested that the attitude within Laestadianism towards the Kven and Sami lifestyle fostered a sort of counterculture to the Norwegian community (Drivenes 1992; Bjørklund 1978). Some authors argued that Laestadianism fulfilled a culture preserving function and contributed to the maintenance of Sami social organization (Gjessing 1954; Paine 1988). In this chapter I will first briefly describe the conversion to Christianity of the Sami. Then I will discuss the general features of the Laestadian movement and finally concentrate on Laestadianism within the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the area of the Porsanger Fjord in the province of Finnmark. In the final section I will discuss the views of my informants on the basis of interviews recorded between 2000 - 2004.

### The conversion of the Sami in Finnmark<sup>18</sup>

The Sami were Christianized predominantly during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The period of missionary activity prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by the Lutheran orthodoxy of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Sami were required to have knowledge of Christian dogmas and to attend church. When they continued to use their drum or perform sacrifices (the most obvious signs of paganism), they were punished according to the laws of the Danish Norwegian State. As a result, Sami would sometimes resort to hiding their drum (see Rydving 1993, 49, 157- 159). The Sami who refused to give up their old religion – idolatry and superstition in the Christian language of that era - were in violation of the law against

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18 I base my description of the Christianizing of the Sami on the following publications: A comprehensive study of the Christianizing in Finnmark was made by Adolf Steen (1954) in *Samenes Kristning og Finnemisjonen til 1888* (The Christianizing of the Sami and Mission work among the Sami until 1888). I have also consulted Håkan Rydving's publications on the period of Christianizing. For Laestadianism I have employed Nellejet Zorgdrager's (1989) thorough studies of the ideas of Laestadius and the research of Laestadianism published in 1982 from the University of Groningen by the anthropologists, Jelle Kleistra, Yme Kuiper and Wiebe Bergsma.

blasphemy, which included idol-worship and *maleficium* (the use of magic to injure others). According to the 17<sup>th</sup> century view of society, abolishing all idolatry was a task sanctioned by God and it was the duty of the authorities to carry this out within the boundaries of their countries.

Concerted missionary activities aimed at the Sami in Finnmark commenced with the founding of the Copenhagen College of Missions in 1714. The College was established by King Frederik IV to be an independent department of missions. It was initially aimed towards India, but it also included the mission among the Sami in Finnmark and also, later on, missionary activity on Greenland (see Steen 1954, 102).

Thomas von Westen (1682-1727) was invited by the Copenhagen Mission College to lead the missionary work to the Sami, the *Finnemisjon*, at its inception in 1716 and did so until his death in 1727. He was the single most important missionary for the *Finnemisjon*.<sup>19</sup> With von Westen, the missionary methods of Lutheran orthodoxy that emphasized church attendance gave way to new methods influenced by pietism. Pietism was a religious movement that originated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It emphasized the need for a revitalized evangelical Christianity and trust in God, in reaction to an excessive formalism and intellectualism. It stressed informal devotional meetings, Bible study, and personal experience of God's presence. It was important to hear the Word of God and particularly the Psalms were read and valued. Its main concern was the development of the religious consciousness of the individual (see Rydving 2000, 20). Von Westen's pietism did not manifest itself in separation from the State Church. His pietism is apparent in his critical stance towards church servants who were 'lacking God' and in his concern for the education and spiritual welfare of the Sami. At the commencement of his missionary work, von Westen founded mission districts, appointed missionaries and teachers, planned the erection of churches, schools and chapels, and recorded the Sami 'idolatry and superstition', as well as preaching the Word of God. During this formative period, thirteen mission districts were established, each with its own missionary. The majority of the missionaries were ordained ministers. They were to spread the Word of God and teach the Sami in their own language. In this period the mission built thirty-seven schools, twenty-six chapels and nine churches. Von Westen established a special Sami language class for students who were to take up missionary work among the Sami, the *Seminarium Lapponicum*, in Trondheim. After his death those who did not share his view that the Sami should receive Christian instruction in their own language, introduced various changes to the *Finnemisjon*. The spiritual care of the Sami was put in the hands of the ministers and no longer in the hands of the missionaries. There was less interest in erecting churches and schools for the Sami and no more books were published in the Sami language. The

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19 Steen 1954, 422-432, has been consulted for the period of the *Finnemisjon*.

official policy was that the Sami should learn Norwegian and the church services and education should be in Norwegian. The number of missionaries dropped from twelve at the death of von Westen to six in 1743.

The period 1743-1774 saw a revival of the mission. After 1743, the bishops of Trondheim and leaders of the mission maintained that the Sami must have missionaries and teachers and have church services and education in their own language. The leaders of the College of Missions were convinced that the Sami ought to learn Norwegian, but the Sami must be permitted to hear the Word of God in their own tongue. This revival was in part due to an able linguist, Knud Leem, who was a missionary from 1725 to 1728 in the areas of Porsanger and Laksefjord. In 1752 he re-opened Von Westen's *Seminarium Lapponicum* and a large number of future missionaries were trained in Lappish/Sami. In addition, he wrote several books on the Sami language and a thorough account on the Sami people of Finnmark. Between 1774-1814, the mission declined again. During this period the bishops of Trondheim, the leaders of the mission among the Sami, strongly opposed the use of the Sami language. They took little interest in the mission and as soon as an older missionary withdrew, the districts were given up, and mission funds were allotted to other purposes. Interest in the Christian message declined among the Sami at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and by royal re-script on May 7, 1802, the College was relieved from its responsibilities in regard to the missionary work to the Sami. The last missionary retired in 1814.

A hundred and twenty-three missionaries had served, since the time when Thomas von Westen had founded the thirteen mission districts in 1716. The few books in Sami that had circulated slowly disappeared. Due to economic decline there were only two ministers in the whole of Finnmark by 1820. In this arena N. J. Chr. V. Stockfleth was appointed vicar of Vadsø in 1825. For several years he was the only minister in Eastern Finnmark. As Norwegian and Finnish immigration to Finnmark increased during this period, Stockfleth was ministering to Norwegians and Kvens (Finnish immigrants) as well as to the Sami within his area. After extensive travel in his area, he discovered that many adults had not been confirmed and that education was at a very low level. He considered the Sami to be only nominally Christian, to be half heathen and full of superstitions (see Zorgdrager 1982, 161). He concluded that the poor state of education among the Sami was due to the shortage of books and to the fact that only Norwegian was used for preaching and teaching. Stockfleth learned Sami and translated the first five books of the Old Testament in Sami. He also endeavored to translate the New Testament into the Sami language. Stockfleth suggested to the University of Christiania (Oslo) that Sami and Finnish should be a requirement for future ministers in the districts where these languages were spoken. His suggestion was accepted in 1848 and Stockfleth taught these languages at the



University until 1851, when he made his last mission journey to Finnmark. His successor at the University as teacher in Sami and Finnish, Professor J. A. Friis, in co-operation with Lars Haetta, revised Stockfleth's translation of the New Testament and this new edition was published in 1874. The *Norsk Finnemission* established in 1888 to foster the preaching of the Gospel by laymen took upon itself the task of editing the whole Bible and completed this task in 1897. Prior to this, only portions of the Old Testament had been published in Sami (Steen 1954, 422-432). We may conclude that missionaries and clergy filled a dual role as educators and ministers. They were most effective in their Christianizing efforts when they employed the Sami language, and in turn, those who employed the Sami language were often pietist.

### *Influences from Sweden*

During the period of Christianizing, the Coastal Sami had contact with the inland Sami through the nomadic practices of reindeer herding. The inland Sami in the area of Kautokeino had long standing relations with the Finnish speaking people of the Torne River Valley, a river valley that nowadays forms the border between Sweden and Finland, and it was from this area that the Laestadian movement arose. Therefore the developments in Sweden are of direct relevance for the spread of Christianity to the Sami in Finnmark. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century Sweden had developed a strict orthodox practice, which forbade by law (1726) all religious meetings other than those held by the Lutheran State Church. However, in North-Sweden because of the sparse and spread out population, meetings held by laymen were tolerated (see Kuiper 1982, 80). During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the pietism influenced by Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705) in Germany had reached the area of the Torne River Valley in Sweden. Within this religious direction, one emphasized the importance of the experience of a religious crisis and its effects, which were strong feelings of remorse, followed by the clear experience of grace (see Zorgdrager 1989, 107). A strong revival movement arose in the Torne River Valley through the activities of two ministers, Isaac Grape (1720-1783) and Nils Wiklund (1732-1785) who were influenced by pietism. This revival movement spread from Øvretornea (a village in the Torne River Valley) in Sweden to Kautokeino, Norway in 1773. Sami affected by this ecstatic revival movement were named the *čuorvvot*, the shouting callers and in Swedish, *roparna*. Another epithet assigned to the movement was 'preaching sickness', because after a swoon and convulsions the persons so afflicted, delivered a sermon. The prophetic spirit was said to have directly and suddenly manifested itself; preaching took place either during the swoon or directly upon regaining consciousness. After 1775 the movement declined (see Zorgdrager 1989, 107-108 and Outakoski 1987, 208-210). The shouting preachers were known to preach to their fellows employing chastisement and correction to bring them to conversion. Some of them claimed, through the working of God's spirit in them, to be able to remit and to retain sin, that is, to proclaim punishment for sinners and grace for the repentant (see

Zorgdrager 1989, 108). The claim to remit and retain sin later became a characteristic of the Laestadian congregation. The *čuoŕvvot* preceded Laestadianism by several decades. The historian of religion Outakoski stated, “In the movement’s external features and customs and ideals there were many similarities with corresponding characteristics of the early Laestadian movement. In looking for the roots of Laestadianism it is not possible to ignore the Čuoŕvvot and the groundwork it did when studying the reasons for the rapid spread of the Laestadian sermon and the Laestadian movement” (Outakoski 1987, 210).

## Laestadianism<sup>20</sup>

### *The founder and early years of the movement*

Lars Levi Laestadius was born on 10 January 1800 in Jäkkvik, Sweden. His father was from a long line of Swedish clergymen, but had him self not studied, due to lack of financial means. The older half brother of Lars Levi became a clergyman as well as his younger brother and Lars himself. Lars Levi was ordained in February 1825 and began his ministry in 1826 in the most northern parish in Sweden, Karesuando, on the Swedish side of the Torne River Valley. His mother as well as his wife, whom he married in 1827, had Swedish and Sami ancestry. In Karesuando most of his parishioners were Sami. He moved in 1849 to Pajala, where most of his parishioners were Finnish. There, he continued his ministry until his death on February 21, 1861. Laestadius’ sermons were in Sami and Finnish, according to the language of his congregation.

An important period in Laestadius’ life was the period between June 1843 and May 1844. In this period he passed his pastoral examination and made an inspection tour, visiting Sami parishes on behalf of the Bishop. During the tour Laestadius experienced a religious breakthrough when he was in Åsele. In the Laestadian literature this breakthrough is referred to as his conversion. In 1844, Laestadius met a Sami woman in Åsele whom he called Maria. The story of Laestadius’ meeting with Maria became a mythical tradition transmitted by his followers. Maria belonged to the Northern Swedish religious movement called *läseriet* (readerism). During their meeting, she related to Laestadius her hard life and her travels to hear the Word of God. Laestadius tells of this meeting in his autobiography:

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20 In the following, in addition to the already mentioned authors, I make use of two documents by Warren H. Hepokoski. *The Laestadian Movement: Background Writings and Testimonies* (1998) is a compilation by Hepokoski of written documents by Laestadian leaders. In *The Laestadian Movement: Disputes and Divisions 1861-1997* (1997) Hepokoski, with the help of citations from the leaders, charts the various factions within the movement. Hepokoski is himself a Laestadian who lives in the United States. He has strong views concerning the dogmatic differences within the Laestadian movement; his compilation is valuable for my purposes due to the thorough documentation.

In the winter of 1844, I came to Åsele, Lapland, to conduct a church inspection. Here I met some readers of the milder sort. Among them was a Lapp girl by the name of Maria, who opened her whole heart to me after hearing the message from the altar. In the order of grace this simple girl had experiences that I had never heard before. She had wandered long distances, seeking light in the darkness. In her travels she had finally come to Pastor Brandell in Nora, and when she had opened her heart to him, he freed her from doubt. Through him she came to living faith. And I thought: Here now is a Mary who sits at the feet of Jesus. Only now, I thought, do I see the way leading to life. It had been hidden from me until I could talk with Maria. Her simple account of her travels and experiences made such a deep impression on my heart that the light dawned even for me. On the evening that I spent with Maria I felt a foretaste of the joy of heaven. But the pastors in Åsele did not know her heart, and she also knew that they were not of this sheepfold. I shall remember poor Maria as long as I live, and I hope to meet her in a brighter world on the other side of the grave (translation quoted after Hepokoski 1999, 15).

The Laestadian interpretation of this text is that a religious conversion took place. The Sami Maria is placed as a link in the sacral transmission that took place. The story also emphasizes that Laestadius is indebted for his conversion to a poor Sami woman. Following this period, Laestadius functioned as a revivalist minister.

Some characteristic elements of Laestadius' ministry prior to 1844 continued into this new period. During the period 1825-43 Laestadius' special concern for the spiritual welfare of the Sami was revealed in his readiness to adapt the routines of the established Lutheran church to local conditions. In addition, he campaigned against the sale of alcohol and the abuse of strong drink already from the beginning of his ministry (see Hallencreutz 1987, 170-172).

In Laestadius' view, the battle against alcohol should be fought within Christianity. Moral ruin was the cause of the alcohol problem and not the other way around. He stated, "The friends of temperance go astray when they speak more about temperance than about Christianity" (Zorgdrager 1989, 48). In contrast to other temperance movements in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Laestadius demanded total abstinence (see Kleistra 1982, 38). He placed drink on the same footing as pre-Christian Sami religion in a sermon from 1842, where he stated:

Listen, then, what life you lead! Your predecessors worshipped seiti and saivo-places, stones and tree stumps. They crept and crawled on all fours

before fallen trees and uprooted stumps. But you have begun to creep before other idols. You have taken your stomachs as your god. It says in the Scriptures, “He who drinks, he worships idols”. And what is he who drinks strong drink but the most abject worshipper of idols (translation quoted after Hallencreutz 1987, 173).

In a sermon given in 1849 Laestadius compared the heathen practices to the social evils in practice in his day. Yet, the old Sami belief system is presented in a sympathetic way, and he expresses his appreciation for the authentic Sami nature.

We could say that when Christianity was imposed from outside, many sins appeared of which our forefathers knew nothing. Although they were heathens, they were not drunks; although, in their ignorance, they sacrificed to idols, there were not so many thieves as there are today; if they worshipped at springs, at least they did not deal in liquor; if they had goddesses, at least they did not have as many whores as we have today; if they were devout in their worship of idols, at least they did not swear so much as today. They were not hypocritical, as people are today, and they did not serve two masters, as people do today (translation quoted after Suolinna 1993, 134).

After 1844 his campaign against alcohol was successful. By 1849, alcohol sales in some areas had been reduced to a tenth of their former level and some villages were alcohol free. His campaign against alcoholism was largely leveled at the alcohol trade, which in his Sami territory was the business of Scandinavian new settlers. He was critical of the moral indifference of his fellow pastors, civil servants and merchants. At a time when the Sami were viewed by Scandinavians as backward, he condemned the behavior of the Scandinavians. His arguments asserted the value of the authentic Sami nature and were against the pollution of the pure Sami mind-set by Swedish, Finnish and Norwegian influences.

Laestadius mentioned the Sami specifically during his pastoral exam in 1843. He defended twelve theses, the last one stated in Sami. The last statement reads in English, “a Sami is a person of better quality than a Finn or a Scandinavian new settler” (Zorgdrager 1989, 152, translated by author from the Dutch; see also Zorgdrager 1989, 146, 165).

After Laestadius’ own conversion the intensity of his sermons increased. His sermons stimulated discussion in his parish. After a year of having exhorted that they must search their heart for God’s word, Laestadius noted signs of grace in the winter of 1845. He writes that on December 5, 1845, a Sami woman who had been ‘long

under the law' experienced forgiveness. At the same moment, and very unusual for the area of Karesuando, there was an earthquake. Laestadius gave the simultaneous experience an evangelical interpretation, in which the wonderful happenings surrounding forgiveness happen together with earthquakes, as was the case with Christ's death and resurrection (see Kleistra 1982, 35). For Laestadius, redemption was through belief in one's redeemer, achieved through *actus gratiae sensibilis*. So that the repentance that precedes forgiveness as well as forgiveness must be experienced through felt sensations of God's mercy (see Zorgdrager 1989, 155-156). According to Laestadius, the moment of conversion can not take place without the person being aware of it, and the converted can remember and relate the experience in detail. Laestadius applied Luther's vigorous teaching of absolution: man is sinful and can be forgiven only by God's Grace. Grace is not received through 'deeds' but through repeated cleansing of the conscience. A sign of grace according to Laestadius occurred when one searching for forgiveness suddenly experienced with complete conviction that his sins are forgiven (see Paine 1988, 165).

Laestadius used concepts that appealed to his Sami congregation when he approached the problem of atonement, that is, the conflict between the demands of righteousness and the love shown by the deity. He stressed a personal relationship between 'the heavenly parent' and the prodigal but reconciled child. He chose the image of the loving mother who bewails and seeks her lost child and is in conflict between right and love (see Hallencreutz 1987, 181).

The anguish of the repenting manifested itself during church services in ecstatic expressions. Laestadius interpreted the ecstatic manifestations as a sign of grace and as proof of 'living' religious experience. The Finnish word *liikutuksia* was used to refer to the ecstatic phenomena, which is a composite word meaning 'emotional movement'. When the congregation was reaching a condition of ecstasy, they made an open confession of their sins. In this way the congregation became 'reborn'. Laestadius considered that a sign of grace was a voice from heaven saying 'your sins are forgiven' and that true Christians have the power to forgive sin, so that by a member of the congregation a sinner's sins, confessed and repented, could be forgiven (see Paine 1988, 165-166). Scriptural passages were often quoted by Laestadius as well as by his followers. The authority to forgive sins was given by Jesus to Peter in the Gospel According to St. Mathew 16:18-19, "thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.... I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." In the Laestadian interpretation, the giving of the Keys refers to the capacity to bind or unbind and retain or remit sin. In addition, the use of the Keys by the congregation was reported to be supported by John 20: 22-23, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose so ever sins ye remit, they

are remitted unto them; and whose so ever sins ye retain, they are retained.” So, that a Christian is admitted to the Kingdom of Heaven through the mediation of the congregation who have the Keys. Some of Luther’s sermons for the Easter season deal specifically with the giving of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to the disciples. On a Sunday following Easter, (Laestadian literature asserts in 1851) Laestadius stated in his sermon the doctrine of the Keys of Heaven:

Since the Jews, Turks and pagans are now so angry with the disciples of Jesus, particularly because of their criticism, it is to be surmised that the Jews, Turks and pagans do not believe that the disciples of Jesus have the power to remit and retain sins. These Jews, Turks and pagans believe instead that the disciples of Jesus are false prophets and fanatics, who do not grant peace of conscience to honorable people. Nevertheless, the disciples of Jesus have the power to forgive the sins of the penitent and to retain those of the impenitent. For Jesus himself has said, “Whose so ever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose so ever sins ye retain, they are retained (translation quoted after Hepokoski 1999, 38).

Studies of Laestadius’ sermons and writings, before and after 1844, show that his theological conceptions did not really change. The actual change was to be found in the practice of spiritual care. Laestadius himself noted that after 1844 his sermons had a deeper color. His sermons show that he emphasized comparisons, used dialogue and employed repetition. He spoke in allegories often using mythic animals, such as a dragon, as well as animals known by the Sami. For example, instead of sheep he spoke of reindeer, and he wove elements of Sami mythology into his sermons. His vocabulary was direct, and some would say too direct, he used a language unfitting for children (see Zorgdrager 1989, 157-159).

A school established by Laestadius in 1848 helped to spread and consolidate the movement. Its first teacher was Johan Raattamaa (1811-1899) who later came to play a central role in the Laestadian movement. Laestadius noted that before the start of the school many people over twenty years of age could not read, but that with the coming of the school there came an inner desire to learn to read and a thirst for God’s Word. When Laestadius noted students with special talent, they were encouraged and trained to teach the catechism. They might be sent to teach in remote places and some were also encouraged to preach. The school produced lay-preachers, and lay preaching became one of the mainstays of Laestadianism (see Kleistra 1982, 41). Kleistra notes that Laestadius began to work with the ‘reborn’ Christians as a spiritual priesthood. Laestadius encouraged those few awoken to raise feelings of repentance in

others. In this way his message reached further into his parish that covered over two hundred kilometers (Kleistra 1982, 33).

According to the Laestadian literature, Raattamaa performed direct absolution at Easter in 1851. He did so as a member of the congregation (the congregation of the reborn that had received signs of grace), and only after the repentant had severely anguished. The repentant must acknowledge to believe Raattamaa and his fellow lay-preacher to be God's children, and also that they spoke the Word of God (see Paine 1988, 166). Raattamaa's story related by a fellow preacher:

Raattamaa was in Gällivare, about to leave for home. His reindeer was already harnessed and waiting at the door of the house. Many people were gathered inside, including one young woman who was groaning in pangs of conscience. Raattamaa put on his travelling clothes, bade farewell to those present and went out the door, but then he turned back and asked the woman, "Do you believe that we are the people of God?" She answered boldly, "I believe with all my heart that you are the people of God." Then Raattamaa said, "Surely you will then believe what we tell you on behalf of God, since you believe that we are the people of God." The woman replied, "I believe." Raattamaa then laid hands on her and pronounced absolution and she became so happy that she began to praise God (translation quoted after Hepokoski 1999, 37).

Laying hands upon a person during the message of forgiveness of sin became common in Laestadian congregations, as well as praising God through great happiness and jumping for joy.

Laestadius was critical of the church but remained faithful to it. Considering faith as a matter of feeling more than of reason and knowledge, he defended the pietists in the north. He preached against the sinfulness of the world and aimed to arouse feelings of guilt that would lead to repentance. Laestadius gave recognition to inner feelings, visions and revelations as signs of grace. The Christian initiation that Laestadius exhorted proceeded in three steps, first, an awareness of one's sinfulness; second, intense repentance; and third, an actual rebirth (see Paine 1988, 164). The practices of the 'regenerated congregation' included open confession and the proclamation of forgiveness of sin. Laestadius adhered to biblical scriptures, fostered conscience probing, public confession of sin, emotional exaltation, and he emphasized the experience of conversion. He stigmatized merchants, clergymen and other persons in authority and was aggressively proselytizing (see Zorgdrager 1989, 369-370). Laestadius employed the Sami language and furthered its use. He was not critical of *liikutuksia* and saw it as an expression of deeply experienced religious feeling. Laestadius employed a concept

of God that appealed to the Sami. He interspersed elements of Sami mythology in his sermons. As related earlier, he himself credited a Sami woman, Maria, for his conversion. Laestadius was familiar with locally adapted interpretations of Christianity and valued Sami character traits at a time of Scandinavian domination. Thus important ingredients of Laestadius' message included his campaign against moral indifference, his conversion experience and his special appeal to Sami identity. This would probably not have been sufficient basis for a movement that proliferated after his demise. There were three other points instrumental in forming Laestadius' message into a movement. First, ecstasy is considered to be a sign of grace; second, the Keys to Heaven are in the hands of the congregation; and third, lay-preachers were mobilized, first instructed by Laestadius and after 1847 trained at Laestadius' special school and then sent out to spread the message.

### *The spread of the movement and early opposition*

Laestadius had named Raattamaa as his successor before he passed away in 1861. Raattamaa was a man with great organizational abilities as well as pedagogical skills, and additionally the believers recognized his charisma. To him is given the credit that during his lifetime the movement stayed unified. He stood above all parties. According to Kleistra, it is Raattamaa's work that the movement stayed within the Church and did not fall into a separatist sect (Kleistra 1982, 51). Laestadius and Raattamaa already represented two different directions. Laestadius emphasized penance and atonement, Raattamaa more the word of absolution. The movement developed both traditions, with one side centered in Gällivare and Karesuando and the other centered in the Torne River Valley. Within Laestadianism they are known as the 'western' and the 'eastern' branches; the west leans more to Laestadius' 'law' and the east to Raattamaa's 'evangelical' direction. In later years the 'east' Laestadians became broader in outlook and more moderate in practice, while the 'west' is known for keeping the tradition and a conservative lifestyle (see Kleistra 1982, 53 and Kuiper 1982, 84).

Laestadianism spread in Norway throughout the province of Finnmark, parts of Troms and Nordland, and in northern Sweden and Finland. The movement stayed unified for some years after Laestadius' death. By the second and third generation, the movement had already divided into various regional dimensions (see Suolinna 1993, 138). As a result, Laestadianism today differs considerably from one region to another.

Today Laestadianism is not a religion exclusive to the Sami or the Finnish-speaking people living in northern Sweden, Norway and Finland, but during Laestadius' lifetime the majority of the members of the movement were recruited from these two peoples. Leaders and preachers used the Finnish language, which became dominant, but Sami was still a language within the movement. Somewhat



later the Norwegian language began also to be used in the movement.<sup>21</sup>

In spite of, at times, strong anti-clericalism, the movement in each country has remained inside the Lutheran Church. Therefore baptism, confirmation, marriage, Holy Communion and funerals are most often administered by a Lutheran minister and take place within the church structure. But the power of forgiving sins on earth in the name of Jesus is considered to be in the hands of the 'regenerated congregation.'

In Finland the movement spread quickly. Here not only lay-preachers but also some of the official clergy supported the movement. Already in the 1840's Norwegian and Swedish reindeer herders, who during the winter had their herds near Karesuando, brought the Laestadian message to their summer pastures in North Norway. They came to four locations: Kautokeino, Alta, Lyngen and Ibestad. After their conversion Laestadius had entrusted the evangelical mission to them. Laestadianism did not reach the long northern coast of Finnmark until a couple of decades later. Along the northern coast Laestadianism was spread by Finnish-speaking preachers, drawn from the newly arrived immigrant population (Kven). Laestadianism took root first among the Kven communities there and later reached the Sami population through the Finnish-speaking preachers. The next generation of Sami Laestadians had preachers of their own (see Paine 1988, 172). Paine states that once Laestadianism reached a community, great efforts were made to bring all of the households into the congregation. Those that made up the congregation stayed concerned with those still considered ungodly, but everyone – even those not yet awoken or not yet repentant – was encouraged to attend the meetings and no one must quarrel with another (Paine 1965, 121).

In the early years opposition to the movement in Finland was expressed by the press as well as by the church. The critique was largely directed at the manifestations of behavior during the meetings, especially the practice of embracing between men and women. The Laestadians were rumored to be sexually free, and their emotional expressions were viewed as religious mania (see Kleistra 1982, 52).

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21 Immigration to the United States in the late 19th century fostered Laestadian congregations in Minnesota and Michigan. Laestadians in the United States are still active and the different factions call themselves variously, The Old Apostolic Lutheran Church, Apostolic Lutheran Mission, and, Association of American Laestadian Congregations, among others. The different groups in the USA maintain some contact and efforts at reconciliation have been made over the last 150 years, but with varying degrees of success. For some congregations, elders who live in Swedish Lappmark provide guidance, for others, guidance is sought from Finland, and there are groups who do not seek guidance. The schisms were often formed by a congregation's support of one preacher and the schism might bear the name of this preacher. When differing views caused dissension, the preacher, or a rival preacher, would write or visit the elders, or the congregation possibly wrote to the elders, all in a bid to support their claims. After deciding the issue, the elders could request a public confession of sin and repentance from the one found to be in error.

Laestadius' ideas were sometimes considered as bothersome in the Swedish and Finnish area but not as directly subversive. As mentioned above, some official clergy even favored the movement (see Zorgdrager 1989, 342). Opposition to Laestadius and his ideas was sharper in Norway, due to the fact that the movement found its adherents mainly among the Sami and the Finnish population. It was seen as a threat to the ideology of Norwegian superiority and the policy of Norwegianization (Zorgdrager 1989, 373). The Norwegian authorities tended to view the movement more as a revolutionary movement than as a reforming movement. As a result in Kautokeino during the 1850's, harsh confrontations occurred between a group of Sami who had come under the influence of Laestadius' ideas and Norwegian officials. In January 1853, Laestadius was called upon by the Swedish church authorities to clarify his position in connection to the events in Kautokeino. He was exonerated from blame and remained in office (see Zorgdrager 1989, 361).<sup>22</sup> According to Kleistra, Laestadius was not out to reform the social order. Laestadius and his followers signaled the social wrongs of his day, however, their concern was not with reform but with sin. Being lost in sin was the root of all evil, which included the social wrongs (Kleistra 1982, 6, 81). Zorgdrager notes that Laestadius even warned against revolution. The true Christian is not an agitator, his realm is in heaven and so he does not take part in unreal things such as governmental committees (Zorgdrager 1989, 151). Paine observed that the two principle achievements of Laestadianism, the congregation as the focal point and an ascetic and strict ethical order, were made without altering the social structure of the communities. He noted that these achievements were made through the practice of confession as a mechanism for reconciliation within a local community and a leader whose position did not include political status (Paine 1965, 180-181).

The 'power of the Keys' was for a long time experienced as challenging by some Lutheran ministers in Norway. The 'regenerated congregation' is considered to have the power of forgiving sins on earth in the name of Jesus, which follows the doctrine that the giver of forgiveness must himself have received the Holy Spirit. The following excerpt written by the Laestadian lay-preacher Ananias Brune from Vadsø in east Finnmark at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century demonstrates the tense atmosphere between the official clergy and Laestadians. Brune:

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22 An uprising took place in Kautokeino (Finnmark, Norway) in 1852. In November of that year, 35 Sami reindeer nomads attacked and killed a Norwegian merchant and a Swedish policeman. Further, the Norwegian clergyman and several sedentary Sami were molested. The uprising was preceded by overly severe reactions from the Norwegian authorities to the religious movement in Kautokeino. From 1849, the congregation had been strongly influenced by Laestadius' ideas and some of the new converts claimed to be the bearers of the Spirit of God and called themselves the 'spiritualised' and 'saints' (see Zorgdrager 1989).

Pastor Gjølme was for a time in the habit of asking us, when we wanted to register for communion, “Do you believe the forgiveness of sins from my mouth as from God’s mouth?” Whoever did not reply affirmatively could not go to the altar. He was especially strict with me. It was Maundy Thursday eve. On Good Friday, I was to travel out to the fishing villages as a telegraph operator and had a great desire to go to communion before leaving. I had to sit for hours then in the pastor’s office and watch ungodly and unconverted people being registered without any questions. I said that I believe my sins forgiven in the name and blood of Jesus and that whosoever has the Holy Spirit has the power to forgive sins. The pastor’s intention was to force me to approve him as a living Christian. Finally, I said that I believe, by the grace of God, my sins forgiven, and so I can also believe it when the pastor says it. This answer was approved, but I had to fetch a man to be a witness that I said it (translation quoted after Hepokoski 1997, 69-70).

### *Core issues and debates*

A fundamental message that the Laestadian movement proclaims is the forgiveness of sins. According to Laestadian teaching, Jesus Christ left the ‘power of the Keys’ to Peter and through Peter to the early Church. Then this true message was lost due to the corruption of the Catholic Church and was preserved only by the persecuted underground churches until Martin Luther, revealed the hidden truth. The message was again obscured in the dead doctrine of the Church until it was finally revealed and transmitted through Laestadius to his congregation of true believers (see Zorgdrager 1989, 159). Laestadian practice requires confession and atonement to be thoroughly and openly expressed in the presence of a few true believers. A detailed and open confession to the whole gathered congregation was the norm during the first decades of the movement. Gradually this was no longer insisted upon and was left as an optional matter. However, the principle that confession should take place within the congregation of the reborn was maintained. Rebirth was contingent upon confession and forgiveness, and only the ‘reborn’ had the Keys to forgive sins (see Paine 1988, 168, 171). Believers are encouraged to confess; confession is to use the Key to the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus left them. In the Coastal Sami congregation that Paine studied, the normal procedure for an individual who wished to confess during a meeting was first to approach the preacher’s table and receive from him forgiveness and thereafter he might turn to the congregation and say, “Give me forgiveness”. Then the one who asked for forgiveness might approach those to whom a personal confession was to be made (see Paine 1965, 123-124). Laestadius became entangled in a debate with some of his Pajala parishioners in 1849. He had

refused to grant absolution to an impenitent woman and he was on this account formally reprimanded by church officials in 1851. Laestadius believed that it was against the Bible, Luther's doctrine and church rules, to absolve an impenitent person and to admit them to church privileges. In a sermon Laestadius said:

But ecclesiastical punishment has in these days become hypocrisy and occurs only because of custom, for now a whore or thief is given forgiveness of sins even if no element of penitence or intention of repentance is detected in them (translation quoted after Hepokoski 1997, 6).

Western Laestadians have always emphasized that not only confession, but also regret and repentance are necessary for forgiveness of sin. Eastern Laestadians state that they are not against confession but oppose the understanding that confession of sin is a purging of conscience, because the purging of the conscience is not effected by confession, but is the work of God. To support their position they refer to Luther's protest against the doctrine that 'deeds' could earn salvation for man. They state that Luther recognized man as a sinner whose salvation comes exclusively by trust in God's grace, which is forgiveness of sin freely given.

In 1877, Raatamaa was charged with antinomianism. This concerned the doctrine that by faith and God's gift of grace through the gospel a Christian is freed not only from the Old Testament Law of Moses and all forms of legalism, but also from all law including the generally accepted moral standards prevailing at that time. Raatamaa responded:

Luther and Laestadius have placed the law of Moses as a guideline for Christian congregations that live after the flesh so that God's justice, by the chastisement of the law, would drive them to Christ to receive by faith the forgiveness of sin in the name and blood of Jesus and also the righteous Christ, which is a pure wedding garment before the glorious face of God, and power, by the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the flesh. For such righteous ones [as we are] the law is not established, Paul says. But we are not, therefore, without law. We have the law of Christ, which says that we should love one another. Christ's love demands that all ungodly conduct be rejected. Also, by faith on the Lord Christ, a holy life is constructed. Thus, the law has been our schoolmaster unto Christ, but after faith came, we are no longer under that teacher (translation quoted after Hepokoski 1997, 21).

Most Laestadians did not follow Luther's teaching on the third use of the law, the law as a rule for the daily life of the believer.<sup>23</sup> The Evangelicals labeled other groups as legalistic for binding people into the law by means of the apostolic counsels and compulsory confession. The other side responded by accusing the Evangelicals of rejecting confession and indulging in 'carnal liberty', because they did not pay attention to "rebuking by God in the conscience" (Hepokoski 1997, 81). There was agreement between 'east' and 'west' concerning the outer expression of the belief. For Laestadians the law of Christ meant that the Holy Spirit urged the rejection of all ungodly conduct. A division was made between frivolous, non-utilitarian, ungodly conduct and godly conduct. The 'fruits of the belief' for Laestadians should be visible in their outer conduct. They did not wear or foster finery, such as pictures, photographs, flowers, radios or televisions in the house. Participation in sports was viewed as vanity and not tolerated. It was considered important that people did not speak evil of others. Praise was dangerous as it leads to vanity and self glory. Alcohol was strictly forbidden. Singing in a meeting was done without instrumental accompaniment, expressing the course of modest means.

Not all congregations continue to strictly adhere to these traditions concerning outer conduct. The 'west' is more traditional than the 'east'. Suolinna has noted for the Finnish part of the Torne River Valley that this ('east') congregation has accepted innovations, such as birth control and televisions (Suolinna 1993, 139). The 'west' Laestadians' emphasize that the tradition from Laestadius and Raattama is preserved in its purest form in their congregation. Grace was taught to come from the absolution spoken by a fellow believer and did not rely on sacraments or 'deeds'. According to them baptism and confirmation do not give religious security, and they find the words of absolution spoken during the rites to be dangerous. Therefore the lay-preacher will try to speak during the church baptism. The lay-preachers follow Laestadius in their view that rituals should closely follow the spiritual position of the believer (Kuiper 1982, 92, 103). Laestadius wrote:

But since a child has saving faith before baptism, of which the Saviour himself gives us a reliable assurance [Mark 9:42], the scriptural passages that deal with the child's faith in the Saviour should also be recited either during or before the baptismal act (translation quoted after Hepokoski 1997, 68).

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23 The *Formula of Concord* (the Lutheran Confessions) in Section VI teaches that the law has three uses: "1. To maintain external discipline among men, 2. To bring men to a knowledge of sin, 3. As a rule of life for the daily walk of the believer" (quoted after Hepokoski 1997, 19)

For Laestadius the infant is in a state of grace prior to baptism. Some Laestadian congregations suggested that Laestadius inherited his view from Pietism and that they would not follow him in this position. They would follow the Lutheran Confessions, quoting the Ninth Article of the Augsburg Confession, “It is taught among us that baptism is necessary and that grace is offered through it. Children too, should be baptized, for in baptism they are committed to God and become acceptable to him” (translation quoted after Hepokoski 1997, 68).

Different regional Laestadian groups do not agree in their definition, or in the significance given to *liikutuksia*. At meetings, it usually occurred during the sermon, but in some groups it occurred at the end of the services during the singing. In the groups where *liikutuksia* was not fostered, critical observations were made that preachers could have influenced powerful *liikutuksia* by appealing to the emotions in their sermons (see Hepokoski 1997, 50). Other Laestadian groups did not agree that it was the preachers who incited the joy; it was the presence of the Holy Spirit (see Hepokoski 1997, 80). Paine observed in a Coastal Sami congregation where *liikutuksia* was given a positive value that a near or complete state of ecstasy accompanied many confessions. The sermons of the lay-preachers confronted the co-congregationalists with their shortcomings, and exhorted them to confess. The preacher would speak of his own life of sin and his sermon would reach a climax in his own confession to the congregation. The ecstasy was considered as the expression of thanks offered to God and the joy felt at being released from the burden of sin. Laestadius’ sermons are sometimes read at the meetings and lay-preachers themselves retain a measure of his lyrical and censorial style. Paine concluded that the purpose of the lay-preachers’ sermons is to bring believers to confess their sins and thereby use the Key to the Kingdom of Heaven left to them by Jesus (Paine 1965, 123, 124). Kuiper shows that it is understood among west-Laestadians that the sermon is an inspiration from the Holy Spirit. The spirit guides the preacher automatically to the correct and true choice of words. Therefore the preachers do not write down their sermons (Kuiper 1982, 90).

The Laestadian movement spread through agrarian communities and became the religion of the northern village communities. The village itself would produce a lay preacher and its own holder of prayer. The Sunday prayer meetings toured from farm to farm. The preachers would occasionally travel, by twos, to different communities and would participate in larger meetings. The importance of the large meeting for its organizers was assessed in relation to how many travelling lay-preachers had been invited. The procedure by which lay-preachers were chosen could vary from area to area. Paine noted that in a Coastal Sami congregation it was considered possible for anyone among the congregation to become a preacher. The speaker may be encouraged to speak or he may feel that he should try. After he has spoken,

the congregation will assent that he spoke God's word and he will speak at other meetings, gradually to become known as a preacher. The choice of a congregation's lay-preacher is by the congregation's recognition that the speaker has spoken God's word. Preaching is seen as God's gift and the speaker proceeds in accordance with his understanding of God's word. What is fundamental is the congregation's oral assent that it is God's word that has been spoken (Paine 1965, 122).

*Laestadianism among the Coastal Sami in Porsanger*

The neighborhood and the wider group of communities that play a role in my fieldwork are situated on the south west coast of the Porsanger Fjord extending from Stabburnes and following the coast of the fjord north to Billefjord. The larger town of Lakselv, south of Stabburnes and at the head of the fjord, is included among them. There are seven settlements between Stabburnes and Billefjord, a distance of twenty kilometers, and each has an average of fifteen homesteads, a number that was the same before World War II. Billefjord is the exception. Here the population has grown to close to two hundred. Billefjord also has the only shops for this area. The total population of the area between Stabburnes and Billefjord is approximately four hundred and fifty. The people from these settlements have been in contact with each other for many generations. In Sigvald's youth all residents in Stabburnes called themselves Sami, with a few people who were Kven, and Sigvald explained that most of the people are his relatives. At the present time, of the thirty-one residents in Stabburnes, twelve would not say that they are Sami, but claim to be Norwegian. The main influx to Stabburnes of people who say they are Norwegian has been within the last ten years, but according to Sigvald some of them have a Sami background. Their homes, which number seven, are all newly built.

Lakselv, before World War II, was a small settlement and the majority of the people were Kven. The occupying German forces used Lakselv as a headquarters and built an airport and connecting roads. Presently Lakselv's population numbers close to three thousand and it is the Porsanger municipality's administrative center. Laestadianism did not have a foothold in Porsanger until 1879, when a small congregation in Lakselv was established. The Lakselv congregation spoke Finnish. From the first congregations, which were Finnish speaking, the movement spread around the fjord and also came to the Sami.

My description of Laestadianism among the Coastal Sami in Porsanger is mainly based on interviews discussing core issues of the movement: confession, the power of the Keys, the position of the congregation, outer conduct and *liikutuksia*, or *lihkadus* as it is called in Sami. My informants are Coastal Sami living in the neighborhood between Billefjord and Stabburnes. The quotations from my interviews (2000-2004) elucidate the concepts and practices by the unique wording of my informants. By using the interviews a closer grasp of their understanding can be made and the

construction of meaning can be observed. My informant's lives span most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Four of them, born in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Alfred, Nanna, Ole and his wife, Sigrid, stayed active in Laestadianism throughout their lives. Sigvald born in 1948, Åge born in 1957 and Nan were born shortly after World War II. They attended meetings as children, but did not continue into adulthood as active Laestadians.

Alfred, born in 1913, was a lay-preacher in Billefjord, and told of the time prior to the Laestadian movement. The population in his area held house meetings that were called *Vangil*, from the word 'evangelical'. Alfred used the term 'old readers' to designate those holding the *Vangil* and observed they were not happy to receive the Laestadian message: "The 'old readers' and their supporters did not welcome Laestadianism because they knew about the uprising in Kautokeino in 1852 and negative associations surrounding Laestadianism were formed." The *Vangil* meetings refer to an established Christian practice and the response to Laestadianism may not have been quick due to this earlier established practice. The Sami were not as welcoming or enthusiastic towards Laestadianism during the first years of its introduction as were the Kvens. Alfred lived in a turf house (before World War II) and his family lived from fishing combined with the tending of sheep and goats. His parents were Laestadians already when he was a boy. He attended meetings but was not a committed member of the congregation until around 1940.

Ole, born in 1921, is a lay-preacher in Billefjord. His parents were involved in Laestadianism, and he remembers that the greater part of the community of Billefjord actively participated in the Laestadian meetings when he was a child. He told that the congregation now is very much smaller than it was earlier. The congregation was largest just after World War II when a 'big' meeting could fill the two hundred seats of the church. Regular Sunday meetings held in people's homes might include many non-believers. Ole said, "At that time those who attended the meetings were not only believers, but never the less it was a unity." In the 1960's there were still between fifty to sixty active members in the Billefjord congregation. Currently there are only ten elderly members and they do not host the extra activities that sometimes took place earlier such as inviting preachers from outside the congregation and having 'big' meetings with other congregations. Currently, they will occasionally visit other congregations, especially congregations in the Torne River Valley, Sweden. Describing the changes in the Porsanger Fjord, Ole noted that meetings are no longer held in Stabbursnes, Børselv, Kistrand, Smørfjord and Olderfjord, but meetings are still held in Lakselv.

Nanna, born in 1909, was an active Laestadian in the congregation of Billefjord before her marriage and move to Stabbursnes. Her parents had also been active Laestadians and her father was a lay-preacher. Nanna told that meetings were held



in Stabbursnes at her own and her neighbor's homes and that Finnish-speaking people came to the meetings from Lakselv and Billefjord and some came directly from Finland. The population of Stabbursnes was mostly Sami. Some time later, the meetings included Norwegian speaking people so that Norwegian and Sami were translated. She does not remember even a single meeting where only Sami was spoken. The meetings were either in Finnish and Sami or Norwegian and Sami, and possibly, all three languages together. From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until 1970 the Laestadian congregations in Billefjord and Stabbursnes were active. After 1970, there was a definite decline.

### *Core issues and debates*

Laestadians often recall their moment of conversion. It becomes a story that is shared at different times. Alfred related his own experience:

When you wake up and you see where the way is going and it is to Hell, if you don't believe, it is the way to being lost and you are lost, to be without God forever. It came to me that I could not go on with that kind of life. I had regret and knew that I needed to heal [*buorádus* = improvement, cure, reform, conversion]. I understood that if I died without a belief that that is the way to Hell. Then I started to believe, and they gave me forgiveness for my sins at the meeting. I remember the first time. I was at a meeting, at Rastte Johan's [located in Kolvik]. I had attended meetings before, but it was not because of the belief, it was just to attend.

The door into the congregation is repentance and confession of sins to an active member of the congregation.

Who has regret for their sins is forgiven. But he has to regret. If somebody would not have regret, it was not good for that person. You need forgiveness for all your sins, what ever they were. You could confess to the congregation, but you did not have to. Confession had to be to an active member of the congregation, because it was so open, some were just visiting the meetings. You could not get this from people outside [the congregation]; it should be Christians. Even if the congregation was not gathered, you could get forgiveness from one believer.

My informant Ole, also an active Laestadian and lay-preacher, agreed with Alfred and observed that when sins are repented, they can be forgiven by the one who has received the Holy Spirit. The whole congregation needs not be present.

Jesus said that where two or three persons are together in my name, I am there. It does not have to be a whole congregation. When there is one who has received the Holy Spirit, and another who feels sin and asks for forgiveness, he is forgiven.

Alfred stated that the congregation could decide on all questions.

The local congregation decided on all questions. We did not ask from anywhere else. Because the belief was according to the Bible, you did not have to ask other people. Forgiveness of sins was given among God's (Ibmil's) children. God's children are the people around here, the people in the congregation.

Alfred referred to scripture to iterate the doctrine of the Keys.

It is in the Bible that the Keys to Heaven are among God's Children. It is written that Jesus gave the Keys to Heaven to Peter, but the Keys have always been among God's Children. You had to know when you met God's Child that she or he had the Keys to Heaven.

Ole also quoted scripture to stress the doctrine that the power of the Keys, to remit and retain sin, were given to Peter and to the congregation, by referring to Mathew 16:18-19; Mathew 18:18; and John 20:22-23. In Sami Ole stated the doctrine, "*Mii lea čatnojuvvon almmis lea čatnojuvvon eatnan alde.*" (What is bound in heaven is bound on earth. Čatnat = to bind.) Ole explained why the movement derived its name from Laestadius.

We do not believe in Laestadius. He was presenting the belief from the prophets and the apostles. Laestadius was not more than a preacher and he was a priest. When Laestadius started his mission he got listeners, the congregations started to grow and gradually the alcohol problems and heathendom was reduced. And this preaching was so prominent in our districts that it got its name after Laestadius.

Alfred made a distinction between Laestadians and church Christians saying that a church Christian does not have the living faith; the living faith will show by one's conduct throughout the week.

The State Church was then what it is now. When you come to the church, you are there, and no one criticized you for going there. One

thing is to go to church, but you had outside to show that you were not only a church Christian. The church Christian was only Christian in the church. Church Christians go to church, and they believe what they are taught there and only that. I knew nothing about what came from the church. [I received no instruction from the State Church.] Ministers had minister knowledge. We got forgiveness of sins without the minister, but we had no contempt.

Alfred said it was important that everyone attends meetings; people must not be judged.

All people could attend the meeting, all were accepted. It was important that people came. People are different and it would be wrong to exclude anyone. Let's say that you are so-and-so, then we need proof that it is true that you are so-and-so, and it was not up to people to judge another.

Ole argued that people may differ but the congregation rests on the word of God spoken correctly.

I will not focus on differences. There is difference in knowledge and understanding among people, which could cause differences, but the word from God is the same. It is in the human beings' nature to make one's own opinion important. It will not depend on a few who have a different opinion; this does not destroy the congregation. When the word from God is spoken correctly it confirms what is right. When a few have a different opinion this will not change the congregation.

Åge's wife Nan emphasized that ethnic discrimination was not fostered: "The Laestadians never made accusations along ethnic lines." Her conclusion is supported by outside observers.<sup>24</sup> The Laestadian movement achieved social goals without changing the social structure. Laestadian meetings proceeded without creating ethnic divisions, and continued with what was familiar. A shared communication style was important. An emotional expression of warmth is often mentioned as a characteristic of Laestadian meetings. Sigvald tells of a style of communicating that combines an emotional expression together with singing:

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24 Suolinna has concluded that although people tried to make Laestadianism the only form of religion in the northern community the Laestadians in the Torne River Valley have not tried "to promote any ethnic or regional rights for its members" (Suolinna 1993, 140).

Recently I met one of the real old time people, a man close to a hundred, who was a preacher at the Laestadian meetings. I introduced myself as the son of Nanna, and I was thereby quickly in the inner circle with him. When this man talked, he expressed an emotional moment and he stayed in that emotional moment. He sang a song about these feelings, all just during a conversation. This mode of conversation is now lost, but would have been the norm in Sami life and was very much the norm within Laestadianism.

Nan also valued the shared emotional component of the Laestadian meeting: “It is hard to relate the emotional experience of a Laestadian meeting; it is essential, there was warmth.” To Åge generosity and personal involvement were signs of a living faith and were a motivation for attending meetings.

The preacher I remember most took a boy into his home, when that was requested of him, and raised him as a son. The preachers then really lived the Christian life. Now, when I ask my mother who is preaching, she answers “so and so is *reading*”. I can tell by how she answers that for her ‘so and so’ is not a preacher as we knew them. The earlier preachers had a living religion and their preaching was effective, I could say, it was theatrical. At one moment the preacher would be softly speaking directly to someone, the next moment speaking loudly to another person. One was really a part of it then. Now the meetings are held in the Lakselv meeting house, people are not close. And also now, there is not the *lihkadus*, nor even the embrace to forgive sin.

Alfred said that *lihkadus* was an expression of joy for having one’s sins forgiven: “*Lihkadus* happened when you received forgiveness for sin; you could be so happy that you started dancing, and it was a great joy. And if that happened with more people, then it could be *lihkadus*.” Alfred’s comment “when it happened with more people, then it could be *lihkadus*” suggests *lihkadus* was not considered as an individual ecstatic state but a group movement. Sigvald became aware of *lihkadus* at six years old. He noticed during a meeting that his father was entering a state that he later understood to be *lihkadus*. He recalled:

We grew up with it; we attended mostly meetings at our own home.  
And I saw it even without attending meetings, where it occurred mainly

during the second half. With the experience of forgiveness – something is released – a deep love. In the 70's, meetings were still held at our home. Father died in '74 and mother still held meetings, but she more often visited others who were hosting.

Sigvald said that he himself never had *lihkadus*, but that I should understand that:

There are different stages into the joy and happiness. It is like asking, "How happy are you?" Where does the *lihkadus* start? There are no rules. It is something natural coming from what was spoken about, the singing, the feelings people had. So when it was all there, then there was *lihkadus*. How it moved: one was inviting any one to join. A communication was going on with a shared question, "Where do we bring this?" It was not what only one person did, but this was a communication: one showed one's feelings and was answered with the same thing. The word *lihkadus* means moving something. It could happen under the preaching, or the singing, or was invited through what was said between people – one person is strong on preaching, one on singing. Further about the course of the meeting, one could say something in the meeting; say what was on your mind. Then, how it was done: you did not ask forgiveness from the whole congregation, you asked from each individual at the meeting, going around to each person. *Lihkadus* was connected to the end, before saying good-bye. It should all be 'cleared up' before departing, meaning that you were asking forgiveness of sin, and this was often a part of saying good-bye. I remember *lihkadus* was the climax of the meeting and forgiveness happened at the very end, before saying good-bye.

Laestadian practice is to proclaim the evangelical message, and this includes that one asks for forgiveness of sin. Sigrid's and Ole's understanding of the evangelical message places an emphasis on asking. Sigrid stated, "When one is Christian one forgives, and will not refuse to forgive. But when there is a non-believer, he will not ask for forgiveness, and that in it self is what holds back the forgiveness of sins." Ole expressed the point that when the message is proclaimed and not received it will 'return' to the one giving it. "Jesus says that when you come to someone's home, ask for God's peace. When there is no peaceful person in the house, who will receive God's peace, the peace will return back to you." It is important to ask. One who has received the Holy Spirit can give, but he cannot give without being asked.

### *Laestadian meetings*

The meetings remembered by Åge lasted many hours; children attended the first part and left before the second part when the experience of *libkodus* was a possibility.

When I was a child, we were all together at the meeting – young, middle and old together. The meeting was often held at the preacher's house. There were wooden benches around three tables and the meeting could last from seven to nine hours. The children left after about two hours. The meeting was divided into a first part and a second part. The children left after the first part. The first part included singing, preaching and reading from the Bible. The second part could move into *libkodus*. Then the people embrace and express emotionally forgiveness of sins, sometimes they danced in this embrace.

As an adult, Åge has not been an active Laestadian.

I stopped attending meetings when I was about ten and I never attended the second part of the meeting. But I remember being troubled and confused when a boy who was one year older than I and who had stayed during the second part teased me at school by saying, "I saw your mother dancing with a man other than your father." Later I understood in what context this had happened, but as a boy I was confused.

Åge explained why he stopped to attend Laestadian meetings.

Two things happened around ten years of age: One, my father got work that took him away from home. And two, I went to the boarding school. All this changed things greatly, as the family had always been together before. These changes altered things, had this not been the case, I probably would have moved into staying into the second part of the meeting.

In Nanna's old age, she attended Laestadian meetings on the average of about three times a year. These meetings were held at homes along the coast. Sigvald told that only the old ones who commonly hosted the meetings before are at present still occasionally organizing them. The frequency of these meetings is about one meeting every two months. The closest active congregation to Stabbursnes is in Lakselv and people meet every Sunday in their own meeting house built for this purpose. Nanna had attended meetings in Lakselv, and the Lakselv congregation, at the request of some older people, had held a few meetings in Stabbursnes that she attended. Nanna also participated in a

woman's group from the Sami Mission located in Billefjord. The congregation in which Ole participates in Billefjord is greatly reduced and there are presently only ten people. Their meetings are held weekly and a visiting preacher will occasionally speak at the meeting. Ole said that the most recent visiting preacher spoke Finnish. The preachers in the past spoke in Finnish or in Norwegian. Ole told that Alfred was the preacher for Billefjord for many years and that Alfred preached in Norwegian. During the same period there was a Sami preacher active in Stabburnes.

Sigvald emphasized the difference between Laestadian congregations that are still active today, compared to the meetings he knew as a youth. He gave an example of an 'isolationist' policy by the present (still large) Alta Laestadian congregation. "The Laestadian congregation in Alta is now planning to build their own schools." Sigvald informed me that the majority of the Alta and the Lakselv congregation were people from a Kven background even though Norwegian was the spoken language and that there were also people in the congregation who had a Sami background. The Lakselv congregation is still active, but much smaller than in earlier days, having presently only around twenty active members.

Together with Sigvald, I attended a Laestadian meeting in Lakselv. It was held in the congregation's own meeting house on Sunday evening. The main room was arranged in rows of chairs that faced a long table where three chairs were positioned. For the rest, the room was bare. People arrived and greeted those already seated by placing their hand on the seated person's shoulder, and saying "God's peace." One woman covered her head with a scarf as the meeting began. Three men already present in the room now took their place at the table. One of the three led the congregation in singing, which was without instrumental accompaniment. Then another spoke for the major part of the meeting. He spoke of his own personal life experiences and brought them into the context of how to forgive sins. He said to the congregation that we were all sinful and we all needed forgiveness, quoting the Bible on how to forgive. At emotional moments he rested his head on the other man's shoulder and received an embrace. After this, the congregation was led in singing, as before. Then the congregation adjourned to tables that were set up in the back of the hall and one helped oneself to coffee and food, and talked. In attendance were about eighteen individuals, men and women, no children. I was told that the congregation chooses from among them someone to lead the singing and also a few who will preach. Those chosen to preach will consult each other to determine who will preach on any given Sunday. As people left, they embraced and said "God's peace" to each other. The language used during the meeting was Norwegian. At my departure, the preacher gave me a folder, *Informasjon om Laestadianismen; Av tro til tro*, an informative pamphlet on Laestadianism. The headings in the folder were (my own translation from the Norwegian): History, Sami-girl Maria, Absolution, Teaching

about Baptism, Conversion and Faith, From Belief to Belief, and Fruits of this Belief. *Av tro til tro* (From belief to belief) is the Laestadian doctrine that one is first Christian, that is, one has a belief, but then one moves to the belief as experienced by Laestadians, which is the moment of conversion. After the meeting, Sigvald expressed his lack of affinity to this congregation. "I had a feeling of going to [State] Church. Something is missing there. Having the meeting in a building, it becomes an institution. In people's homes, the meeting had a very close feeling." He compared his lack of affinity to the Lakselv congregation with his affinity to Alfred's statements, commenting that Alfred spoke about Laestadianism in the way he was familiar with:

Alfred did not say that other ways were excluded. If you are going to [State] Church you were not excluded. Alfred said, "It is not up to us to judge." Other Laestadian groups can be hooked into rules. His message was "Connection to God is through love of your fellow man. It is not judging your fellow man."

Sigvald thought that the reasons he felt no affinity to the Lakselv congregation also stemmed from his lack of familiarity with Lakselv. Lakselv was first a Kven settlement, then a World War II headquarters and, in the last fifty years, the administrative center for the municipality of Porsanger. Therefore Lakselv's population, which now numbers approximately two thousand people, is quite diverse. According to Sigvald, "the life in Lakselv is not the life one lives in Stabbursnes." Sigvald no longer participates in Laestadian meetings, and like Åge he stopped attending during his youth, in his case at about fifteen years of age. He stated that the reasons for not continuing to attend were related to his age and the desire to fit in with his age group. "A teenager wants to be normal. The school had an influence on all things Sami." He said his parents left the choice to attend up to him. As a young person he remembers being asked by friends, "Is it not very restrictive being Laestadian?" He told that he answered, "Not for me." Because he remembers his parent's home as an open place where many young people gathered, which was not the case in all other Laestadian families.

The Laestadian meetings took place in people's homes and I experienced great joy and the sharing of care between people. A person could say what they had done wrong to another and ask forgiveness of him or her. This forgiveness was given by God. The meetings were about the relatedness and connection between people and they moved from there into the relatedness with God. It was possible that the meeting stayed on a human sharing level, and it is also possible that it was felt that the exchange should become a religious one.



Sigvald related his experiences of a meeting as a child:

People came. You did not know who would come, people from Lakselv, the other side of the fjord, and people from the surrounding villages. There were different parts of the meeting. As children we wondered if there would be *lihkadus* at a meeting or if a good preacher would be there, who could talk to all people (not only those who were reading the Bible) and who also communicated with children. When the meeting was over, then you had a social part and there was coffee. This part could be short or long. It could be long when people came from outside, then it was a 'big meeting' or when there was a special speaker. In the period with the coffee, and depending on who was there (maybe a good speaker) stories were told. As a child we listened and were close to what was going on. We did not know when a good story would come, because the talk was mixed with the daily life, a good story would just emerge out of the talk. Sometimes we would come with a question, if the story raised our curiosity. It was a learning experience.

Sigvald emphasized fellowship and togetherness.

Laestadianism offers community and the experience of shared feeling. From this shared feeling, they are able to relieve their fellow Laestadians of sin. They can forgive each other their sin and wash each other clean. Another important component is singing together. The fellowship and togetherness is the point.

For Sigvald, Åge and Nan, the Laestadian movement contained a shared style of personal communication and emphasized the value of emotional expression. They also told that during their youth they did not continue to participate in Laestadian meetings. They noted that the fabric of their lives changed by having to live away from home to attend school. And, the village life that they were familiar with also changed. During their adolescence, Sigvald and Åge stopped attending Laestadian meetings. One might conclude that during their youth they were engaged by the impact of modern culture, and are now left with nostalgia for the closeness, the familiarity they remember from Laestadian meetings.

### *Conclusions and Remarks*

The Christian message that 'through Jesus Christ a Christian has received forgiveness of sin', was central to the Laestadian movement, and various factions developed their

own regional interpretations. As in many sectarian Christian movements the rebirth of the individual who henceforth has the repository of authority was a central tenet. The movement contains no overall organization and there is local autonomy. Specific for the Sami is the cogent social aspect of Laestadianism, which creates a strong bond within the congregation and stimulates congregations to come together in occasional 'big' meetings. Antagonism between Laestadian groups has often been conceived in dogmatic terms but the divisions often follow familiar social lines.

The Laestadian movement clearly created distance from the State Church. Kleistra considers two ingredients within the movement that definitely deviated from the official position of the State Church. First, the lay-preachers who gave the movement its own leaders, and second, the vision of the Keys, which could bind and unbind and were in the hands of the congregation (Kleistra 1982, 49).

Laestadianism has been conceived as a response to the Norwegian policy of assimilation. Bjørklund made a study of the reactions of Sami and Kven minorities to the 19<sup>th</sup> century pressures to assimilate. In his conclusions, he stressed that values within Laestadianism resisted the economic pressures that motivated the Norwegian process of modernization. These values, which included economic poverty as spiritual wealth, kept the attraction of the modern Norwegian lifestyle at bay. Preachers could be recruited from the community, so local leadership options remained. A resistance to the school policies concerning language took shape through Laestadianism, because the Christian Word was to be presented orally and in the mother tongue (Bjørklund 1978, 93-120).

Dissimilitude to the Norwegian lifestyle was longstanding for Sami and Kven residents in Finnmark. However, to characterize motivations as 'resistance' is perhaps reading into the situation a message that was not experienced by the actors themselves, who may have had quite other motivations for embracing Laestadianism.

Paine has suggested that it is reasonable to suppose that for the Finnish immigrants of Northern Norway Laestadianism was a symbol of their Finnish culture. He considers that the political and cultural difficulties they encountered in Northern Norway heightened their sense of identity and ethnocentric vigor. Laestadius' parishes of Karesuando and Pajala were very Finnish in culture and language more so than Sami and certainly not Swedish (Paine 1988, 172). Only a few of the Norwegian speaking fishing communities in Finnmark embraced Laestadianism. Paine has pointed out that the Norwegian population viewed the anti-clericalism of the Laestadian congregation as actually anti-Norwegian, which was found self evident by the Norwegians particularly by the congregations' use of either the Finnish or the Sami language. In addition the ecstatic manifestations were perceived by the Norwegians as non-Norwegian behavior and further as anti-Norwegian. Paine states that he often heard from his Norwegian informants that Laestadianism was 'primitive' (Paine 1988, 174).

The anti-Norwegian sentiments are perhaps more a projection of the Norwegians than sentiments of the Sami themselves. The interpretation of Laestadianism as a response to Norwegianization may signal important events in Finnmark but misses the local experience. Laestadianism was probably a familiar way of being a community for the Sami and outside influence from the State was not enough to appreciably change the social structure.

Coastal Sami born in the first half of the twentieth century maintain that before World War II, health, religion and the law/justice were experienced as the province of the local village community and that presently this is no longer the case. They conclude that now the government organizes life and that very little is left for local people to take care of together. The element of 'taking care of' was an important facet within Laestadian meetings. It was also part of the authority that resided within the congregation in the 'power of the Keys' and the employment of local preachers. The values contained within the community that took priority over participation in the nation-wide state were the social, moral and economic equality of individuals within the community, and the community's social and moral independence. According to Paine, the Laestadian congregation sanctioned these values and in turn this was important for the maintenance of these values (Paine 1965, 183). Among the Coastal Sami secularization accelerated after World War II. For the Coastal Sami there were new social and economic options made available through the Norwegian welfare state after 1945. The State provided scope for economic emancipation for Coastal Sami and so they could enjoy equality within the nation-wide society.

### 3 ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCES

#### The presence of exceptional beings

This chapter is composed of my interviewees' stories. Their narratives speak of encounter experiences that are out of the ordinary but are meaningful to them. Certain prescribed behavior and attitudes are evinced to forego that an encounter should result in misfortune, illness or death. The encounter experiences speak of categories of beings and relationships that are outside the scope of Christianity but still within the daily life of people in the Porsanger Fjord area. The interviewees expressed their own views, which are not necessarily shared even by their close Sami neighbors. Therefore my concern is not to demonstrate a comprehensive Sami cosmology. My intent is to show the concerns of the storytellers and their perceptions of what we might characterize as an interactive field, experiences of interaction that follow certain expectations. The encounter experiences form the background for intervention by a healer. The counsel rendered for an eventual encounter, depict specific kinds of relationships that Sami have with other beings. The various beings have characteristics that can overlap and the evident relationship between them and Sami individuals serves to identify what has been encountered. The basic idiom tells about a clash at a specific location between beings, with precedence to the location, and modern people. A difference between exceptional beings and the deceased is usually not explicit. In the course of the chapter I endeavor to present what is distinctive for each category of encounter experiences. I will show that forcing distinctions between categories would be problematic.

Some of my informants are residents of small communities along the West Coast of the Porsanger Fjord. These are Sigvald, Nanna, Sigvald's brother Hjalmar, Solveig, Ole and Sigrid. The summer pasturage of a reindeer-herding group borders on Sigvald's farm and my informant's from this group are Karen, Rávdná, Per, Nils, Anne and Johannes.<sup>25</sup> I restrict my presentation to those encounter experiences cited by my informants and employ their Sami term for the encounter. Similar encounter experiences in other regions may involve other Sami terms. Present day stories include *gufihhtarat* (subterraneous beings), *eahpáražat* (dead child beings), *gomit* (ghosts), *ganežat* (gnomes), *hálddit* (holy beings), *rávvgat* (creatures from the sea/water trolls)

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25 The interviews were videotaped. The spoken language was Sami and the translation a joint effort by Sigvald and I. The interviews with Sigvald and Hjalmar were conducted in English; the interview with Solveig was conducted in Sami and English, and hand written notes were taken.

and encounters that are not specifically named.<sup>26</sup> Another form of encounter in the stories is an experience of seeing or hearing a living person who is not physically present. A person observed *preceding* their actual arrival is an encounter experience, called *ovdasaš*, and is auspicious. An observation that *follows* the arrival of a person is an experience called *manŋásaš* and is inauspicious. A companion observed to be travelling *together* with a person is called *fárrosaš* (travel companion) and is inauspicious. *Fárru* is a group of travelling people, *vouigŋa* is 'spirit' and disturbing a magpie can bring bad luck. After introducing these encounters I will present stories in which a spell has been placed that reveals the perceived interactive field of 'encounter experiences'.

*Gufihhtarat (subterranean beings)*

The *gufihhtarat* are anthropomorphic and occupy specific locations. They may simply be observed at a location, without interaction or direct consequences. Sigvald related:

What they tell, those who have seen them. One man with whom I often fished described them. What he had seen were old women and men, just sitting on the ground. He was passing them not far from where they lived. The spot where he experienced it is called Skunkkaoalgi.

The translation of *Skunkkaoalgi* is ghost (*skunka*)-shoulder (*oalgi*) and is suggestive of a location where an encounter would be expected. Despite the possible viewing of *gufihhtarat* without consequence, an encounter may have issue. There are locations where one could expect to experience *gufihhtarat* and at these locations it is important to be respectful. Hjalmar in a warning to his neighbor said, "Leave them in peace." Sigvald stated, "It is said, if you disturb them or bother them then they can become visible or they may harm you in some way or make it unpleasant for you." The *gufihhtarat* are not consistently visible at their location, but may become visible when they are disturbed. On the other hand, the encounter may be registered by a certain discomfort or misfortune without their having been seen. A location known by Sigvald where he would expect an encounter with *gufihhtarat* is close to his brother Hjalmar's cabin. There have been unpleasant incidents understood to result from disturbing the *gufihhtarat* who live there. The stories tell that close to the cabin the neighbor's snow-scooter recently broke-down and twenty years earlier the transport vehicle carrying building material broke-down at the same location. More severe consequences are also surmised to be the result of the *gufihhtarat's* presence at this location. Sigvald told:

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26 I only employ the Sami singular and plural form and further follow English grammar. The plural form alters the spelling according to the word class of the noun and the rule of consonant gradation, example: *gopmi* (singular), *gomit* (plural); *gufihtar* (singular), *gufihhtarat* (plural).

In the beginning the land was my uncle's, he died in an asylum in Bodo. He went crazy. The last owner of this land, his house was burning, he was rescued, brought out of the burning house but he suddenly ran back into the house and died.

An encounter with *gufihttarat* is not always predictable. When travelling, the locations of their habitat will not be readily known. Alertness to the danger is required so that the consequences of an encounter are not too severe. Sigvald related:

My experience: I had already been many times to have my surgery check-up in Hammerfest Hospital traveling by bus. This time I was driving my own car. It was before Christmas. I was returning from having been in Hammerfest, just past Olderfjord; it was dark. Suddenly, I experienced that I was driving on a different road, a motorway. In front I could see a big city with skyscrapers. To my left was the sea and on the right was a park - and it was summer! My first thought was, now there is something very wrong. But I felt okay. And started to think, what now? In the meantime, I was following the traffic driving on this road. I hoped to find out what I should do. Suddenly, the summer light was gone and I was back in the darkness, and back on the road just past Olderfjord. When I realized where I was, I was in the middle of very long curve. I was shaky, first, for having seen the city and summer-light, and then shaky because I had been driving half of this long curve without registering it. So, when I came to the next village, I stopped, and took a long walk to get some air and to recover.

Sigvald's story was told in the company of a reindeer herder neighbor, Karen, who expressed the conclusion, he would have been 'caught' had he arrived at the city. Karen commented, "You have almost been taken by *gufihttarat*. They had a plan, if you had arrived at this city, you would have stayed there, because there is no city there. It is only wilderness." Karen provided the following story that again demonstrates the *gufihttarat*'s motive to retain someone if given the chance. Karen told:

In older times, they used to talk about this, like my father's younger brother. He saw it just across Dilljajohka. He was coming down the mountain and saw people living there, with animals, many houses and barns. He was walking. He said they were wealthy people. It went so far that he had been inside one of the houses, but felt something was strange about the people there. They invited him in and asked him to



*Karen and Sigvald during an interview in Karen's lávvu.*

sit down. But he felt unsure, so he did not stay there. He left and when he looked back, there was nothing there. I asked my father what would have happened if his brother had stayed there. He answered, "Well, he would have been one of them." My joke was to say, "But they were very rich people!"

The *gufihttara*t have the potential to retain one, and the proscribed contact procedure suggested by these stories is that one should have respect for the *gufihttara*t's presence. They appear to have a prior claim to the location that they occupy. In the hierarchy with modern people, one must always give way to them. The same hierarchy is demonstrated in the following story told by Sigvald:

In Kolvik during the 1970's, there was a farm where the calves did not thrive. One day the farmer met a *gufihtar* in the enclosure where the calves were kept. The *gufihtar* told the farmer, "You have your calf just where we have our cupboard." The farmer then realized that his calf was a disturbance for her and changed the location. After that the calves thrived.

A correct attitude, which includes not harming a *gufihtar* and respecting its claim to the location, can result in helpful communication. They will forewarn of dangers and provide good advice as in the following story related by Sigvald:

A woman living in Billefjord received advice from a *gufihtar*. She had not been harming the *gufihttarat*. It was during a particularly hard winter. The rest of the community had already slaughtered their cows due to the lack of fodder. The woman met a *gufihtar* in the barn, who appeared as a little old woman. The *gufihtar* gave her the advice not to slaughter the animals. Saying, "Don't do it." She followed this advice and they survived remarkably well through the winter. They had not harmed the *gufihtar*. The neighbors wondered how they managed, because there was nothing to feed the animals.

A too light attitude is considered to be dangerous. A story told by Johannes, a reindeer-herding neighbor of Sigvald, demonstrates that a parent can be concerned because a child has not yet developed the correct attitude. He tells that parents worried that a child would be 'taken' by *gufihttarat* and therefore children wore a coin around their necks. Johannes wore such a coin as a child.

I was about seven years old and when I told that I had been playing with *gufihttarat* children my father gave me a beating. So I stopped talking about it. But I only stopped playing with them when one time I saw the boy and girl walk over the water. I turned to my brother and said, "Did you see that?" He said, "No." They never let me get close enough to really play with them, they kept moving away. All children had a coin around their neck, so that they should not be taken.

Sigrid, a resident of Sandvik doubted that these beings were *gufihttarat*, but provided an interesting explanation of their existence: "I do not believe in these *gufihttarat*, but it is said that these are Eve's hidden children that she did not manage to wash before God came."

The *gufihttarat* have a sort of kinship with humans and are also basically human in appearance. They are considered to have a separate sphere of existence even though occasionally occupying the same location as humans. With an encounter, communication or disruption occurs between the human and the *gufihttarat*. Stories indicate that when they are encountered and one would stay or make oneself too comfortable in their company, one would not be able to depart. The inherent logic is that there is already familiarity between the two and therefore a close contact can form a lasting connection. The difference between the human and the *gufihttarat* can be found



in (1) *gufihttarat*'s prior claim to the location (2) they live in a reversed temporality (they live as human's do but are active during the night) and (3) their greater wealth, which is an attraction for the human. The problem of seduction is ever present and to give way to the seduction would mean to be caught in a different temporality.

*Other underground beings connected to a location*

The great majority of stories speak of *gufihttarat* but other beings are also understood to live underground, *hálddit* (holy beings) and *ganežat* (gnomes). Bäckman traced the *háldi*-concept to the pre-Christian name for servants of the god and to their connection to cult-sites, and stated that later the concept of *hálddit* assumed features of the underworld, invisible people (Bäckman 1975, 148-9). However, Sigvald's understanding of *hálddit* is still very close to the understanding that connects them to cult-sites. Sigvald sees them as distinct from the other beings that may occupy the underground. The *hálddit* may be ancestors and may even be God.

I heard the term *hálddit* not in my home as a child, but from my neighbor who was an old man. He used to tell about these things. He was not active in the Christianity and could tell more than the Christian people. He told that they lived up there and belonged to the mountain that is called *Háldi*. He was telling about other beings there. Those I don't know much about. He was telling about *ganeš* [gnome] and *eahpáraš* [dead child being]. *Ganežat* are underground beings, small, with human form. I never heard other than that the *háldi* and *ganeš* were peaceful. *Eahpáražžat* were not peaceful. *Hálddit* could be ancestors, but the understanding of *halddit* is also possibly God.

Sigvald tells how knowledge was transmitted to children. Children had to be aware of the danger of being 'caught' and heed the advice not to stay where it is dangerous. They should 'know' if something is there by sensing the unrest one experiences.

As children we were told not to go to some places, because things were happening which were not so good, where it was not so peaceful. So we were told not to stay there. There are many places around where it is not peaceful; life is still going on there. Sometimes when going out with the horses, even they avoid places, and you feel the place does not have a good feeling, one can tell that the horses are trying to leave that place. Sometimes animals feel more than people, so there are times when I have thought, "Is there anyone here?" because I could sense it from the horses, even when I could not feel anything.

The criteria of unrest, is important and determines the conclusions drawn in many stories. It is particularly present in stories where permission is requested to stay at a location. Reindeer Sami regularly travel with their migrating reindeer flock. My informants told me that earlier it was common practice before setting up the tent to ask permission of these invisible people that may live at the location. When people set up the tent over their dwelling-place, then they are disturbed. The consequences are then similar to the disturbance of a *gufihtar*. One's enterprise will not thrive. The procedure of requesting permission was also carried out when building a new house. The procedure known by Sigvald is that one sleeps on the proposed location. When there are no disturbances during the night, it is considered acceptable to build there.

In the stories I have heard, the identity of the in-dweller has been assigned to *gufihttarat*, *gomit* and *ganežat*, but the same mechanism of requesting permission to stay at a certain location is employed without regard for the assigned identity. Permission may be requested simply from the 'underground people'. Rávdná related, "People say there are underground people living there, and those are the ones who are asked for permission to camp, or other activities such as logging, in their location." Making such a request is no longer as common as it was. Per said:

The old people told that, but I never understood this. Where I have camped, I never asked, I only prayed the Lord's Prayer. I never asked if someone was living where I camped, and they have never harmed me. Well, maybe I am too nervous to see or hear a *gopmi* [ghost]. I had a grandmother who used to ask when they came into a *lávvu* [tent] or *goahti* [family living tent or turfhouse], just a question to someone – it was not to the hostess – whether they could stay and sleep there. But that was the old time, and I do not hear of this today. It is different now. I have not asked the younger people if they are asking in this way. I never asked myself. Only before, when I was very young, I was afraid to be out in the open, because of all the stories of *stálut* [trolls], *gufihttarat*, and *gomit* [ghosts]. But I have never seen them, even at seventy-six years old. I am not speaking about of what I dream. In my dreams there have been *gufihttarat*. Once I heard one doing a *joik* [song], but that was a dream.

Per states that unlike his grandmother, he does not ask permission to camp, but he does say the Lord's Prayer. Karen related the consequence of an encounter where permission was not asked.

I said to our Johannes when we built a new house in Karasjok, "You have not asked if you can stay here." This he did not always do. For

example, it happened our Johannes went up to where the border is to the next siida [group], and put the lávvu [tent] on a path. He did not ask – this ‘wise man’ did not ask – anyone if we could stay there. He heard someone coming through the door, but it just disappeared at the door. It happened again and again that someone came to the door and disappeared. But he stayed in the lávvu. You see our Johannes was not consistent in these things.

At certain locations anonymous owners occupy the land and it is necessary to show them respect and obtain their permission.

*Fárru (travelling group)*

*Fárru* consists of a group of beings travelling together. It can be experienced along old paths or when one is travelling by boat. The experience can be visual, auditory or physical. The *fárru* beings are connected to a special land area or a sea route. The travelling group continues to use old paths that were used by former generations to travel to markets, to collect berries, and to fish or trap. Sigvald explained what is ‘connected’ to the old path close to his farm:

They are active doing what they have always been doing. It is known from very old times that somebody is travelling on this old road. It is not people we see, but it is like people. You can hear them, sometimes maybe even see them. It is like the same things happening that have been going on before, but you do not see it. This path has been used for as long as people have been living here. When they were going to the sea, to the market place, or wherever they were travelling. So it is like marks left after all of what has been going on here. It is still there, even if you do not see it.

Sigvald connects the travelers to ancestors:

Hálddit could be ancestors. What is left over from ancestors is not harming. But what is travelling on the paths where all kinds of people were, and they could be good and bad, well then it is not so strange that there is noise along the paths. I am not sure that it is negative if there is noise, but it depends on how you experience it.... Because they are walking the same paths as our parents and grandparents, it must be from them, but this can be from before them, even thousands of years old. We don’t know. But the fact that I link this to my parents is because they were using the same paths. So what goes on walking after death?

Sigvald's daughter heard children playing on this path. After she related the experience, Sigvald explained to her about the path and its occupants. He said he did so in order that she should not be afraid and conclude from the experience that there were ghosts: "I tell my children about the 'path walking' when they experience it, so that they don't have worries or have fears. A ghost causes fear and a ghost is harming. It can be experienced as 'ghosty' until the child knows what it is." Sigvald related how a man was thrown from a path by a *fárru*:

I heard my neighbor tell this experience: Once during the summer when they were mowing the hay, it was on one of these old paths, and they had finished for the day. He was tired and took a rest on the ground. His family had returned home and he was alone. Half asleep, he heard a lot of people and animals coming towards him. They approached closer and closer. Suddenly he was thrown aside and he heard them pass by and continue on and then finally they were out of hearing. When he awoke fully, he was indeed not lying on the original place he had laid down, but he was some meters further away.

The treatment of the *fárru* experience shows that a location is imbued with the use that people in former times have made of it.

#### *Rávvgat (water trolls)*

Dangerous entities that live in the sea are called *rávvgat*. According to Sigvald, they may appear in all the animal forms that are found in the sea as well as in human form. Encountering the *rávvgat* has dangerous consequences. However, unidentified entities living in the sea can sometimes be helpful. Sigvald told a story relating how people were saved.

*Rávvgat* are sometimes used as an explanation for a scary experience or for having trouble. Sometimes for helpful experiences no name is given. The story I heard was that, one time during a storm, a group of ships were crossing the fjord, at one moment a man appeared on one of the ships and guided the ship to the other side. When they had safely arrived, the man jumped into the sea and disappeared. The other ships wrecked in the storm and their whole crew drowned.

In a story related by Nanna, the consequence of a girl's encounter with *rávvgat* is similar to that of being 'caught' by *gufihttarat*. The harmful effects resulting from contact with *gufihttarat* include unrest, insanity and suicide. A mother once consulted Nanna. The mother was concerned for her daughter. The family lived some distance away, in Lyngen,

so the mother communicated with Nanna by telephone and by letter. She told Nanna that a group of children had been playing along the coastline. The children saw something come out of the water that looked like people and that these people wanted to have contact with them. The children left the area but her daughter had stayed. The mother described to Nanna that thereafter her child would regularly go to the spot, and that she was somehow caught into going there. The child's behavior had changed and she was not her normal self any more. She was very sad, ate very little and became ill. The mother told that she said many things that were fantasy. After the mother had consulted Nanna, the girl would say to her mother, "Nanna is here, and she is talking to me." Nanna first speculated that the child had possibly taken something, an object from the sea, and had brought it home. But she finally concluded that the encounter of people who had come out of the sea, were the cause of the problem. Nanna said that she could not help in this case.

Nanna did not employ the term *rúvggat* for what was encountered by the child, even though she diagnosed the problem to be stemming from the encounter. Nanna also never used the word *gufihtar* when speaking about a diagnosis. Nanna said that the child had 'received a scare', *ráimmahallat*. The verb *ráibmat* means to scare and *hallat* shows that the verb is passive, so that the scare has been received. Nanna was indicating that an influence arose from a contact and the influence was harmful. Nanna's careful way of speaking can also be noted in stories where the storyteller does not identify the entity encountered. The identity of what was encountered is left open and may be identified later when further events have clarified who or what was encountered. Stories sometimes build on earlier stories in providing an explanation for certain events.

#### *Eahpáražžat (dead-child beings)*

Pentikäinen noted a high prevalence in Finnmark of accounts describing the supra-normal dead-child experiences and concluded that this was evidence of the actuality of the belief in this district. One recollection, from the many noted, was the appearance at the moment of sunset of a ptarmigan, which was laughing and then changed into a child (Pentikäinen 1973, 150). Sigrid, an older woman from Sandvik, defined the *eahpáražžat*: "It is these abandoned children, left to die, and they had no name. They had not been baptized (*gásttašuvvon*).” In her definition, the determining factor is that a child had not received a name. According to her husband such stories are not as prevalent as in earlier times. Ole related:

These old things from old times, you can not hear anything about them any more. It is all gone. I think it was the people themselves, I think they made it all themselves. They could hear different things, birds, fox, and then they could say, "Oh, this is an eahpáraš." You have heard a

fox yourself, and it can be a scary sound. And an owl, they can have an awful voice. I was just here and I heard an owl in the darkness. I think people in old times were just telling stories, prompted by these sounds in nature and then just assigned them to an *eahpáraš*. And they enjoyed telling stories. And they made up a lot.

The characteristics of an *eahpáraš* encounter include being frightened. There is a danger that one would be captured into repeatedly visiting the location. Sigvald told of the warnings he received as a child and the consequence to a former neighbor who did not heed such warnings.

We were told as children not to go to a little pond up on the hill here, because it was not a place that was a good place to visit. There was an *eahpáraš* there. It is not a nice experience when it comes. A former neighbor started to visit where the spirits were, and for much of his life he was not well. He was trapped into going there to visit them, and he was almost going to stay there. So, it shows that people can be trapped by spirits.

Sigvald's stories indicate that the measure of contact determines how permanent the spirit's influence will be. When the contact is such that the spirit has a lasting influence, a change in the person is precipitated, which is observable in behavior and emotional life and may even lead to suicide.

Not so many years ago, another man started to visit a lake along the fjord here. People noticed that he was often there. They also knew that an *eahpáraš* was in that area. He never said what he was doing up there. It ended when after a time he took his own life. He parked his car there, placed a hose so that the exhaust went into the car and took his life.

Concerning the man who committed suicide after repeatedly visiting an *eahpáraš* location, Sigvald said, "The man was too curious in the spirit and he went crazy." In other words, he had succumbed to the *eahpáraš* influence. The healthy response to an *eahpáraš* is flight, and Sigvald related:

Not so long ago, two young boys were swimming in the same lake. They heard screaming and wailing that came closer and closer to them. They ran away so quickly that they did not stop to dress themselves, not even to gather up their clothes.

The *eahpáraś* is not at peace and influences the person coming into their territory by imbuing them with their lack of peace. The situation requires intervention by someone who can bring peace. Sigvald explained:

You have many things living around that people talk about. Like you have the *eahpáraś*; a presence after a baby has been left out in the open nature. The *eahpáraś* complains about what happened, accusing the whole environment for what has happened, and also reminding people what was done. The *eahpáraś* needs to be given peace. They do not continue forever – I do not know how long they continue to do what they do – but they need somebody who can give them rest and peace. That is done. We had an *eahpáraś* between Sandvik and Kolvik, whom Gamvik took care of and put to rest, so that it was again peaceful there.

Sigvald related that Gamvik, the ‘teacher’ of Nanna, was able to give peace to the *eahpáraś*:

Gamvik was a *buorideaddji*; he knew how to do it. *Eahpárazzat* were doing what they had to do. It was needed to ask them to give peace to the people around there. He would maybe not just ask them, but tell them not to harm anymore, saying, “It is already known what has been going on, so now it is time to be silent.” According to what I have heard, this was done at other places around here. There are still places where they have not been put to rest. But, if it was close to where people lived, someone was asked to give peace to the *eahpáraś* there, and this in turn would give peace to the people living there.

Sigvald explained that when there is an encounter, it happens in order to deliver a message, and this holds true for an *eahpáraś* as well as a *gufihtar* encounter: “If one meets an *eahpáraś* or a *gufihtar*, they have a message. Otherwise you don’t meet them. If an *eahpáraś* is bothering, it is telling something.” Sigvald discussed the reasons for the practice of abandoning a newly born child.

Sometimes children were born different from normal children, the child could be sick or people thought that they were *lonuhus* [a changeling]. It could have been exchanged with a *gufihtar* child. This could happen after the child was born but usually not a newly born child. The danger existed as long as it was a child. I have thought about the word *eahpáraś*, and I wonder if it is connected to the word, *eahpidit*, which means ‘to doubt’. The doubting could be then a doubt about where does the child

belong, to the society into which it was born? It could be a *gufihtar* child when it is thought that it was exchanged, but that was usually not a newly born child. Does the society want to take this child to itself as a part of it? This would be why one would have this doubt. This is possible with the advent of Christianity when the child was born out of wedlock, because as I have assessed Christianity, there was reason for a baby out of wedlock to be abandoned.

Baptism and receiving a name are the determining factors deciding whether or not the dead child becomes an *eahpáraš*. Nils' wife, Anne, stated:

In older times, that a child had a name was very important, and the longest time should be a week. If that child dies, then it becomes a *balddonas* [an object of fear] and what we call an *eahpáraš*. It could happen that the child could die at home, but if it did not have a name, this made no difference. That was how it was.

Anne clarifies that an *eahpáraš* is not simply a newborn that has been abandoned out in the wilds but is foremost a newborn that has died before it had received a name. The *eahpáraš* elicits fear and the term used above for this was *balddonas* (an object of fear).

Sigrid referred to the *eahpáraš* as abandoned children without a name. Apparently these children can find no rest without a name. Sigvald gave the following explanation for why the child without a name, an *eahpáraš*, would continue to stay where it died:

The name gives the child a connection, so it can go 'there.' Otherwise it only stays. The *buoriddeadji* asks God's help to give peace. The *eahpáraš* is unconnected. To be connected is to fix it. The connection is to God.

So according to Sigvald the *eahpáraš* has no other connection than the location in which it died and therefore it has no other option but to stay at this location. It presents a threat to others in that its predicament is infectious. The *eahpáraš* has the possibility to leave its location when a more propitious connection, by asking God's help, is formed. The *buorieaddje* Gamvik could interpret the message that was 'delivered' by the *eahpáraš* and his diagnosis was also the cure. He said to the *eahpáraš*, "It is known" and gave peace to the *eahpáraš*. The procedure to 'clear up' an *eahpáraš* presence related by Sigvald was to tell the *eahpáraš* that it is known and to have peace. Sigvald has explained that the *eahpáraš* is unconnected. To connect it is to 'fix it' and the 'fixing' connection is to God. He further explained that a haunting spirit is also an unconnected spirit and should be connected again. The *eahpáraš* haunts, as do other 'unconnected' spirits. Characteristic of *gufihtar*,



*návga* and *eahpáraš* is their tendency to capture one into their place and time. They are just outside normal perception.

Naming - influence and advice from ancestors

Rydving writes regarding the Lule Sami that they were considered Christian by the clergy during the 17<sup>th</sup> century because the rituals in connection with naming, marriage and burial were largely performed according to Christian observances. Unknown to the clergy, however, Sami rituals for naming continued. The first task was to find out the correct name. The mother prayed to the birth goddess, *Sáráhkká*. And should a departed family member appear in her dream, this was considered to indicate that this relative's name was the correct name. Other options were divination techniques employed by the father or the *noaidi*. After returning home from a Christian baptism, the Scandinavian name was washed off. The child obtained its Sami name through a water-pouring ritual. In addition, the child received a certain theriomorphic guardian spirit, a *nimme-guelie*, 'name-fish' (Rydving 1993, 115-6).<sup>27</sup> Rydving writes that among the Lule Sami a child received a new Sami name only if it became ill or cried a great deal after the Christian baptism (Ibid., 118). According to Rydving sources on the North Sami especially emphasized that children became ill and started to cry after the Christian ceremony (Ibid., 117).

Toivo Itkonen, writing on the Inari Sami, stated that it was the norm to give the new born the name of the grandfather or grandmother. The dead relatives potentially retrieved the child to their realm if a name should be given that was not used by the group. He noted that consistently the forefathers were involved in the lives of their descendants (Itkonen 1946, 194).

According to my informants, baptism in present day Finnmark can still be performed according to the Sami tradition. First, the baptism (*gásttašeapmi*) is performed at home. This ceremony is followed by baptism in the church, *risttašeapmi* (church baptism). For *gásttašeapmi* (baptism at home), the child's parents invite someone who can read and write; words are read from the Book of Psalms and a written record of the baptism is made. This document is then delivered to the church, and the church records the baptism. It can be noted that *gásttašeapmi*, even though stated to be a Christian baptism, is foremost a naming ceremony. More generally, the word *gásttašit* can be used when typifying someone, for example, 'Now I am going to tell you (*gásttašit*) what you really are!'

A man from Kolvik, now in his nineties, told that when he was young there was still a close relationship between people. When someone died, the name lived

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27 Rydving regards the 'name-fish' as a theriomorphic auxiliary spirit, and not as a reincarnated ancestor like Bäckman or a materialised soul like Strömbäck. "In contrast to these authors, I do not interpret the Saami naming customs in 'soul'-terms" (Rydving 1993. 117).

on among the people, living there a long time after. This close relationship was the reason those who had passed away let their voices sometimes be heard. They kept a dialogue and could even give advice.

Nils emphasized the importance of a child receiving a name. He was unhappy because the baptism for his grandchild was not performed within the prescribed time and also because his son and daughter-in-law had had both ceremonies (*gásttašeaþmi* and *risttašeaþmi*) performed at the same time. His opinion was that the child has no peace until it receives its name. Nils related:

It used to be a rule that a week should not pass by before the name was given. My son's child was four months old and I was sorry for this delay. The child was crying for these four months because it was without a name. The child was quiet immediately upon receiving its name.

Sigvald explained that naming is important because the name is a connection and therefore the name must be correct:

The name must fit and be correct, it is connection. In Sami, for example, a name of a mountain is descriptive of the mountain. A wrong name is then not descriptive of the mountain. The name of the mountain works as a guide for orientation. Just so for a person, a name that does not fit the person would be a wrong name. Events could show that the name was wrong, events like misfortune. The person is contained or described by the name and, if wrong, can not find his right connection.

I asked Sigvald's brother, Hjalmar, to explain the following story that demonstrates the importance and influence of the name. A family from Kolvik changed the name of a boat after the boat had had an accident on its maiden voyage. Hjalmar said:

Yes, with Sami people this is the way, to change the name when something like an accident happens, because the name is connected to memory. When you name your children with the name of a forefather, you are connecting a positive memory and association to the child with this name. In Kautokeino you find, John John John John. So they say Four John, or Three Martin. When a boat is used up, too old, you will not name your new boat with the old boat's name. The name would be associated with being used up and finished. You will give the boat a new name. And if the boat, as in your example, has had an accident, it is to not associate the boat with this misfortune that one

will then give the boat a new name. This is so that the memory is not carrying the misfortune - constantly being reminded of it with the name that it carried at the time of the accident. Memory works so, it is the association and expectation of good feelings to the name or the expectation and association of misfortune connected to the name.

Sigvald added that because his family was Christian he was not familiar with the practice of renaming. He only knew that a child should have a name:

In our family there has not been spoken about renaming. I heard about the woman in Kolvik renaming the boat. Christianity probably put these things away, and then it belonged to superstition. My only experience about the name is the home baptism. It was done and found to be important. The child should not be without a name.

Apparently the 'correct' name is that name which is 'life furthering', because the name functions as a 'correct' connection or compass leading one on a profitable route. Should it be incorrect it leads towards misfortune. When the name is given at baptism it forms the connection to God and to the ancestors. Baptism, a name giving ceremony, forms the correct connection to the community and to God.

It is interesting to compare the statements from the source material employed by Rydving with the present-day account as given by Nils. The sources for the North Sami especially emphasized that the children became ill and started to cry after the Christian ceremony. These views do not contradict each other, but show that the name is important and should be correct.

We can note for the Inari Sami that the ancestors potentially behaved in a similar way as the *gufihttarat* and the *eahparažžat* as presented by my informants, in that they could capture, in this case the child, and take him into their realm. Additionally, we can note another similarity, but in this case the *positive* role assigned to both the *gufihttarat* and the ancestors, which is the giving of helpful information or advice. From my survey I would say that the ninety-year-old man was exceptional in his story about the ancestor's voices being heard and indeed he indicated that the close relationship between people was a requisite and is no longer common. However, Mikkel Gaup gave another account in which someone dead gave advice. He related that when he feels the need for his dead teacher's advice, he makes contact by *joiking* (singing) this man's signature *joik* (song). In this case the signature song is the identity marker, rather than the name, and is used for establishing contact with the dead.

Although Sami seem to accept the continuing presence of ancestors, present day stories only obliquely allude to the possibility of receiving advice from ancestors.

Relating events in the 1960s a neighbor of Sigvald suggests that ancestors may take care of their descendants. Six boys ranging in age from six to ten were on the mountain for a few days. They were without adult supervision, a quite normal situation in those days. After some days, they decided to return home and started to walk. The oldest boy got tired, lay down and slept. All the younger boys continued on their way and returned home. The oldest was expected but some time passed before his arrival. When after some hours he came home, he told what had happened. He had slept, but an old woman came and woke him saying that it was now time to return home because the weather would soon change. The explanation provided together with this story was that the parents trusted that their children would be taken care of when they were out alone. They themselves would not have to be there to watch out for them.

### *Gomit (Ghosts)*

Gomit are usually described as auditory experiences, but may also include visual experiences. Rávdná said about *gomit*:

Gomit are something that you only hear. That you can hear at the lake close to where we live. At the end of the lake is a rock and it is like there is a door in this rock. It was in August, it was dark. I went out for some fuel, I heard someone cutting trees near by the rock. I knew that no one could be there. I went to look if someone was there, and saw no one, but I could hear someone cutting trees. The sound was like big trees when they are falling. So I went back to the lávvu and built a fire. I listened further, but it had stopped. They are not harming anyone. But there can come strange and bad dreams. It is not good to sleep there, where the fence is. There is a place along this fence that is so unpleasant, that I do not want to be there. And if we have to get something done there, we finish as soon as possible. There is a little forest there; this forest is so different from all others I do not know what is there. I try to be quickly out of this area.

Ghost behavior is included within the category of *gomit*. In English, we would use the term ‘haunting’ for ghost behavior. In the dictionary, *gopmi* (singular), “ghost, specter,” includes the gloss, “aggravating” (Nielsen 1932, Vol. II, 158), which indicates a disturbance. The experience of disturbance related in the stories is of an object moving of its own accord or of hearing unaccountable sounds. Further, the haunting or disturbance is registered by general unrest, which includes the unrest of animals. Underlying these stories of haunting is the concept that objects potentially retain a connection to their

former owners. The stories relate that a question may be raised concerning an object found out on the land. This happens when a disruptive event, which could be noise or movement, occurs. The disruptive activity is explained to be a result of this object's presence, that is, the disruption is emanating from the object. Then the question will be asked by whom was the object formerly owned or to what was it connected? Also, one is advised not to take what one finds out on the land because one never knows to whom it belongs. Sigvald related a story from Sandvik:

Two boys from a family heard the broom being used on the front porch, the shoes being cleaned and then someone going inside the house, up the stairs and only then it was quiet. They heard this but knew that no one else was home. Then it happened again, the broom swept, the shoes were heard being cleaned. The boys, as an experiment, nailed the broom to the wall. Even with the broom nailed, they heard it sweeping. They asked their father what this could be? The father thought it could be coming from the old planks he had collected by the fjord and had used to build the house. They opened up the walls, removed just those planks, and took them back to the sea. After that, the house was quiet and peaceful.

Another story I heard from Heidi, a young woman who grew up in Stabburnes. She had bought a necklace containing a single stone at the market. After this particular purchase she noticed unrest in herself. She considered the cause might be the stone in the necklace and placed the necklace in the barn in order to have a good night sleep. But the horses started to make such a commotion that she brought it back and placed it in her bedroom. During that night she woke up (adding that she could still have been asleep) and saw a man with a black coat and hat in her doorway. The next day she asked Nanna about these events. Nanna first asked her to describe the man and then concluded that this was Kaaven and that the stone was his. Therefore, the stone should be returned to the place where it had been found. Heidi returned the necklace to the woman who had sold it to her. Heidi related that this woman looked sheepishly when Heidi confronted her with the fact that the stone had not come from the place the woman had claimed. The story of Heidi and the necklace illustrated according to Sigvald how a transmission of the *noaidi* inheritance was possible via an object of a former *noaidi*.<sup>28</sup> Sigvald said, "It would come from an object that belonged to the former *noaidi*. It would be in there. Remember the dream that Heidi had? The amulet belonged to Kaaven and when Heidi had the amulet, Kaaven visited her." Sigvald refers to the necklace as an amulet.

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28 Date of interview, 28 April 1998; the date is important because it is prior to Sigvald's acceptance of Nanna's gift and therefore he is expressing a commonly held notion.

The dead may continue to be connected to their objects. Sigvald told a story of a canister that was moving. The canister had belonged to a former neighbor. After having been stored by the widow in the garage for a long period, it was now at another neighbor's house, but they did not want to have it because the canister moved of its own accord. They returned it to the widow. Sigvald commented, "The spirit in the canister is unconnected. All these unconnected spirits living after man dies, they should be connected again. God's spirit does not bother people. To be connected is to fix it. The connection is to God." Sigvald explained his view of connection between objects or possessions and a deceased person:

All what God has made has God's spirit in it. All what man has made has man's spirit in it. Whatever it is - tools, houses, etc., that which is manmade - sometimes you experience gomit [ghosts]. You see or hear what is connected to the person who made it. It is what is left after death. It can be the body itself or that person's possessions. It is not a rule that something makes noise. It looks like it depends on the person whose possession it was, why there is no peace.

Sigvald stated that a haunting could be viewed as 'unfinished justice'. Sigvald's concept of 'unfinished justice' is also contained in his view of the *eahpáraš*. He explained that the *eahpáraš* is said to be complaining to the community of its unjust fate. When correctly joined to God, there would not be 'left-over-life'. Sigvald said, "The ancestors are not disruptive, they have joined God."

It is possible that ghosts are employed by a *noaidi*.<sup>29</sup> Ghost elements can be utilized in practices where harm is intended. However, the activity may not necessarily be undertaken by a *noaidi*. Today, stories of causing injury are predominantly from Kautokeino where it seems that almost everyone has heard about it. Causing injury could involve the use of soil from a grave. The soil would be put into the unsuspecting person's drink or food or thrown onto them. This is not necessarily done by a *noaidi* but by the few that find such acts beneficial.<sup>30</sup> The experience of a *gopmi*, usually not a visual but an auditory experience, may be unpleasant and disruptive, but there appears to be no direct harm as a result of its presence. However, when used by a person with evil intentions, a ghost may be harmful.

### *Gáccit (groups of helpers)*

In Chapter One, the helping spirits of the *noaidi* were discussed, and the term employed was *noaidegáccit*. Nielsen's dictionary defines it as "a Lapp sorcerer's attendant spirits."

29 A story in which the use of a ghost by a *noaidi* is demonstrated will be presented as the final entry in this chapter.

30 Adolf Steen (1966) has published a collection of charms of this nature.

In singular form, the definition of *gázzi* is “household, assembly of people” (Nielsen 1932, Vol. II, 7). Therefore the term *gázzi* (singular) indicates a physical assembly. When employed as the last part of a compound word (for example, John-*gázzi*) *gázzi* designates John with his household or companions. In the plural form *gáccit* are understood as spirits. John is a member of the group (*gázzi*) of people who join him in his work. The *noaidi* has his helpers (*noaidegáccit*) but he is not himself a member of this group. Clarity is provided by the context in which the term is used. Sigvald explained that should he have a plan to do some work on the farm, those helping him would be referred to as Sigvald-*gázzi*, denoting a physical assembly of people helping him to achieve his goal. The use of the personal name followed by *gázzi* indicates that there is an assembly that is connected to, and pursues the goal of, the named individual.

A story earlier mentioned told of a man who was thrown off a path by an invisible travelling group (a *fárru* experience). Concerning this experience Sigvald explained, “If he had been asked *who* was travelling along this path, his answer would have been, *gáccit*,” and by this answer a Sami listener would understand that the travelers were non-physical.

Nanna used the term *gáccit* with subtlety. She would say, “John’s *gáccit* are working,” meaning that John’s ideas were influencing the community. In other words, Nanna is referring to the effect of the rumors John has spread. Noting the result of the spreading of a rumor, Nanna said, “This comes from John’s *vuoiŋŋat* (spirits).” When Nanna was critical of someone’s effect in the community, she said, “Oh, these small *gáccit* (helpers).” For Nanna, ‘these small helpers’ could be overruled by thoughts that were stronger. Stronger thoughts are those thoughts that are connected to God. Simply stated, *gáccit* are thoughts and ideas, and people have *gáccit*, which can be sent out into the community for a good or bad result. Sigvald said about working as a healer:

One ‘gets’ from the people around one. People have *gáccit* and you ‘get’ energy from people and set their *gáccit* to help. If you are going to have a goal together and they have a will to do that, they will also give energy. *Gáccit* are thoughts and ideas; it is spiritual, you could name it with ‘helpers’.

Solveig told that she might think of *gáccit* “when something is bothering, or things are going wrong.” She gave the example that the *gáccit* hid a utensil she needed for sewing. After an unsuccessful search she drew this conclusion and said, “Probably the *gáccit* have taken it away” (“*Várra lea gáccit dolvon*”). When the *gáccit* have taken it “it is useless to continue to search; the utensil will return on its own accord after a few days.” She also related another experience concerning a period in which she was pursuing a project without success. She thought that the *gáccit* were active and stood behind the lack of success.

At one moment I saw something like a shadow (*suoivvan*) in the next room. Then I realized that the project was not succeeding because I had been pursuing exclusively my own ideas and the project needed to be inclusive of the other participant's ideas. When I later indeed did include their ideas, the project was successful. I said to myself [after seeing the shadow and having the insight to include the other participant's ideas] "Oh, it is this helper (*veahkki*)". The helper was correcting me.

Sigvald explained Solveig's story saying that the *gáccit* were the invisible actors behind the lack of success of Solveig's project. Sigvald stated "When the shadow was first seen it was separate from her, as soon as she received advice from the experience she called the shadow with a term that brings it in connection with her and she called it *veahkki* (helper)."

#### *Vuoigŋa (spirit)*

Nielsen defines *vuoigŋa* as "spirit; breath" (Nielsen 1932, Vol. III, 793). Investigating the soul concepts of the Skolt-Sami, Itkonen writes that the life-spirit (*heagga*, modern spelling) dwells in the breast in the neighborhood of the heart, if not the heart itself, and that characteristic for life are 'blood' and 'breath' (*vuoigŋa*, modern spelling). Concerning the influence of Christianity, Itkonen writes that the concept 'soul' is not known by the Skolt, who are Greek Orthodox. However, the Lutheran Sami believe that the human life-spirit (*heagga*) and the soul (*siellu*) reside in a person, and he concludes that this concept of soul among the Lutheran Sami is an influence from Christianity (Itkonen 1946, 161).

Itkonen's conclusions are supported by my interviewee's views on *siellu*. They are Lutheran Sami and for them the notion of *vuoigŋa* carries the same meaning as the Sami word for soul, *siellu*, probably a loan word from the Norwegian *sjel*.

Ole explained his understanding of *vuoigŋa* and *siellu* from a Christian perspective: "Every person on earth has an immortal *vuoigŋa*. *Ibmil* (God) has given it to each one of us. That is what is written and I can not tell it differently or interpret it differently. And, *siellu* is this immortal *vuoigŋa*." Rávdná understands *vuoigŋa* to be connected to people: "It is only connected to people. Other living things do not have *vuoigŋa* – animals do not have *vuoigŋa*. Animals have *heagga* (life), which is connected to the *váibmu* (heart)." Nils understands *vuoigŋa* as the immortal part of man, which may stay around after death and frighten people. The solution for this disturbance is to ask someone to come and read from the Bible.

Old people used to say, "Vuoigŋa will never die." If a person dies, the *vuoigŋa* will not. People today do not understand that we all have *vuoigŋa*. They think too simple, that a person is just living. But that is



not so. *Vuoigya* is living. It is written so in the Bible. People today are scared of this part of a person. If they hear something, they can not even return it. If you hear something, you need to be able to tell the *vuoigya* that you have not harmed it. From the very beginning people have died and so, here also, there is no place untouched, no place where *vuoigya* is not. You need your Bible if you are scared and ask them to leave. We have had them even here, but I have not heard them recently. Earlier when we arrived here we often would hear something. We had to find somebody who could 'read'. They are gone. We do not hear it any more.

Sigvald explained that *vuoigya* is connected to locations where one has lived. He does not agree with other people's beliefs that spirits haunt graveyards.

We have no stories about activity at the old graveyard. There it is quiet. There is nothing happening. There are just the bones, what is physically left after life. The rest is gone, wherever it is, it does not live there. What is not physical - *vuoigya* - has left the graveyard. They are doing something, we do not know. There is a lot going on, but there at the graveyard it is peace. It is happening where it has been lived, where you have all these marks, it still happens. It looks like the life itself makes or leaves something. It is still going on even if you do not see it.

An encounter experience is likely to happen where people have lived, rather than at the graveyard.

#### *Fárrosaš, Maŋŋásaš and Ovdasaš*

Another genre of stories tells of an experience in which someone is seen or heard prior to or following the actual arrival. A non-physical companion travelling together with an individual may also be observed. An experience of seeing someone accompanying another is a *fárrosaš* and is inauspicious. The *fárrosaš* experience bodes ill for the person seen accompanied by another, that is, another who is not a physical reality. Karen related:

That is bad luck (*guoržžu*). Once upon a time, my mother did not tell what she saw. She decided it must be a walking stick accompanying my brother when he arrived, because there were no other people around. He died the same winter. That was my brother. On another occasion, Piera Ande had seen a man arriving with Johannes. Per Ande said, "I just departed from the lake and on the lake I saw this man skiing even

though Johannes was surely alone.” Piera Ande forbade me to tell this further - nothing happened to Johannes. Maybe it sprang from being snow blind in the spring.

Karen’s stories are examples of stories in which the final conclusion is postponed until future events clarify the experience. The mother, hoping to be wrong, had decided that what she had seen was only a walking stick. However, the brother died, so what she had seen was a *fárrosas̥* (travel companion). Because Johannes had no follow-up of bad luck and continued to be healthy, Karen concluded that seeing a travel companion, *fárrosas̥*, had been inaccurate and that this mistake had been due to snow blindness.

The experience of an arrival subsequent to the actual arrival of a person is inauspicious and called *man̥ḡásas̥*. It can be visual or auditory. Sigvald related a case of *man̥ḡásas̥*: “A father, mother and son came home. The mother and son checked with each other because they both heard the father arrive after their actual arrival. Shortly thereafter the father became ill and died.” From this story, we can see that the hearing of the subsequent arrival is first checked. The experience is conclusive when events verify the *man̥ḡásas̥*; the father died.

The *ovdasas̥* experience can also be visual or auditory and refers to the experience that another person is present before their actual arrival. The experience is auspicious for both parties. Having the experience more often than others indicates that this person has special powers. The one with special powers can be either the one who sees the early arrival or the one who is seen to arrive earlier. Kaaven (1837-1918)<sup>31</sup> was said to experience *ovdasas̥* often. Sigvald said that Kaaven would tell his wife to set an extra plate for dinner because someone was arriving, and this always occurred. The Sami interpretation of *ovdasas̥* is not that one has seen a spirit. When asked specifically if these experiences are *vuoig̃na*, both Ole and Sigrid answered emphatically, “No!” Ole stated that it is not easy to say exactly what the experience is:

If I understand correctly, for example, when you would be coming?  
This is a very difficult question. I do not deny that these experiences exist, but I cannot explain where they come from or why they are there. Today, it is not so much spoken about. It was earlier more spoken about. Then you also had *gufihtar* and those kinds of things. You could hear they saw a cow, horse or sheep and none of them were existing. Like in winter, you could see someone walking and there were no footprints left. But, we do not hear about this today. And even up until now, no one has come with an answer explaining what this is about and why.

31 Kaaven will be the subject of Chapter Four and has been referred to as the ‘last *noaidi*.’

The effect on a person of an *ovdasaš* experience can be a certain over excitement. Karen related, “I have seen an *ovdasaš*. Even though what is coming before you is not a bad thing, later, I was so scared I could hardly sleep.” Karen told of an *ovdasaš* experience that involved her son:

I was sitting here, just here, and looking out through the door, and I saw my son, Mahtte, coming along the road with a four-wheeler and a trailer carrying poles for the fence. He just passed by outside the camp. It was only last week; the same day there was a burial in Lakselv. Later my daughter, Berit, came down from the lake cabin, and I asked if Mahtte had reached the cabin - Berit had not seen anyone. Later, I asked my husband, Piera, if Mahtte had been there. He had not seen anyone. I thought, now I am going to see what the old people used to, and I will see if it was correct what old people used to say. When Mahtte did finally arrive together with a friend, I wondered what they would say if I told them, “I already saw Mahtte here yesterday”. You see, he arrived the day after I saw him; that is *ovdasaš*. And I thought, “Okay, just go further, I saw you already yesterday.” What you see after someone is not good.

In another story told by Karen the *ovdasaš* experience was auditory, not visual.

My brother, Lemet, was in the *lávvu* with his son, when they heard someone come in. They recognized by his movements who it was, Johan Mahtte. He comes and sits on the other side of the fire, taking birch bark from behind the *boaššu* [part of *lávvu* where the food is stored] in order to make a fire. They see nothing but only hear it. His son asked, “What is this?” His father answered, “It is something that sometimes comes.” The boy did not sleep until Johan Mahtte really arrived. The son asked him then, “What were you doing here earlier?” But, he had not been there.

The outcome of an *ovdasaš* experience was shown to be beneficial in a story told by Karen about the herding of reindeer. It was at first not possible to herd the reindeer, but the reindeer became manageable when Karen’s brother followed the lead of what Karen had seen in an *ovdasaš* experience.

Another time, my brother Lemet and I were on the peninsula with Lemet’s herd. Among his flock, I had five reindeer; another man, Ravnna Jovvna, had three. I saw the whole flock resting beside the *lávvu*,

I went to Ravonna Jovnna, and told him this. He asked, “How can you see something that leaves no footprints in the snow?” He said, “It could be the old trees that you saw, because the flock is not there.” My brother said nothing; he went and brought the flock to where I had seen them resting close to the lávvu. Then the reindeer were so tame that I could gather my animals with leads and take them with me. You see the animals had been so wild, we were unable to gather and put leads on them, but when brought by Lemet to where I had seen them, they were tame.

According to Rávdná, people used to take heed from such experiences: “Old people would sometimes tell what was going to happen to someone; they had seen it by an *ovdasaš*.” Some people will be experienced as ‘arriving early’ more frequently. In a story told by Rávdná, Nillas commented that he is frequently observed before his actual arrival.

We had a camp at the little river. There were other people there, working on the fence. It was evening. We had eaten and were going to sleep. I could hear someone coming. He had a walking stick and put it beside the lávvu. Emptying his pack, he took out pans, and walked down to the river for water. I thought this would be the people that were working on the fence. But, he did not return. I had almost slept, but stayed awake waiting for someone to return. I went out to see if I could see the stick or pack, but there was nothing. We were tired, so we went to sleep. We slept long into the next day. We were sitting in the tent. It was a hot day, and we heard someone coming and doing exactly the same things - going down to the river and not returning. We investigated, and there was Nillas sitting drinking coffee by the river, but he had only arrived that day. Nillas said, “Ovdasaš,” and that he often has someone preceding him.

The *ovdasaš* provides foresight and such valuable knowledge is said to happen most often to one who is known for having the ability to accurately predict the future. Sigvald said:

Some healers are receiving *ovdasaš* more than others; for others (healers as well as not healers) you can see by their *ovdasaš* experience that the possibility is there also for them to know coming events. But it is like a child learning to walk, after a few steps it falls. The *ovdasaš* experience says something about their openness to the picture of the future, plus, it says something about the openness to the picture of the one who is experienced as coming early.

Some people are more 'open' to the experience than others. It may occur to an average person but then it is simply happening to him rather than that he has any say over the episode, whereas the experience appears to be 'available' to the healer.

The notion that the shaman can be in two places at one time has often been assigned to people of a shamanic culture. Sigvald, when confronted with some shaman deeds as recorded by Schefferus<sup>32</sup> to show that shamans can be in two places at one time, remarked that the Sami understanding of an *ovdasaš* experience is not that the person is in two places at one time.

No, it is not. It is a message or communication. The *ovdasaš* can be experienced in different ways and it is one kind of communication. Before I arrived at Berit Anna, she told that that day she began the day by cleaning the house, therefore she knew someone was arriving for a visit. She said to her husband, "I think someone is coming to us for a visit." Someone else could be sleepy before someone arrives and then "Oh, that is why I was sleepy." Or we are talking about someone and they arrive, and we say, "Oh, you are going to live a long time." When Karen experienced her son coming early, she did not then think "Oh, he is in two places at the same time," but the experience was understood that he is coming.

Sigvald said concerning the notion of being in two places at one time:

That is outside of what I can say anything about. I leave open whether he was physically there or would be there by thoughts and spiritual power, with which you can do a lot more. Like Karen said, someone was chasing the reindeer back, was it a helper or Gamvik himself? You can travel to another place in your thoughts, and this can be so strong that even people at that location can feel that you are there.

The idiom of expression 'the shaman is in two places at one time' and 'the shaman is experienced at a location at some leagues distance' are for Sigvald not representative of the same. Sigvald said, "The *ovdasaš* experience is communication, this communication can tell something about coming events."

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32 In an account in *Lapponia* the retrieving of an object, such as a mitten of the patient, is stated: "Their general Opinion is, That if the Drummer did bring it away, there is great Hopes of the Patients recovery.... They give you an Account of whatever is proposed to them (though at some hundred Leagues distance)....And to take away all Objection, to what the Drummer relates....he shows them certain Tokens, such as are proposed by the Person, who asked him the Question"(Scheffer 1704, 148 and 145)

*Animal helping-spirits*

Helping spirits are often associated with animals. In the *Historia Norwegiae*, the magician's helping-spirit took the form of a whale.<sup>33</sup> Laestadius referred to the *noaidi* helping-spirit as a bird. I have only heard stories of whales and birds as spirit-helpers.

Mikkel Gaup told that a hawk always followed him to his place of introspection and would dive at anyone who was accompanying him. Kaaven encountered a whale (see below and Chapter Four). It was suggested that Nanna had two magpies. Laestadius wrote about the *sáivo*-world, where there lived people, gods, fish, birds and reindeer. Their life is similar to the Sami's own, but they are happier and richer. The *noaidi* used the *sáivo*-bird because, just as the *sáivo* people were richer and better, the bird was stronger (§ 76). Sigvald explained that the bird would be a normal bird but when it was a *noaidi-loddi* (*noaidi*-bird) "then it is the 'greater' in the form of a bird. If you are also connected to what the bird is connected to then the bird can do something; the bird is then the gate." The magpie has a special place. Even without a connection to a *noaidi*, the magpie is singled out as a bird that should not be disturbed; to disturb it would bring bad luck (*guoržžu*). Sigvald related events that demonstrate that bad luck results from disturbing the magpie:

There is a farmer in Billefjord who combines farming with a taxi service. He was building a new farm building. In the meanwhile when the carpenters were working, a magpie took shelter in the building and it stayed inside. When all was finished and the workers were about to close the big doors, the farmer asked the carpenters to chase out the magpie before closing the building. But they did not do it. They said, "This is not our business." So the farmer took a pole chased the magpie out and closed the doors. Before going to bed that night, he checked the oil of one of his taxis. It was dark so he had a flashlight. He forgot the flashlight on the motor and closed the hood. So the hood was not closed and the wind that night opened it and it broke the windshield. So an accident. He would be driving the next day, so he took his second car. The car suddenly stopped, the motor would not go, so he had to be towed to Lakselv. Well it can happen that a car won't go. He also had a bigger taxi when there were more people. He had a driver who was going to Hammerfest and on the way the bus stopped. It would not go anymore. The driver had many people he was transporting and he had to arrange with the owner how to get them to Hammerfest. Over the telephone he said, "You should clear

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33 The *Historia Norwegiae* employs the Norwegian term *gand* (see Chapter One).

up with the magpie.” The farmer started to think, “Three accidents in a row, maybe he is right.” It is told he had his talk with the magpie and promised not to harm it again.

At the Persen farm, a magpie bird should not be disturbed when it is building its nest. To bother the magpie would give all kinds of bad luck. I asked Sigvald about the magpie nest under his roof and Sigvald explained:

The magpie has a position among Sami people, and on this farm it also has a position. It is a bird that you don't harm, because if you take care of it, it brings you good luck. But, if you harm it, it is a *guoržžoloddi*, which means things will not go well. While I was fixing the roof, the magpie also started to build a nest. I did not stop it from building, so last year there were chicks here. I could not take it down before that. This is the nest from last year so now I can take it down without harming the magpie.

Towards the magpie one should follow rules of respect and correct relationship. When the magpie starts to build its nest, its claim to the location takes precedence, and this speaks of a hierarchy in which man must give way.

#### *Bijat (spell)*

The common idiom for encounter experiences presented so far has been that of a clash between exceptional beings and modern people at a location in which exceptional beings are given precedence. Encounters may also involve a being or entity that has been harnessed to a person or to an object by a *noaidi*, which is understood as the placing of a spell, called *bijat*. Sigvald related:

Harming a magpie and getting bad luck, is not the only way that that can happen. It can happen when somebody puts *bijat* on someone, as it happened to a garage in Lakselv. I don't know exactly how it happened, but there was a *bijat* on this garage, it started to go wrong. It was sold, and the buyer also bought these problems. That continued for a long time. Some ten or fifteen years, until the owner, who thought in these terms, contacted someone who could help to get rid of this *bijat*. So now it is okay; the garage business is going well.

In order to relieve the garage of the spell, the *bijat* was sent back to the one who originally sent it. Sigvald related:

I don't know who did it. What I heard was that the new owners knew about these things and believed that it was *bijat*, and searched out someone who could help them. I heard it was a man from Kautokeino who helped to get rid of it and send the *bijat* back to where it came from. After that it went well. One only sees the results, a comparison of how it was and how it is now. How it happened? It could have been as easy as a talk over the telephone and things were done, like there are people who can heal simply by talking to people over the telephone.

We may conclude that the spell does not lend itself to be directly diagnosed by a non-expert. Events such as on-going bad luck may arouse suspicion that a *bijat* has been placed. The expert is able to assess the nature of the problem and will be called upon for his help. That the spell is indeed sent back is demonstrated by good luck. The following “Billefjord Boat Story” provides an example of the interaction and functioning of bad luck, justice, the *gopmi* (ghost), *fárrosaš* (travel companion), healer, and *bijat* (spell). Sigvald heard the story when he visited the hospital in Hammerfest.

The man from Billefjord had bought a fishing boat. From that time onwards he was in financial difficulty – it went from bad to worse. He also had many small problems with the boat. The boat drifted from the harbor even though the boat was securely tied. Once, while he was sleeping on board, he heard someone say, “I go now”, when there was no one to be seen. He also saw, and then several times, a man dressed in Sami clothing standing in the boat, when no one was actually there. He consulted Mikkel Gaup who suggested that he would visit the boat, but this did not take place. He decided to sell the boat and he did sell it but the boat sank first. Now in pieces, he tried to keep the boat from the shore. He became sick and landed in hospital. While in hospital, he met a man who knew the history of this boat. The former owner was a man who had stolen reindeer. The man from whom the reindeer were stolen had said “Not one penny”, which meant that the thief would not prosper, not even by one penny. When the man from Billefjord recovered, he bought a new boat. He had good luck in fishing. Sometime later when he was out with his new boat, he received a telephone call from a man he did not know, who said, “This was the right thing.” Meaning, it was correct to have left the old boat.

Sigvald explained to me that there was a spell (*bijat*) placed on the boat. The *bijat* was put on the boat and not onto the person of the reindeer thief because the initial wrong was a



wrong involving property and not a wrong that was life threatening. Depending on the intent of the one who placed the *bijat*, it could be temporary or long term. Because the *bijat* was attached to the boat, it continued to be active even though the boat changed ownership. The *bijat* could not simply be sent back, because the *bijat* was just. Should the enterprise not have been just, the *bijat* would have returned to the one who sent it. Mikkel Gaup considered it necessary first to visit the boat to assess what the problem was. Sigvald said, “Mikkel would want to know with what force he would be dealing when he should enter into the problem.” The appearance of the Sami dressed man on the boat demonstrates how a *bijat* can be carried out, in this case, through the presence of a ghost. A Sami listener would surmise that the man in Sami clothing was haunting the boat and was the ghost that loosened the chain at the harbor and also said, “I go now.” It would appear from the story that the *bijat* was put into effect by the words, “Not one penny”, but a Sami listener would leave this open because the one who made this statement may or may not be the one with the special powers. It is possible that the reindeer-herder went to an expert with the request to place a *bijat* on the boat.

An episode from a story I have called “Kaaven and the Whale”<sup>34</sup> demonstrates a *fárrosaš* and a whale experience that is understood to be the sent back evil that Kaaven had initiated. Sigvald related:

The daughter and father were out on their boat and from the shore people saw Kaaven on their boat with them, that is, Kaaven was not physically on board. He was visible as a *fárrosaš*. When the father and daughter arrived in Lyngen and visited a *noaidi* there, he said to them, “Oh, you have something with you that is from Kaaven. We will return it - return it to where it came from.” It was returned in the form of the whale that scared Kaaven. Then it was known that Kaaven had put a *bijat* onto the father and daughter, that is, the *fárrosaš* experience - Kaaven seen on their boat - was then understood to indicate that Kaaven had placed a *bijat*. When people saw Kaaven on their boat, it was at first only called *fárrosaš* because it was not known that Kaaven had placed a *bijat*.

From this story, we can see that a *noaidi* is needed to provide an accurate diagnosis of a situation. Observers on the shore saw Kaaven as a *fárrosaš*, a sighting that was inauspicious for the father and daughter. However, the actual problem for the father and daughter was a spell placed by Kaaven. This was diagnosed by the Lyngen *noaidi*.

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<sup>34</sup> This story will be treated further in Chapter Four.

## Conclusion

### Encounters

In encounters with exceptional beings correct behavior has to be observed. These beings have to be respected; otherwise the encounters may be harmful. The *noaidi* or healer is able to perceive the nature of these encounters and often he is able to counter harmful effects by making the right connections. Some topics frequently recur in encounters with these beings, as follows.

#### Respect and ownership

Land and sea are occupied by more beings than human beings and on occasion these occupants are encountered, which can be dangerous or beneficial. They have the capacity to retain one in their territory. The risk of staying too long and therefore not being able to depart is a danger that the encounter experiences have in common. Where an encounter experience, whether of *gufihttarat*, *eahpáraš*, or *rávvgat*, could be expected it is best to respect their presence by not bothering the residents. In general the idea is to be respectful of ownership. This is shown by (1) returning a haunted object; (2) not disturbing the *gufihttarat* at their location; (3) asking permission to set up the tent from the unseen in-dwellers; (4) staying out of the territory of an *eahpáraš*; and (5) not disturbing a magpie. The encounter can be beneficial when due respect has been given. In return a helpful message might be communicated.

#### Starting and stopping

‘Start’ and ‘stop’ are movements that can be observed in the various encounters.

- 1 In the system of *bijat*, when the spell has been placed on a person or on the source of income (boat, garage), the prosperous flow of life *stops*.
- 2 A person or vehicle may be *stopped* by an encounter with *gufihttarat*. In the stories it is said they are *caught*.
- 3 The magpie would give bad luck if one *stopped* it from doing what it would naturally do, for example building (*starting*) a nest.
- 4 A new name *stops* the old associations, the connections made by memory.

#### Connecting

‘Connection’ is an underlying theme in the stories about encounters with exceptional beings. It appears to provide the logic for why one thing would happen over another. When one is too long *connected* to the ‘other’ world, one stays there; the name is *connected* to memory; the child without a name is *connected* to its place of death because it has no other *connection*; an object may retain a *connection* to a previous owner; the dead are *connected* to the places where they lived.

In the stories special attention is given to experiences that could indicate a person's fate. An encounter experience leaves a deep impression and its 'meaning' is often sought or speculated upon. We can note that the right name serves to build a complete person and a social environment. The name is established by Baptism and the connection is formed to ancestors and to God. The ancestors connected to God are not disruptive of life. The connection to ancestors and to God is a necessity for making a complete person, who is recognizable, consistently present and an active part of the community. However, the life-furthering connections may not be completed, resulting in a certain incompleteness. It is this incompleteness that can stay and cause trouble. We see incompleteness and disruption in that the child without a name cries; the *eahpáraš* is disruptive because it has been abandoned without a name; *gufihttarat* are Eve's hidden children that she did not manage to wash before God came. An incorrect relationship is socially disruptive and may indicate incomplete socialization. Objects and locations can be socialized, but they also can be disruptive. The disruption can be 'repaired', a better expression in this context is 'healed'. The disruption or lack of peace is infectious, causing unrest and illness. To heal the unrest or illness, the correct relationship is established by one who knows how to do it. He or she must be able to disconnect as well as connect. A person's attitude towards the 'other' that he/she encounters is decisive. Pursuing further contact will bind him because all contact binds. The stories and warnings a person has heard over the years provide the knowledge needed when there is doubt about what he has encountered.

## 4 DISCOURSE ON THE NOAIDI AND THE HEALER

The present chapter focuses on healers from the recent past who are presently considered to have been *noaidit*. The discourse concerns the definition and use of the term *noaidi* by local people. It shows the tensions surrounding the use of the term. Over time there has been change in its use and definition. During the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *noaidi* was an epithet used freely by some people; presently, local people express divergent views. Some people avoid the term *noaidi* but freely use the term *buorideaddji*, which denotes ‘one who can make well’ or ‘improve’. ‘Improver’ would be the most accurate English translation of *buorideaddji*. However, as ‘improver’ is not a normal English term, the Sami use healer when speaking English. Newspapers have introduced the term shaman (*sjaman* in Norwegian) a term that had already been employed for a long time by historians of religion, but that term has not been adopted by the local population. In this chapter I discuss Kaaven (1837-1918) and Gamvik (1873-1942), some healers active in the period from 1935-1970 and lastly, healers active in the present period. The portraits given are drawn from my interviewees’ stories and present their perspective. I will give particular attention to the perspectives of my main informants Sigvald and Nanna, who often express their concepts through stories of either Kaaven or Gamvik. For some people Kaaven and Gamvik are *noaidit*, but not everyone employs the epithet *noaidi*. The healers active between 1935 -1970 are not referred to as *noaidit* by my interviewees. Kaaven and Gamvik are also mentioned in a few publications. Some publications received comment by my informants and these comments provide relevant details. In the literature, the only extensively discussed individual is Johan Kaaven. Thus the present chapter reviews newspaper articles, literature and local views of the lives and deeds of Kaaven, Gamvik, and other healers.

### Use of the term *noaidi* and shaman

#### *Noaidi and shaman in local newspapers of today*

Articles in local newspapers collected between 2001- 2002 reflect current ideas on the *noaidi*. Instead of the Sami term *noaidi* the term shaman is sometimes employed. In the local Sami (Norwegian language) newspaper *Sagat* (24 November 2001, pages 8-9), the article “Samisk sjamaisme i Oslo Spektrum” (Sami shamanism in Oslo Spectrum) reported on the largest event in Europe concerning shamanism with expositions, exhibitions and lectures held in the Oslo Spektrum. Special mention is given to two

shamans, Erik Myrhaug and Anita Biong. Erik Myrhaug is said to come from a line of shamans from Sør-Troms. His grandfather, Jerpe Nilas was a shaman. Myrhaug now lives in Oslo and advertises his capacity to heal in the whole of Norway. The article states that he concentrates on a person by praying and that he succeeds in stopping bleeding, healing pneumonia and heartbreak. Anita Biong is presented as a professional shamanistic advice giver, healer and therapist. She lives in Oslo since 1965 and comes from a family in Finnmark that for generations has kept the shamanic traditions.

The term *noaidi* is not employed in the article, only the term *sjaman* (shaman). This is not the choice of the reporter. He is using the language that is employed in the exposition in Oslo itself.

The exposition presents the views that (1) the shaman receives his abilities through the family line (2) that he or she may practice outside of a Sami community, and (3) that shamans may earn their living through this practice and advertise for this purpose. However, as we will see, my informants presented exactly opposite opinions concerning local healers. First, the practice is not transferred through a family line, secondly, it is not a practice outside of the Sami community, and thirdly, the practice may not be advertised and be the source of income (see also Myrvoll, 2000). Therefore shamanism as presented by the exposition constitutes an example of phenomena familiar in other countries, a reinvention or revival (depending on the point of view) and popularization of shamanic tradition. It conforms to patterns of 'urban-shamanism' and as Rydving has discussed, demonstrates the use of the term shaman in a post-shamanistic frame of reference.

An article "River ned mytene om samisk folketro" (Exposing myths concerning Sami folk-belief) in the local Norwegian newspaper *Finnmark Dagblad* (25 September 2002, page 5) presents a research report by Berit Andreasdatter Bongo written for the Finnmark University College in Alta. She sought out individuals who had the reputation for sending *gand*, which was understood as sending evil. Her conclusion was that they were rather isolated individuals and through their isolation had aroused suspicion. This again led to the circulation of stories that were unfounded. She found, on the contrary, that those accused were kind and fine people. I note from Bongo's conclusions that the so-called old thinking is given a sociological explanation and shown to be a misconception. The article includes a picture of a staged event of a man drumming and a woman praying. The caption under the picture states that Bongo has demythologized shamanic notions. However, in the text of the article we can note that she has only treated the reputations of individuals who have been considered in terms of sending *gand*. She did not employ the term shaman, nor does the picture of a man drumming and a woman praying relate to Bongo's study. Therefore I conclude that when the term shaman is applied locally, it will have a variety of connotations, and in this case the local reporter adds the picture and the term for accent.

The way in which the terms shaman and *noaidi* are used in conjunction to each other can be illustrated by an interview of Ragnhild Vassvik Kalstad in the *Finnmark Dagblad* (10 November 2001, page 2). Kalstad is the director of the Center for Sami Healing Practices, a newly established department under the Institute for Community Medicine of the University of Tromsø. Kalstad states that the purpose of the Center is to explore the healing practices within the present Sami environment including shamanic practices, but she states that neither the *noaidi* with his *runebomme* (magic-drum), nor ecstasy, are present today. She thinks that although the shaman belonged to the traditional Sami culture of former days, there are still traits from that culture today. She suggests that much of the old culture will have been integrated within Laestadianism, and refers to a Laestadian category of healing in practice by *lesere* (readers) in which a text from the Bible is read to relieve the symptoms. The Center will explore healers who stop bleeding, remove warts, and in addition, a group who use products from nature, such as the use of herbs.

The title of the article is “Forsker på sjamaner” (Research on the shaman) and a third of the page is taken up by a picture of a man drumming and a woman praying (the very picture that later appears in the article of 25 September 2002, mentioned above). The caption under the picture states that the Center for Sami healing-research will research among other things the Sami *noaidi* art (“Nå skal Senter for samisk helseforskning forske på blant annet samisk noaidekunst.”). I conclude that the reporter has placed the picture, the caption, and created the title for accent. Kalstad, to a certain extent uses the term shaman and *noaidi* interchangeably. However, when considering present day traits from the traditional Sami culture, she writes shaman and not *noaidi*. Apparently ‘to explore the continuity of shamanic practice’ is not interchangeable with ‘to explore the continuity of *noaidi* practice’.

An example from the local Sami language newspaper *Min Aigi* (28 December 2001, pages 12-13) shows the ongoing tension around the term *noaidi*. In the article, “Bahpat cielahedje su noaideáhkku” (Ministers called her a female *noaidi*) a Sami woman artist, Merja Aletta Anttila, is presented together with pictures of her work. The article describes the problems she got into in 1993 when her work was shown in an exposition. Lutheran ministers and Sami Laestadians visiting her exposition condemned her as a *noaideáhkku* (female *noaidi*) and a maker of *noaidi* art. Anttila said that she suffered from these accusations, but credits the support she received from the media that helped her to feel free again. She states that her pictures present a dream world in which devils and angels are fighting: “I had hoped that one day my work would be valued. I never imagined such condemnation. Ministers probably like to see angels but not devils. But is not the real world quite different? Wherever you look you can see devils and angels fighting. My pictures are maybe too hard and direct for some people” (translation by Sigvald and author). Anttila does not

comment on the accusation of being a female-noaidi but explains her worldview in which angels and devils are fighting. Anttila was born after World War II and her generation appears to be less troubled by references to pre-Christian Sami religion than the older generation. However, tensions are still high for those born prior to World War II and for those actively proselytizing Christianity.

*Current local views on the activities associated with the noaidi*

My interviewees differ in their interpretation of the appellation *noaidi* and in particular in their application of the epithet to Kaaven and Gamvik. With the exception of Nanna, my interviewees do not recount personal experiences with Kaaven but relate what they have heard about Kaaven from their parent's generation. During their parent's lifetime, some people referred to Kaaven and Gamvik as *noaidit*. For those who consulted Kaaven and Gamvik for help, a *noaidi* was a 'doctor'. He was given more credit than a modern medical-doctor, but even when viewed positively, a *noaidi* can do 'bad things'. Karen related that her father would only accept treatment from a *noaidi*: "My father told about this doctor, Gamvik. My father would only have a *noaidi* healing him. He did not believe in these other [medical] doctors." Per confirmed that people used to give more credit to *noaidit* than to medical doctors: "Jovnnin Máhtte was of the same opinion. He had a bad cough and went to Gamvik and was healed. Gamvik was a doctor, but I don't think he was the kind of *noaidi* who did bad things. These people believed more in a *noaidi* than in the other [medical] doctors." Rávdna observed that they were very healthy and became quite old: "But these must have been healthy people because they lived to be almost a hundred years old. And so Gamvik must have been a very good *noaidi*."

In present day Finnmark there are also Sami individuals for whom the term *noaidi* is a cause for consternation. Their definition of the *noaidi* is "the one who places an injurious spell" (*bijar*).<sup>35</sup> In this case the *noaidi* is negatively relegated to the past and the employment of the term is avoided.<sup>36</sup> For some people, to claim that Kaaven was a *noaidi* is provocative because he is considered to be a healer. Nils (born 1926) emphasized the distinction between the two categories:

In books they can write that Kaaven is noaidi and some people may have called him noaidi just to cause fear. When it comes to be written that way, this causes people to believe that it is so. You can even hear

35 The dictionary gloss for *bijar*: "a spell which is put on someone" (Nielsen 1979, Vol I, 173).

36 An example of the type of material that could provoke a defensive attitude: In *Min Aigi* (16-10-2002) an article was published entitled, "Bealli Norggas jáhkka Sámiid gonstošit birufámuiguin" (Half of the Norwegian Population believe that there are Sami who deal in black magic) (page 10). The national newspaper, Verdens Gang, placed a list of questions on their inter-net site. One of them concerned the Sami. The question was, "Do you believe that individual Sami practice black magic?" They logged 46.86% for a "Yes" response and 53.13% for a "No" response.

it on Sami radio, and they, those on the Sami radio, are the best in the world to talk. I believe very little about this talking. And to use the word *noaidi* just how it is written in books? I don't agree. [The question of what is] *bijat*? Is not that the *noaidi*? I think so. Today there are only those who heal others and they don't *noaidut* [verb]. It is not true that there are *noaidit*, there is being scoffed at the Sami people. If there are any, they are not doing any good. Those who can heal these I know about, in Alta and Porsanger. People should not be so stupid that they would let *noaidit* come into the world.

Ole (born 1921) expressed the opinion that those who consult a *noaidi* will not go to heaven:

A *noaidi* is one who could put bad things onto other people. Those who consult a *noaidi*, they will not enter heaven. Those who could not put 'bad' onto others – that could not do it themselves – consulted a *noaidi* and asked him to do it. I have heard that in this place it happened, they found a *noaidi* to do this, and had him put the bad onto another.... This *bijat* is nothing, but I have a clear answer about healing. Our savior Jesus said that it is given to some to heal (*buorideaddji*). Do you read the Bible? There you can see how much power God (*Ibmil*) has given to man. For example to the Apostles, he gave so much power that it once happened there was a man dead, and Peter the Apostle asked the dead man to wake up and he did. Jesus said that if your belief is strong enough this is possible. I have no doubt that there has been given power to some so that they can heal others. And we also had them around us, and it is certain that they could heal. Now about *bijat*, that is a different question. It is written somewhere in the Bible that these *noaidit* – because in the Sami translation of the Bible *noaidi* was used – were those who could use *bijat*. It is written in the Bible that a *noaidi* and those who were using a *noaidi* would not enter into heaven.

Ole places the healer as well as the *noaidi* in a Christian context and condemns *noaidi* activity (*noaidut*).<sup>37</sup> When asked directly, "Was Kaaven *noaidi*?" Ole answered, "He lived

37 Rydving studied the change of meaning Sami terms underwent between the 17th and 18th century and the later Christian period. Comparing the Sami translation from parts of the Old Testament in 1811 with the translation of the same parts from 1895, he found *noaidi* only in the 1811 translation. The terms used in the 1895 translation to replace *noaidi* were: *einustaeg'gje* (diviner); *diet'es olmai* (a man good at knowing); *guwlar* (quack-doctor) (Rydving 1987, 191). Ole did not substantiate the use of *noaidi* in the Bible by showing his Bible, which, however, I doubt is from 1811. Therefore, it is his *understanding* that *noaidi* is written in the Bible.



before my time, so it is hard to say. From what is told and written, he could do good, but also not good things. Could be that he was a *noaidi*, but of that I do not know so much about.”

Sigvald explained that how and when spirits are harnessed or released, will express whether they are being employed for harm or improvement. He explained that when it is said that a *bijat* has been placed, this does not say which powers have been harnessed: “An active spirit is something working for you, *gáccit* or *ganihat*. When I don’t visualize which power is working, I just say *bijat*. With *bijat* I am not naming the power. If someone said a devil was put, you can expect trouble.”

Both a *noaidi* and a healer are expected to be able to diagnose and deal with the powers that may be behind a problem. Nils and Anne explain that bad thoughts or devils placed on one can lead to an illness and that this is called having *ganihat*.<sup>38</sup> The one who can place *ganihat* is *goanstaolmmái*.<sup>39</sup> Nils explained, “A *noaidi* is *goanstaolmmái*, or a healer is *goanstaolmmái* – doing supernatural things. *Goanstaolmmái* means who could put *ganihat* on another person.” Anne gave an example:

“This person has *ganihat*,” means that it can be thought bad thoughts onto you, so that you can be really ill. You could think, “What has happened to me? Why am I behaving like this?” after a person thinks about you. So this person has put *ganihat* on, for example, put on a devil (*biro*).

In an interview conducted by Sigvald, he asked Nils, “What did they call people who put *ganihat*?” Nils answered, “They don’t name them specially.” But when Sigvald asked, “Is it a kind of *noaidi*?” he agreed to the connection when Sigvald suggested it, and Anne and Nils said, “Yes, for example, Kaaven.” We can see that initially Nils did not connect *ganihat* to a *noaidi*. The reticence to name Kaaven a *noaidi* is mitigated by calling him “a kind of *noaidi*”. Then Nils related how Kaaven placed *ganihat*:

Yes, and Kaaven could do a lot of this. Once a man was transporting on a lake and the horse just stopped. Kaaven had asked him if they could

38 *Ganihat* is used locally and understood as ‘witch’s helping spirits’ or ‘witch’s products’. Following local custom the plural form indicates spirits. The noun is derived from the noun ‘gani’, which means witch. *Gani* appears in local place names: *Gane’ohkka* is the name of a mountain in the Stabbursdalen National Park. Dictionaries have no entry. Sigrid Drake’s 1918 collection of Sami terms for the district of Västerbotten in Sweden contains an entry for *kitnihab* or *katnihab*. For the Sami in Västerbotten, in addition to their understanding of *sáivo* beings, there were spirit beings (*katnihab*) that Drake considers could be confused with wood nymphs, spirits in the rocks or an echo. The trollbird was called *keddner*, which demonstrates a connection to *kitnihab* (Drake 1979, 355).

39 The dictionary gloss for *goan’sta*: art (something difficult to do); (magic) art; charm; magic potion (Nielsen 1979, Vol.II, 141).

travel together, he had said no. Kaaven came by and said, “You have to move away from the road.” The man said, “Well, I can’t, the horse won’t move.” Kaaven said, “But you try now.” And then they drove away. That is *ganihat*.

The *ganihat* described by Nils is a short-term spell, temporarily immobilizing someone, in this case, a horse. It is often cited as a capacity of both a *noaidi* and a healer. We see that *ganihat* may also cause illness. The discourse demonstrates that the features (a short-term spell that renders immobile and an illness caused by bad thoughts) are not controversial but the term *noaidi* is. The *noaidi* has been strongly associated with doing harm, so that when the speaker’s intent is to refer to ‘the one who does good’ the epithet *noaidi* is difficult to employ. While the same people who avoid its use apparently feel free to express many of the concepts involved in how a charm is accomplished or released.

Considering the nature of the discourse on the *noaidi* and the healer, the appellation *noaidi* has to be used with caution and can not be applied indiscriminately to all healers. When *noaidi* activity is viewed as black magic, *noaidi* activity is separated from healing. However, features that pertain to the *noaidi* are persistent and can not be thoroughly distinguished from those of a healer. A healer and a *noaidi* are both considered to be dealing with the supernatural, which is understood as dealing with spirits.

The element of magic is not unrelated to people’s concerns. Nanna, commenting on earlier times in the Porsanger Fjord, said that Laestadianism was a blessing when it took hold in Porsanger (which was relatively late, around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) because then the black magic that had been so persistent retreated. Nanna is one of the exceptions from the pre-World War II generation in her definition and use of *noaidi*. She is also some ten years older than my other elderly interviewees. Nanna used the term, however sparingly. From her use, I have understood that she was aware of some people’s exclusively negative understanding of the *noaidi*, but she also had her own interpretation. Nanna’s definition of the *noaidi* and the definition employed by the reindeer herders with whom she had a *verdde* relationship, are quite similar. We have already seen that those of her generation within this *siida* (the parents of my reindeer herding interviewees) called Kaaven and Gamvik *noaidi* and doctor. Sigvald is also a representative of this tradition and is also well aware of the present older generation’s association of the *noaidi* with doing harm. He said:

Using *noaidi* is tricky because it also includes bad sides of activities that people don’t want. I’m using the language that the community is representing, so I don’t use *noaidi*. Sometimes it is okay to use the term *noaidi*, but you have to know. If you put ‘*noaidi*’ into different

classes according to activity, which the Sami do, there are different ways to work. A person can know and just see, for example, Johannes said he consulted a *diehtti* (someone who knows). You get specific on one skill. *Buorideaddji* is used to indicate someone who is healing a single person or the healing of more than a single person, then a community or group when questions are coming from the group. The healing is with help from outside, which is the use of forces – a connection to God, is more what is meant today rather than spirits or forces because of Christianity.

Sigvald takes into consideration Nils and Ole's view that the *noaidi* is exclusively the 'one who does harm'. In Ole's opinion, a special connection to God defines a healer but not a *noaidi*. When Sigvald asked him, "Was anything given by God (*Ibmil*) to the *noaidi*?" Ole said, "Do you mean to heal and to do good? I do not know and I don't answer this question. According to the Bible, God has given this power to some so that they can heal. I do not think the *noaidi* is of God."

According to Sigvald, the term *noaidi* is loosely defined in his environment and he can not agree with how it is sometimes used. He took as an example a short piece in a local periodical titled, "Noaides Competition of Strength." It tells of a meeting between two men in the 1920's. One said to the other, "You will meet worms." The other said, "You will meet ermine." They both returned from their visit to the market. One did not meet worms, but the other came home and discovered a troublesome ermine in his house. The conclusion is presented as self-evident for the reader; one was stronger.<sup>40</sup> Sigvald said that he would not call this *noaidi* activity. For him this falls under the category of magic spells, and he stated, "They will just call it *noaidi*."

Sigvald commented that an emphasis has been made on the practice of magic as the distinguishing feature of the *noaidi* and that perhaps this is due to the employment of the Norwegian *trollkarl* for the Sami *noaidi* in the Norwegian language. For Sigvald, "The *noaidi* makes medicine, is busy with his people and *noaidi* activity can be as simple as just being there. When the land is flooded the *noaidi* can be the pole on which people hold on to." Sigvald defines the *noaidi* in terms of the help the *noaidi* can provide for his people. This appears relatively straightforward: the *noaidi* helps his people. But Sigvald's overall definition is that a *noaidi* has a connection to the supernatural, and a *noaidi* is a *noaidi* whether or not he helps or harms people.

Sigvald does not employ the word magic, but the English word 'correction' when an unjust *bijat* is returned or when the placing of a *bijat* is used to enforce justice. In

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40 *Porsangerfolket*, 2001, page 64, reprinted a story from Richard Bergh (1981).

Sigvald's understanding of *noaidi* activity, 'correction' is included. He demonstrated 'correction' through the different uses that can be made of *bijat*, stipulating that the employment of *bijat* is not necessarily for ill: "There are also good ones – correcting things." He emphasized that *bijat* can also be used for good:

It has come so that the focus on *bijat* is seen as sending 'bad', but the use of *bijat* is also for 'keeping justice'. When I was a child a family here in Stabbursnes who did not have a well, used an axe to break up the ice on the river to get their water. One day the axe was gone. In this environment there were not many axes and one less was one too little. It was decided to consult someone who could help. And after a while the axe was returned. The one who helped used *bijat*, and that meant that the one who took the axe had to return it.

Today *bijat* stories appear to be told less frequently than before World War II. When Sigvald asked, "How do they do *bijat* today?" Karen answered, "I don't know, I have not heard of any *bijat* happening in these times." However, Sigvald said, "We don't speak about it." The one who considers that a *bijat* has been placed and the one who is consulted for this problem do not speak about their experiences. The code 'not to speak' could perhaps be related to the understanding that openly speaking about *bijat* is understood to be a challenge and would be the opening for a 'correction'. A reindeer herder reveals circumspection in his narrative, calling the one he consulted a *diehtti* (someone who knows):

Things started to go wrong and they just went wrong all the time.  
I lost reindeer. Things did not work, so it was finally a financial problem. So I decided to contact a *diehtti* and so I did. I got advice from him and I did what I was instructed to do. Then things turned to the better.

The Sami term for the one who returns a *bijat* is *juovssaheaddji* (as mentioned in Chapter One, see L.J.Hætta, 1923). Sigvald explained the concept to me:

Juovssahit means to send back, for example, answering back to an accusation. The *juovssaheaddji* is the one who is sending back, and could be a *noaidi*, a *buorideaddji* (healer) or whoever was doing this, that is, sending back *bijat*. I have not heard this word used except for by Nanna who used this word for example when giving good answers or biting back. It looks to me that people who had the good Sami language

[were proficient in Sami] were using these words more freely because they can be descriptive in many situations.

Nanna explained how ‘sending back’ and ‘correction’ work: “The explanation for the success of correction is that the good is stronger than the bad. If this were not so, it would go wrong [life would not be possible].” When Nanna and Sigvald speak of ‘correction’, it can also refer to interaction between noaidit. A noaidi misusing his power will be ‘corrected’ by another noaidi. Such an event is related in the stories of Kaaven and will be treated subsequently. I asked Sigvald if he considered Kaaven to be a noaidi before or only after the correction. Sigvald answered, “Kaaven was noaidi; it does not change from what he did or did not. The noaidi is when you have this connection to something outside the common – the supernatural.” Sigvald’s overall definition is that a noaidi has a connection to the supernatural, and a noaidi is a noaidi whether or not he helps or harms his people. However, the noaidi loses his power by being incorrect. Sigvald explained (as did L.J.Hætta in the 1850s, see Chapter One) that noaidi is the generic term and that there are subtypes that describe more specific activities. Sigvald’s definitions can be best understood within the functioning of ‘correct connection’ in a cosmological order.

## Johan Kaaven (1836-1918)

### *Johan Kaaven as depicted in literature*

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century ethnographic literature, the healer was often termed noaidi. The ethnography on the healer over the last hundred years has been sparse.<sup>41</sup> J. Knud Qvigstad wrote, “Am Ende des 17ten und im Anfang des 18ten Jahrhunderts blühte noch in Norwegen und Schweden unter den Lappen der Schamanismus, und der Schamane (Noaide) mit seiner Zaubertrommel war der Helfer in der Not, der die Seele des Kranken von dem Todtenreich retten konnte” (In Norway and Sweden, at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, shamanism still flourished among the Lapps. The shaman (noaidi) with his magic drum saved those in need, and he could bring back the ill one’s soul from the land of the dead) (Qvigstad 1932, 6-7). In 1954, Gjessing provided an ethnographic list in which only one “shaman/noaidi” is named: Johan Kaaven. “Dr. Asbjørn Nesheim was told by an old informant from the sea-Same district Repparfjord in West Finnmark, about a *noaide* Johan Kåven” (Gjessing 1954, 27). Gjessing wrote “shaman/noaidi” following the scholarly convention that a noaidi is a Sami shaman.

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41 For ethnography see Qvigstad 1932; Kramvig 2003; Nergård 1994; Paine 1994; Pentikäinen 1994.

Johan Turi, a Sami living in northern Sweden but born in the neighborhood of Kautokeino, discussed Kaaven in *Turi's Book of Lappland* (1910). He speaks of Kaaven from personal experience.<sup>42</sup>

There was a noaide whom even I (J.Turi) have seen and whose name was Johan Goven. And he lived in Kistrand, Porsanger, in Norway, and he was a really strong noaide. He travelled widely round the sea-coasts of Norway, and he was in Ivgo (Skibotten) for all the markets.... And sick folk gathered together at the markets so that they could see Goven, and so that he might possibly heal them. And he cured many sick folk without any medicine. And he used a little medicine too, but he cured most of them without medicine. And he freed folk from the spirits of the dead. Neither have I ever heard that he did harm to anybody, or sent ghosts to anyone, although he could have done it if he had wanted to (Turi English edition 1966, 169-170).

Kaaven traveled widely and had a great reputation as a healer attracting many people. His cures included medicine but he predominantly healed without medicine. Kaaven released folk from the spirits of the dead. Turi asserts that he never heard that Kaaven harmed or sent ghosts to anyone. Turi does not use the term *bijat*. Today, placing or sending a ghost that attaches to someone is understood by local people to be one of the ways that a *bijat* can be affected. Turi, writing during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, employs the epithet *noaidi* without further pardon, using *noaidi* in a positive sense by saying that Kaaven was a really strong *noaidi*. Turi relates that once Kaaven immobilized a boat forcing a thief to return stolen goods.

Once a Norwegian stole several things – meat and skins – from a Lapp. And there were many people in a boat and they set off (the thief and the others) and then the Lapp noticed that a thief had stolen some things from him, and he went to Goven and begged for his help, and so Goven began. And the boat had gone many miles before his power reached it. And then the boat could go no farther forward, not the least little bit. They had to turn back, although there were many innocent people among them, and the thief had to bring back the stolen goods. And then they could go on their way again. And Goven did many such things to thieves (Turi 1966, 170-171).

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42 Turi spells the name Kaaven with a G. The Sami consonant holds a middle position between G and K.

The boat was stopped by Kaaven, which forced the thief to return the stolen goods. Turi relates these incidents within the worldview that endows them with their meaning: A cause of illness can be spirits of the dead; Kaaven as a strong *noaidi* had the capacity to free folk from such spirits and to immobilize a ship.

Both Kaaven and Gamvik receive notice in Ragnvald Jacobsen's local history of the district of Hammerfest, *Sørøysund Lokalhistorie*, 1983.<sup>43</sup> It contains a synopsis of folk medicine that bridges the last hundred years.

[When looking at the folk medicine it is needed] to dispel any possible misunderstanding that any kind of medicine-man-arts would be included. No, the superstition was banned by the reformation in 1536, and the witch trials extended until Vardø [East Finnmark] from continental Europe and culminated in 1653. One did not hear any more of medicine-man-arts after that. People in Finnmark agreed that it was good to be rid of black magic....On islands and fjords in Finnmark one could still find people who took special care and consideration to help people. They had a quality that came from a heritage, and sometimes it could help. Yes, they were there, but in these cases it was done within Christianity and with brotherly love. Like it has been even until our own times with Lars Pedersen from Gamvik on Sørøy and Johan Kaaven in Porsanger. Even the most successful doctors at that time consulted them in times of personal need (Jacobsen 1983, 207; translation by author).

Jacobsen employed the term medicine-man-arts (*medisinmanns-kunster*). This art is viewed as superstition, black magic and relegated to the past. Formulation of the help provided by Gamvik and Kaaven is placed within Christianity, done with brotherly love. It is a help that stems from a heritage that is not further defined.

*Mannen som stoppet Hurtigruta: Historier og sagn om noaiden Johan Kaaven* (The Man Who Stopped the Hurtigrute: Stories and Legends about the *Noaidi* Johan Kaaven), by Richard Bergh and Erik H. Edvardsen (1990) contains stories about Kaaven told by local people. Bergh, a schoolteacher in Finnmark from 1954-1969, collected the stories. Edvardsen worked for *Etnologiska Institutionen* in Göteborg, Sweden. The authors employ the term *noaidi* and the Norwegian *trollkarl* (or variations thereof) interchangeably (*trolldom*: magic; *trollkarl* or *trollmann*: magician, wizard; *trollkyndige*: an able magician). Edvardsen provided commentary on the stories, briefly discussing the change from former shamanic practices (as described by the

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43 In the whole of Norway one finds an interest in local history so that most municipalities have one or more published histories.

missionaries) and the practices represented by Kaaven. Edvardsen discerns the general traits of what he calls “later Sami shamanism” in the stories of Kaaven that often tell of his use of helping spirits (*noaide-gáccit*). Edvardsen emphasizes that the former *noaidi* took care of many social tasks. They practiced divination and were sacrificial priests, magicians, and medicine men. They were consulted by persons suffering from a haunting experience, and were consulted to gain hidden information about where to fish or hunt or about the future. Edvardsen notes that although Thomas von Westen confiscated many drums when he was active in Finnmark during the early 1700s, he did not rid the people of their need for knowledge concerning these hidden things. According to Edvardsen many missionaries and historians of religion have focussed too much on the ecstatic state of the practice of the *noaidi*. Edvardsen comments that already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the information the shaman received from his helping spirits seems to have been of at least equal importance as the ecstatic state as an element of shamanism. And it is this side of the shaman’s work that one finds in the stories of Kaaven. Edvardsen writes, “If the worldview of today is still of a shamanic type, is it to be expected that the *noaidi* is able to solve the problems [in health care] with the help of his helping spirits?” (Ibid., 22). Edvardsen considered that Johan Kaaven represented a *noaidi* in this line, since Johan Kaaven had dead-people spirits (*noaidegáccit*) that kept him in contact with the world beyond. Kaaven’s specialty was to release spirits and ghosts from people, either by ritual behavior or simply as the commander of these spirits (Edvardsen in Bergh and Edvardsen 1990, 15-22).

In the appendix of *Mannen som stoppet Hurtigruta* Edvardsen gives a survey of the publications about Kaaven from the hands of his contemporaries. I will present some of their views about Kaaven. Anders Halvorsen (1854-1926), the minister in Alta from 1887 until 1895, wrote what may be the first published treatment of Johan Kaaven in an article in the Oslo newspaper *Morgenbladet* of 12 January 1896. Halvorsen made a distinction between travelling quack salvers and what he calls “*innfødte underdøktorene*” (native wonder-doctors). The travelling foreign quack salvers were frauds and swindlers, taking money under false pretensions. The ‘native wonder-doctor’ could be Sami, Kven or Finnish, and the local people in Finnmark spoke sympathetically about these seriously working doctors. He points out that it is important to understand the circumstances in the northern provinces. There was at that time a serious shortage of medically trained doctors throughout the whole northern region. Halvorsen included in his article an anonymous story about an incident when Kaaven and some other travelers were once on a boat. It was a long crossing, and the men asked Kaaven if he could produce a deck of playing cards. Kaaven took no notice for some time, but they continued questioning. Then upon each question, “Where are the cards?” he named a specific place name very far away and then place names coming closer to their location. Then all of a sudden ‘a certain



man' (*en vis mand*, which is understood in Norwegian to indicate the devil) entered through the door and delivered a deck of playing cards and disappeared again. Not one of the company dared to touch the cards (Ibid., 150-151).

In 1920 Jens Otterbech (1868-1921), minister in Kistrand (Porsanger) between 1894 -1902, reported how the Sami people treated illnesses. He was critical of his colleague Halvorsen for presenting the story of Kaaven and the deck of cards. While Kaaven lived, many stories and legends circulated about him. For Otterbech such stories did not do justice to Kaaven because Kaaven helped and cured so many people. He cites a neighbor of Kaaven, a teacher for the Billefjord area, Ole Andreas Thomassen (1844-1926). Thomassen knew Kaaven well, because Kaaven would come to him for help concerning difficult written assignments, even though Kaaven spoke and read three languages, Sami, Finnish and Norwegian. Thomassen considered Kaaven to be a religious man, knowing his Bible and speaking of subjects concerning the soul. Kaaven knew his limits and did not attempt to heal internal illnesses. He had success with treating skin diseases, rheumatism and nervous illnesses. Otterbech stated that many people traveled to Kaaven for help and could thank him for saving their life. Kaaven and his wife took people into their home and nursed them sometimes for months on end. He adds that Kaaven was not a charlatan or quack salver, in the way quack salver is understood, but a man with natural good skills, which he used for people's good. Otterbech comments that in connection to Kaaven's work there grew superstitious beliefs among the Sami people, adding that Norwegians are just as superstitious (Ibid., 173-178).

Professor Amund Theodor Helland published a monumental work *Norges land og folk* (Norway, the land and its people). Volume XX (1906) deals with the province of Finnmark. In a chapter on "Husraad, kvakksalvere og overtro om sykdom" (Home advice, quack salvers and superstitions about illnesses) he mentioned Kaaven. He stated that quack salvers practiced now and then in Finnmark. Their methods were often not useful or actually damaging. However, according to Helland some personalities could cause an improvement in nervous and superstitious people and Kaaven was such a strong willed person. Kaaven, often to be found at the market of Bossekop, near Alta, was said to have power over illnesses and over evil spirits. He cured many people. One time at the market money was stolen and Kaaven was asked to help. Kaaven announced that he would 'mark' the thief. The thief returned the money the following day. Helland explains that this was due to the great belief and fear in Kaaven's abilities. Helland illustrated his views about the power of suggestion on nervous or hysterical people with a story of a woman who was bedridden for many years. She could not stand the climate and was oversensitive to noise so that everyone was very careful not to upset her. Kaaven was asked to help. When he arrived, he banged the doors and told her to get out of bed and make him some coffee. He

repeated this order and said, "If you don't get up, I will throw you out!" She got up and made him coffee. When Kaaven left he said, "If you don't stay out of bed, I will come back!" From then on she kept house and was normal (Ibid., 155-158; translation by author).

The Medical Doctors Gade and Grøn, in 1911, sent a missive for information on Norwegian folk medicine throughout Norway. Of the 152 replies they received, four mentioned Kaaven. (1) A schoolteacher in Lakselv related that Kaaven cured all three nationalities there, Sami, Kven and Norwegian. His specialty was to release people from haunting. (2) A medical doctor from southern Norway who had earlier been working in the Alta region mentioned Johan Kaaven as a healer in West Finnmark. (3) A medical doctor for the district of Alta, skeptical of folk healers in general wrote that in Finnmark a man, Kaaven, has gotten more attention from local people than he deserves. (4) Ole A. Thomassen, the Indre Billefjord schoolteacher (already mentioned by Ottenbech, see above) and the medical doctor for Kistrand district, Ottesen, stated that Johan Kaaven, then about 70 years old, had been practicing for the last forty years as a quack salver. He made long travels in Finnmark and Trøms. He made some medicine himself but mainly healed by talking. The patients would say that he was 'reading' even if this was not audible. His specialty was the driving out of the spirits of dead people, which could have been placed by evil people. Kaaven was said to feel this when those who suffered from dead people spirits came to him for help. Ottesen reported that Kaaven was taken to court in 1909 for having treated a woman suffering from tuberculosis. The treatment is not mentioned however so the reason for his being taken to court is not clear. Edvardsen speculates that it may have been due to the new law against quack salvers, even though a quack salver was not taken to court except when remuneration was requested, and Kaaven did not ask for remuneration. Edvardsen mentions that the medical doctor stationed in Porsanger, who left in 1908, never had any problems with Kaaven (Ibid., 161-166).

Additionally Edvardsen cites two Sami who wrote about Kaaven, Johan Turi (1854-1936) from Kautokeino and Matti Aikio (1872-1929) from Karasjok. I already discussed Turi's defense of Kaaven's practices. Aikio was a writer and outspoken against what he calls spiritist notions. In the national newspaper *Tidens Tegn* of 13 April 1919 he wrote an article on "Finnmarkens siste troldmand," (Finnmarks last *Trollman*) a year after Kaaven died, in which he begins and ends ironically. "I think he is dead now. Last time I saw him was in 1892 and he was then already over sixty." He continued: "Kaaven had sharp senses feeling people's susceptibility, skills he probably shared with his vocational brothers, as well also with others, as for example, lay-preachers and Bishops, we can say all of us, Kaaven was only the brightest in this all embracing business of confidence tricks." And in the final phrase: "As said, I believe it is true that Kaaven is dead and if some spiritist wants to be in touch with him his

address is the Kristrand graveyard” (Ibid., 168, 170, 173; translation by author). Aikio related that when Kaaven was at home and among Sami people he wore Sami clothes. When he was travelling in Norwegian districts he wore Norwegian attire. His two daughters were Sami. People told that Kaaven stopped a ship. Aikio thinks that the people themselves played a role in forming Kaaven’s reputation; by spreading stories about Kaaven they unconsciously advanced his reputation. The people did not doubt that Kaaven could point out a thief, heal sick people, bring dead spirits onto someone or bring bad weather. To challenge Kaaven on this meant to risk having all kinds of accidents, writes Aikio. Once when 200 crowns had been stolen, the man who had been robbed said that he was going to Lakselv without saying that he would visit Kaaven, but the same day the thief threw the money into his room. People heard the thief crying, full of fear for days afterwards. He only recovered when the man he had stolen from came to him and said that he forgave him. Kaaven was not considered to be a bad or evil man. Aikio wrote that people did not confront themselves with the question of how a Christian man could practice such activities as the putting on of ghosts. Kaaven was a Christian man and yet people assigned activities to him. People spoke about how in a thunderstorm and at night he was sailing having a green light around him. He was collecting wood from coffins at the graveyards, and that someone had seen him rounding the house of a criminal three times, even though, at the time, he was many miles from the place. The stories were never repeated to Kaaven. Aikio concluded that some people do elicit people’s fantasy and create mysticism and that Kaaven was just such a person. There was a certain distance between him and the environment, which aroused curiosity (Ibid., 167-173).

We can note from the literature that opinions expressed by observers during Kaaven’s lifetime diverged. Norwegian observers were often dismissive (Kaaven’s activities are overrated or due to superstition and the power of suggestion) or he was valued (Kaaven is sincere and rendered help to many people in need, considered acceptable activities within a Christian context). Sami observers also diverged in their opinions. Turi defended and shared the folk concepts. Aikio questioned the effect of the people’s expectations concerning Kaaven.

Stories told about Kaaven were filmed and the local television station aired a program about Kaaven in 1998. The program was composed of interviews of a few of the people who still remembered Kaaven.<sup>44</sup> The youthful filmmaker, Mikkelsen, employed the epithet *noaidi*.

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44 The title I Noaidens fotefar. *Den Samisk-Norske noaiden Johan Kaaven var viden kjent. Han foretok stadig lange reiser for a helbrede folk - doktor, prest og Lensman.* (In the Footprints of the Noaidi. The Sami-Norwegian noaidi Johan Kaaven was widely known. He did long travels for healing people - doctor, minister and local policeman.) (Producer: Medieverkstedet, Anstein Mikkelsen, Regi: Roald Hansen, 1998.)

The generation born after World War II does not define the term *noaidi* identically to those born prior to World War II. A certain distance is perceptible in the younger generation's employment of the term and it does not arouse so much emotion or conflict. Their use does not refer to any one still living. The term has an aura of the past, is often romanticized, and their conceptions are influenced by what has been written about the position of the *noaidi* in the pre-Christian period. Thus the title of Mikkelsen's film includes "minister" in the roles assigned to Kaaven the *Noaidi*.

Certain traits are recognizable in the style of local story telling. A frequently employed story telling device in Finnmark is one that elaborates or builds on earlier stories. Each time a story is related, it is told with the storyteller's own variations. The story is used for various purposes and often proves a point. The story from which the book *The Man Who Stopped the Hurtigrute* borrows its title is a case in point. Kaaven boarded the Hurtigrute and, while it was cruising, asked for something to eat. He was told that the boat would soon be landing and he should wait until he disembarked to eat. The engines suddenly stopped and could not be started. Kaaven was fed and the engines started again. The story proves that Kaaven had the capacity to immobilize at will, however such a conclusion is not stipulated by the storyteller in the book. The reader/listener is expected to fill in a self-evident conclusion. One of my interviewees said, "When Kaaven stopped the steamship, was it a bad thing or was it to 'correct' the captain and remind him that we all should be treated equally?" He employed the Hurtigrute story to show that Kaaven stopped the boat to demonstrate correct values.

#### *Facts about Kaaven's life*

According to Bergh and Edvardsen (1990), Kaaven's father, Andreas Johnsen was a Norwegian, born in Brønnøy, Nordland in 1791. His mother, Inger Mosesdatter, was a Sami from the Hammerfest area. They married in 1835 and settled in Repparfjord, which is close to Hammerfest. Johan Kaaven was born in 1836. In 1837 the family moved to Kaaven, which is in northern Troms close to the provincial border with Finnmark. After the publication of Bergh and Edvardsen's book, a resident of Stabburnes, Kurt Kristoffersen from Nordland, did research on the background of Kaaven's father and concluded that he was not Norwegian but Sami. Kaaven's father worked as a reindeer herder in his youth. Later he worked for a prosperous Norwegian farmer who owned a large boat and he often participated in the farmers fishing expeditions. On one of these fishing trips he met his future wife in Alta and then settled in Finnmark. Kristoffersen (1993) explained that because both Kaaven and his father were fluent in Norwegian some people assumed they were Norwegian.<sup>45</sup>

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45 Kurt Kristoffersen in the *Sagat* newspaper article, "Noaiden Johan Kaaven var av sørsamisk ætt", 17/2/93, page 6.

In 1865 Andreas, then a widower, moved to Billefjord. His eldest son, Johan came to Billefjord in 1866. Johan was then married and had a daughter. Johan Kaaven's wife came from a Sami background. They had nine children (6 daughters, 3 sons and 2 stepchildren). Johan Kaaven was well known and widely traveled. On his travels, and particularly at markets, people would ask for his help (Bergh and Edvardsen 1990, 8).

Kaaven lived in Billefjord, within a few kilometres from Nanna's home in Sandvik. Nanna and her brothers played with Kaaven's children. Nanna told stories about Kaaven to demonstrate certain life rules she thought important. Nanna referred to Kaaven occasionally as a *noaidi*. She remembers stories told about him by her parents, plus her own encounters with him. She was slightly afraid of him, but still would sit on his knee when he came to visit her family. She told, "There was a time when a neighbor said to Kaaven when I was sitting on his knee, 'Why is just this child always on your knee?' Kaaven answered, 'Maybe we have more in common than anyone else here'."

Kaaven died in 1918, when Nanna was nine years old. The story of Nanna sitting on his knee and Kaaven's suggestion that maybe they have much in common, is a story that alerts the listener to the special quality that Nanna had and which was already predicted by Kaaven.

#### *Johan Kaaven as healer*

Various stories about Kaaven circulated and advanced his renown. Kaaven was called a *noaidi* during and after his lifetime. In Turi's account, Kaaven freed folks from the spirits of the dead and caught thieves by rendering them immobile. Ole also noted Kaaven's ability to render immobile and understood him to be 'correcting'. Nanna spoke of Kaaven's ability to foretell the future.

#### Inheritance

In present day accounts it is expected that the one having special capacities, *noaidi* or *buorideaddji*, would have received them from someone with special capacities. Sigvald related that it is possible to receive an inheritance from more than one *noaidi*.

Something was said about Kaaven that he had contact with other *noaidit*, more than one. So, he could have been chosen by more than one. That is, maybe more than one had given him something. People wonder and tell these stories. He was travelling and had more contact in this field.

Sigvald understands the inheritance as "something passed on, and when it is given, then the person who gave it can not do it any more." If the *noaidi* died before he had passed his gift on, then, Sigvald said, "it would come from an object that belonged to the former

*noaidi*. It would be in there.” Sigvald referred to Heidi’s dream as an example: “Remember the dream of Heidi? The amulet belonged to Kaaven and when Heidi had the amulet, Kaaven visited her.” The former *noaidi* is ‘called up’ by a personal object and via this route the powers may be transferred.

Accounts recorded by J. Qvigstad also contain these features: the ongoing connection of the dead with an object and the help to heal offered by the dead. Qvigstad (1932)<sup>46</sup> mentions three individual healers in his section “Wie einige Lappenärzte die Heilkraft bekamen” (How some Sami doctors acquired the power of healing). Lars Olsen (dead ca 1918) received the capacity to heal from two Russian spirits who visited him one night after he had touched a skull that lied exposed beside an old, Russian grave. The second man received healing capacities from his two passed away children who came to him during the night. The third, a Coastal Sami woman, Inger Nilsdatter, buried a shin bone she found in the forest and later, returning to the location in the forest, met a large Norwegian. He said that the bone was his and he told her that should she have problems, she could ask him and he would help her. In this way she received the capacity to question the dead (Qvigstad 1932, 225-226).

My interviewee’s stories of Kaaven revolve around a few specific themes: prophecy, rendering immobile, and correction.

### Prophecy

Prophecy is expected from a *noaidi* and a healer. My interviewees explain that the *noaidi* predicts through his *ovdasaš* experience. As explained in Chapter Three, the *ovdasaš* experience is hearing or seeing someone arrive prior to their actual arrival. The *noaidi* will often have an *ovdasaš* experience, and Kaaven was said to have this often. My interviewees related that Kaaven told his wife to set an extra plate at the table for a guest who shortly thereafter arrived; he said to his wife that she should cook a greater portion that night, and indeed visitors arrived that evening.

Nanna told a story in which Kaaven could be present for his wife and also knew what had happened in his home in his absence:

One time Kaaven was going to Kirkenes. He said to his wife, “I am writing a date and time and putting this into a chest. Put the chest on the first floor, and when you sit on the chest we can be together.” She did this and nothing happened, but suddenly he was there. He told her about what had been happening in Kirkenes. Then she told that while he was in Kirkenes, she had had three burglars. He asked about them. She

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46 *Lappische Heilkunde* is an extended study of Sami folk medicine, employing written sources from the 17th century, scholarly publications of the 18th century and material that had been collected since that time.

told him that one burglar was dead and the other two had left. Plus that they had not taken anything from the house. He said, “Things will go well and I will be back.” When he returned he knew about the burglars.

In another story told by Nanna, Kaaven not only predicted the future, but the implication is that he made things happen:

Once Kaaven’s daughter and her girlfriend had hired someone to put evil spirits onto a man. The man got ill and Kaaven was asked to come. Kaaven saw what had happened. It did not matter who did wrong, even if it should be his daughter. Kaaven said to his daughter, “You will never have more in your life than what you need to eat from one day to the next.” And so it was. To the girlfriend Kaaven said, “You will have many children, but your husband will not be able to walk.” And it was so. The husband got sick and stayed in bed the rest of his life. Kaaven said, “I can not make an exception between people, not even for my own daughter. If I would, the spirits will eat me!”

In the story, Kaaven must deal justly otherwise “the spirits would eat me”, which indicates that he must answer to the spirits.

#### Rendering immobile

Kaaven is said to have had the capacity to render immobile. An example is Turi’s account of the ‘marking’ or ‘binding’ of the thief, whereby Kaaven forced a thief to return his loot. Kaaven’s capacity to stop a ship was mentioned in the story *The Man Who Stopped the Hurtigrute*. Many of the stories concerning Kaaven demonstrate his ability to render people and vehicles immobile. He is then associated with keeping justice by my interviewees.<sup>47</sup> Sigvald told the following story of his grandfather, in which Kaaven was the arbitrator of justice and justice, when it would be fully served, meant that the guilty party would be temporarily rendered immobile by Kaaven:

The local ranger once approached my grandfather. He accused him of stealing wood from State land. The policeman came and tried to sort out the information coming from the ranger and my grandfather. The suggestion was made, and agreed on by all parties, to consult Kaaven. The policeman, on his next trip, would stop by Kaaven’s home. So the

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47 The term justice usually implies reference to a legal system while my interviewees are concerned with what is correct. I retain the term justice because it has been so consistently used by my informants.

policeman requested of Kaaven that justice be done. Kaaven responded by a question, “Do you really want the guilty party to be caught?” Then the policeman realized that justice would not be as he had imagined it.

Kaaven asks suggestively, “do you really want him caught?” indicating, should Kaaven follow through, the consequence would be that the ranger and not Sigvald’s grandfather would be rendered immobile.

Kaaven could make a person immobile. Nanna told:

There was a man who did not like Kaaven. He was visiting Kaaven and it is customary that one serves one’s guests. Kaaven asked his wife to give this man some cake. But he refused the cake, saying that he was not going to stay so long. But while they were talking, Kaaven said to him, “It can happen that you eat here.” The man started on his way home. It was early evening and he got up from his chair in the kitchen and started to walk to the door. The man was walking on the kitchen floor, but he walked and got no where. It became late and Kaaven said that he was going to bed. The man was still there walking. He begged Kaaven’s wife to help – could she talk to Kaaven? Kaaven came down and said, “You are still here? I thought you left hours ago. You see you should have eaten. We offered to you, maybe you can eat at home.” Then the man could walk home. From then on this man never used words in his conversation that could irritate Kaaven; he was straight and clear in his conversation with Kaaven.

Problems are often seen in terms of the flow of motion, which can be too much motion or too little. In another story told by Nanna, Kaaven caused and stopped a running nose:

This woman did not like Kaaven. He was not pretty, nor were his shoes. He was big and not fine. Kaaven came in from the cold into her lodging house. She said to him, “You should dry your nose.” (It was dripping). After a while her brother, Roul, came in and found her lying over a chair, holding her nose. Roul asked her what she was doing. She said that suddenly water was running from her nose and that she did not understand. Roul knew that his sister did not like Kaaven and he wondered if she had said something to Kaaven. Roul suggested to her to go and talk with Kaaven. She was too embarrassed, but the nose was running. Roul went in to Kaaven and said that maybe it had not been so nicely presented by his sister. Kaaven said, “Yes, we should all dry our noses and things will go better.” The sister’s nose was then dry.



Kaaven has the ability to monitor movement, correcting where needed. Kaaven could assess what was correct and then enforce this by rendering a person immobile, which was achieved by placing a *bijat*. Kaaven released a *bijat* when he assessed this to be correct. According to Karen, Kaaven was able and willing to place a *bijat*:

Nanna used to say that Kaaven would do *bijat*. Nanna's brother was once scared, so he stopped talking. They asked Kaaven to help. Kaaven was a very ugly man so the boy would not easily go to him. But finally he went to him, and Kaaven asked the father what kind of *bijat* he would like to have put on the man who scared his son. The father answered, "No, I don't want you to, because this man is since birth a little retarded." Then I heard that Kaaven could put *bijat* on someone.

Nanna related the same events and included how Kaaven went about healing her brother. He was to chew the paper Kaaven prepared for him.

When I was child my brother and a neighbor boy were playing. The play got rougher and the neighbor boy put my brother into the water. It was winter. When my brother came out he could not talk. So finally my father went and brought Kaaven to the house. Kaaven made a circle from a brown paper bag rolled it up into a ball, and said, "Chew this." He chewed but nothing happened. Kaaven did the same thing again with the paper, but first chewed it himself, and then gave it to him to chew. Kaaven said, "If you can say anything, ask for your mother." And then he could speak.

#### Correction

According to Nanna and Sigvald, Kaaven made a significant change in his behavior after an incident in which his life was threatened by a whale. The story is also related in *The Man Who Stopped the Hurtigrute*. Before the incident, Kaaven is considered to have used his special powers for his own advantage. After the incident he helped people. The story of "Kaaven and the Whale" relates that Kaaven was in a boat on the fjord when a whale started to approach the boat. Kaaven encouraged the man who was rowing, to row harder. This he did, but the whale continued its pursuit of their boat. Their lives were being threatened as the whale could capsize the boat. Finally Kaaven said openly, "From now on I am not going to do any bad, but only good for people." They landed safely. The story continues that Kaaven received a letter from a former neighbor in Lyngen who explained in the letter that he had sent the whale because Kaaven had crossed the boundary of what he may do with his power. The storyteller related that after the fight with the whale,

Kaaven kept his promise to do good for people. Kaaven made medicine from plants for those who were ill, taught thieves not to steal, and rescued those in need. In addition he “takes away *gan* when dead-people-spirits have been placed onto a person” (Bergh and Edvardsen 1990, 29-33; translation by author).<sup>48</sup> Sigvald elaborated on the Whale Story, and explained how Kaaven formerly had misused his special powers:

It appears that Kaaven had requested from a neighbor in Billefjord that that man's daughter would come and work in Kaaven's home. The neighbor had answered, “Please don't request this, my daughter is needed in her own home.” Kaaven had continued to press his request for the daughter to come and work in his home. Kaaven, after several attempts to employ the daughter, placed a *bijat* on the father's boat. The *bijat* was noticed as a [visual experience called] *fárrosas̥*, in which people [other than the father and daughter] saw Kaaven together with father and daughter on their boat. The father who was having troubles consulted a man in Lyngen who was reputed to have special powers. The man from Lyngen said, “You have brought with you something belonging to Kaaven.” That is, he could see that Kaaven had placed a *bijat*. Then the father was told that he would presently see how this would be returned. The *bijat* was sent back through the whale that pursued Kaaven.

Sigvald called the experience that Kaaven had with the whale ‘correction’. Nanna told (interview August 1997) another version of the story:

Kaaven visited my parents and confided to them that he had been corrected. He had been out in a boat and had tried to steer the boat in one direction but the boat went in the opposite direction. When he finally landed, he walked straight to the man he felt had caused this to happen and apologized to him.

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48 Edvardsen's comments on the whale story include a survey of three earlier references to similar accounts where whales are instrumental. The oldest is from the *Historia Norwegiae* (12th century manuscript, see Chapter One). He also refers to Knud Leem (1697-1774), professor of Sami at the *Seminarium Lapponicum* in Trondheim. Leem noted the *noaidi*'s whale form. Leem wrote in 1767 that he observed two types of *noaidit*, (1) the *noaidi* who people feared because he caused accidents and (2) the *noaidi* who only did ‘good’ and was healing people and animals. Locally these were considered blessed and wise men (Leem 1767, 475). Lastly Edvardsen noted that Qvigstad recorded three variations in which a whale played a role between two rivals (Qvigstad 1929, 343) (Bergh and Edvardsen 1990, 33-39).

‘To send back’ and ‘to correct’ are key terms in the discourse that refers to the *noaidi* as well as to Christian traditions. The Sami terms that are used reflect the complexity and richness of this discourse. Nanna said in Sami<sup>49</sup>, “Kaaven confided to my parents that his work had caught him and corrected him.”<sup>50</sup> In this important episode, we see that the man from Lyngen returned to Kaaven the *bijat* that Kaaven had placed on the father. Sigvald understands the sending back of the *bijat* as ‘keeping justice’, or that Kaaven is ‘corrected’. He said in Sami, “The Lyngen man sent the *bijat* back to remind Kaaven what he was doing. And Kaaven understood what he had been doing and promised there to do the good things.”<sup>51</sup> Sigvald uses the term baptism<sup>52</sup> to describe the action of the Lyngen man: “The Lyngen man ‘baptized’ Kaaven.”<sup>53</sup> Sigvald explained, “Kaaven saw he had no choice for ‘who’ he was going to be, if he would continue to live.” And added, “Kaaven understood that his intrigue was sent back, he was about to be caught, and he promised conversion. The bad returned, brought correction to Kaaven, and he converted.”<sup>54</sup> Sigvald employed the English word conversion. In the Christian context, conversion radically changes identity; one becomes born again in Christ. Nanna and Sigvald were Laestadians and their understanding of conversion implies this Christian context. However, it is significant that ‘conversion’ expresses for Sigvald also his understanding of ‘correction’, and ‘improvement’. Sigvald employed both *sáddii ruovttoluotta* (sent back) and *máhcahuvvon* ([was] urged to turn). Nanna also employed these notions: *sáddet ruovttoluotta* (to send back), *sádde baháid ruovttoluotta* (he sends the bad things back again). Nanna further expressed the concept of returning something in Sami: *máhccat baháid* (to return the bad thing), *juovssahit* (to send back by answering/talking hard to send back) and *jorgalit* (to turn away/to be converted). In English, Sigvald uses the term, ‘correction’, saying that the important occurrence in the story of Kaaven and the Whale is that Kaaven is ‘corrected’. Sigvald stresses that Kaaven *accepted* the ‘correction’.

Sigvald heard another even stronger version of the Kaaven and the Whale incident, told by an elderly man from Kolvik. In this version the rower first thought that a ship was approaching and that this was the reason Kaaven had asked him to row to safety. When they finally landed, Kaaven lay on the ground, almost dead, and blood streamed from his mouth. Sigvald commented, “Of course, Kaaven saw what

49 English translation provided orally by Sigvald.

50 *Kaaven dovddahii vahmemiidda ahte su dagut ledje juksan su, ja buorádahttán su*

51 *Ivgóáddjá sáddii bijaid ruovttoluotta muittuhit Kaavena daguid. Ja Kaaven addu iehcas daguid ja lohpidii dies iehcas buriid daguide.*

52 Sigvald understands *gásttašit* as also meaning ‘trump’ as one would employ in cards.

53 *Ivgóáddjá gásttašii Kaavena*

54 *Kaaven áddii ahte su iehčas juonat ledje máhcahuvvon, ja ledje juksamin su, ja lohpidii buorádusa. Baháid máhcaheapme buvttii buorádahttima Kaavenii, ja son dagai buorádusa.*

it was.” Sigvald said that the rower could have thought he saw a whale or a boat, but Kaaven certainly knew what pursued him. He explained that when a *biját* is sent back to a *noaidi*, the receiver recognizes this and knows it could mean his death.

Nanna used Kaaven’s correction as an example to express important concepts and rules of life. She said in Sami, “Misuse of power can be returned.”<sup>55</sup> And, “Don’t do stupid challenges, so you don’t become caught in a reverse state of affairs.”<sup>56</sup> The verb *eatnáduvvat* denotes to be exposed to the retribution or irony of fate. Sigvald stated simply it means “what is yours comes back to you. Your own words can come back and haunt you.” Nanna emphasized that the good is stronger than the bad: “The explanation for the success of correction is that the good (*buorre*) is stronger than the bad (*bahá*). If it were not so, life on earth would not be possible.”<sup>57</sup> Nanna’s employment of *buorádahttit* denotes correction, betterment or to cause an improvement. The Sami word for healer, *buorideaddji*, which is expressed more completely by saying, ‘one who can get somebody to become better’, contains the same root word, *buorre* (good).

In the opinion of Nanna and Sigvald, ‘corrections’, such as occurred to Kaaven, are still taking place. Sigvald said, “If you are working with the bad things, you know these. They can be met, like it happened for Kaaven: he met something bigger. One can never know from where it comes. The one who instigates a correction? He may not be known for this.” Sigvald considered the whale in the *Historia Norwegiae* (HN) (see Chapter One) also as ‘correction’.

In a condensed version, the HN account tells of a woman who is suddenly ill. A man after some preparation falls down lifeless, followed by a terrible scream after which he dies. Another man discovers the problem. He tells that the first man’s helper in the form of a whale encountered poles at the bottom of the ocean that ripped open his stomach, the poles having been positioned by an unknown man who instigated the woman’s illness. Sigvald made the following conclusion after hearing the HN story, “The whale was originally sent as a correction, but a correction that failed.” Sigvald said that the *noaidi* who had the whale as helper appears not to have checked whether the illness of the woman to be cured was possibly ‘just’: “He entered into the problem without knowing the strength of the other *noaidi*.” For Sigvald it would be important to know if the woman (who had become suddenly unwell) was possibly being ‘corrected’ by the *noaidi* (who put the poles at the bottom of the sea). He considered it unwise to enter into the problem before checking. This is confirmed by the outcome: the *noaidi* was overcome by another *noaidi*. Sigvald and Nanna used the example of Kaaven’s ‘correction’ to demonstrate a change in Kaaven’s life. Nanna

55 Boastto fámuidd geavaheapme sáhtta máhcahuvvot

56 Ale hástal jallodagaid, amat eatnáduvvat iebčat saniide

57 Čilgehus buorádahttin menestuvvamii lea ahte buorre lea gievrrat go bahá. Jus nu ii livčče, ii livčče eallimis.

said that Kaaven after this ‘correction’, true to his word, never again used his power incorrectly. She emphasized that after the ‘correction’ he did a lot of good for people.

## Lars Pedersen, also known as Gamvik (1873-1942)

### *Facts about Gamvik's life*

Gamvik (Lars Pedersen) was born in 1873 in Gamvik on the island of Sørøy. His parents were Coastal Sami. His father, born 1822 in Skjervøy, an island in Troms, married Aigael Kristensdatter, born in 1828 in Talvik near Alta. Lars was their youngest son. He was often called Lars from Gamvik or simply Gamvik, which was also the name of their farm, “Gamvik søndre” (Jacobsen 1983, 378). According to Nanna, Lars married a woman from Kjøllefjord, which is close to Gamvik. They had three boys and one girl, plus foster children. At some point they left Kjøllefjord and moved to Hammerfest. According to the Norwegian digital archive (Folketeljinga fra 1900 for Sørøysund) Gamvik's wife's name was Lisa Karlsen, and her background was Finnish. However, according to Jacobsen, her name was Henrikke. Further they should have lived some time in Revsholmen before moving to Hammerfest. All sources agree that he lived in Hammerfest from approximately 1920 until his death in 1942 (Jacobsen 1983, 381). Gamvik frequently traveled, and on these travels people would ask for his help. Nanna's father often accompanied Gamvik on these travels selling meat, fish and handcrafts. Nanna said that Gamvik was her teacher and that he chose her as the inheritor of his gift. She related that he did so after first asking her father for permission. She remembers that her parents wondered why Gamvik did not teach one of his own three children. Gamvik explained to them that his children were not strong enough, and therefore it would make no sense to teach them. Nanna related:

Gamvik often went to Karasjok. He came from Hammerfest and would come straight to our place [Sandvik] and stay a couple of days with us. Then one time Gamvik asked my father if he could talk with his youngest daughter. Father asked me if I would accept what Gamvik offered. I answered, “No, you should ask my older sister, Sofia.” And Gamvik was looking at both children. We could not understand anything of this.

In Nanna's view Gamvik's activities were activities intending ‘good’. She emphasized this intention by saying that when Gamvik visited her parents he always first said to the children that they should be good to each other.

### *Gamvik as healer*

There are people in Hammerfest who still can remember Gamvik. Sigvald related a telephone conversation with a genealogist from Hammerfest. He told Sigvald

that Gamvik had helped at the hospital. During the conversation the genealogist wondered to whom Gamvik had passed his knowledge because he knew that Gamvik's children had not been the recipients. Typically, Sigvald gave no answer to this query. He told me:

I spoke to a man in Hammerfest asking him about Gamvik. He said that Gamvik was well known in Hammerfest and used to help at the hospital when they had problems. For example, when they could not stop bleeding, it was enough that Gamvik walked by in the corridor past the room to stop the bleeding. Gamvik was respected in the hospital and even had his own closet for his clothes when he visited the hospital. Also he told that Gamvik has a son living south in Norway but he didn't know exactly where he lived. Then he said, "None of his children got his knowledge and I'm not sure where it went."

In Nanna's opinion, Gamvik was a respected doctor, that even the Hospital appreciated because he was a good doctor. However Gamvik was not a 'medical' doctor and she said that he used 'other' methods when he was doctoring. She told that one time he was accused because of this: "Some people said what he is doing is against the law and said to the police, 'Look what he is doing.' Gamvik could say, for example, 'Take a piece of earth, put it in your coffee plate and then after you have been drinking, hide it somewhere'." Another story Nanna told demonstrates that in some circles there was a strong resistance to consult Gamvik. A medical doctor, Just Broch in Hammerfest, had a son who was ill:

The family had tried everything they could and they were considering sending the boy to Germany for further help. The doctor's wife suggested that they try the help of Gamvik. Doctor Broch said, "Absolutely not." His wife, though, decided that she would try Gamvik's help. She did, and the boy recovered.

Sigvald meant that this Hammerfest doctor knew that Gamvik sometimes prescribed medicine that could be viewed with suspicion, for example, to place earth beside one's tea cup. Furthermore Sigvald attributed the Doctor's resistance towards Gamvik's methods as due to a religious element: "The attitude of the Hammerfest Doctor? Because it was known that as a doctor Gamvik was not using the good Latin, and it is not easy for everyone to accept that one moves into a part that is religious."

Gamvik was consulted for a variety of problems. Nanna related that once she visited an emotionally disturbed girl together with Gamvik:

Once Gamvik and I visited a family and in this family was a young girl. She was ill. We came in and were served coffee. Gamvik asked where the ill girl was, and her mother said upstairs. After a while we heard her there. She came downstairs and ran straight to Gamvik – she did not know him. Gamvik said, “Oh, you know me?” The girl started to cry and said, “No, I don’t know you.” He spoke a short time with the girl, and then she went outside. Gamvik asked her brother to go out and look for her. They came in again and she said to Gamvik, “I want to speak with you.” They went into the living room and closed the door. They came out and she, Ingrid, went upstairs. Gamvik asked her brother to find a scarf that was hers. Gamvik took the scarf and went outside, walked 30 meters away and tied it to a pole there. He came in again and said to the brother, “You have to watch your sister tomorrow. When she wakes up, she is going to dress up in other kinds of clothing than she usually wears. You have to watch when she runs out, she must not pass the pole with the scarf.” Then I asked if Ingrid knew about this and Gamvik said that she didn’t. The morning came and the brother was prepared. Ingrid woke up, dressed herself with nice clothes and then she ran out. Gamvik had told her brother not to let her pass the pole. Ingrid ran out, but her brother did nothing, staying in the house. Ingrid took the scarf and ran into the river. She did not drown. She came out of the water and ran up into the mountains. People saw her far up in the mountains. When she came down, it was to Billefjord, and she was totally not in her right mind. Her brother was thinking, “Why should I run after a crazy girl?” But he was later feeling very bad, for years, that he had not done anything.

Gamvik was said by Nanna to have provided ‘peace’ to a location. He dealt with a haunting of a path between Kolvik and Sandvik by an *eahpáraš* (a dead child being, see Chapter Three). Gamvik ‘cleared’ the path haunted by the *eahpáraš*. Sigvald related, “To do this, Gamvik spoke to the *eahpáraš* saying that it was known what had happened and that there could now be peace.”

### Prophecy

Gamvik was expected by my informants to give accurate predictions. Nanna recalled a time when the Spanish influenza was spreading in Finnmark. Gamvik said to her that she would be able to see who would be infected by the influenza. She would see the coming and going of the illness by observing the light that would circle the house and then enter the house and then enter some of her brothers and sisters. She said that she saw

where and when the disease attacked, and it happened the way he said it would. During Nanna's adult life Gamvik continued to occasionally visit Stabbursnes. She remembered one time sitting with him on a hill and viewing the farms in Stabbursnes. Gamvik told her what would happen to the families. She said that it has happened as he told it would. Concerning one farm, Snekkernes, she remembers particularly what was said, because the farmer asked Gamvik if he would be rich. Gamvik answered, "You are searching to be rich, no one will find it." For Sigvald and Nanna, this was a correct prediction, because the farm at Snekkernes is no longer occupied. Gamvik also helped reindeer herders. Karen told a story about four draught reindeer that were lost. Draught reindeer are tamed and trained with great effort, so for a herder they have particular value. The story not only relates a prediction, so that the herders waited for the animals to return, but also suggests that Gamvik was instrumental in their return.

My father lost four draught reindeer. He went to Gamvik and asked him if the reindeer were still alive. The answer he received was, "The reindeer are okay and they are coming. You just have to wait." And they did return. My brother and I were about to move the whole flock and then I see the draught reindeer coming. They were running to us, in a manner as if someone was chasing them.

Per asked Karen, "Could anyone see what was behind them?" Karen answered, "We could not see anything. They were sent back."

#### Rendering Immobile

Stories are told of Gamvik's capacity to render people and vehicles immobile. Nanna related how a patient of Gamvik contested the payment and then could not move:

One time when Gamvik and father were travelling to Finland, Gamvik treated a man named Eniken. Eniken accused Gamvik of charging too much money for his treatment. Later Eniken asked if he could travel with them to Karasjok. This request was granted and an appointment was made when and where to meet. Gamvik and father waited but Eniken did not arrive. Father went to his home to see what the trouble was. Eniken was sitting at the kitchen table and could not walk. Finally he said, "Send this devil!"

Saying "Send this devil" is understood to mean, "I give up, have Gamvik come to release me, I am sorry I accused him of thievery." Nanna commented, "Gamvik only 'did' when it was needed." And Sigvald explained, "Gamvik was probably Kaaven's size. But, not so



visible so he was not so widely known. He ‘did’ a different way; people did not see what he was working with.”

Referring to Gamvik as “Kaaven’s size,” Sigvald speaks of the strength he would assign to Gamvik. Gamvik had the ability to render immobile, which confirms to Sigvald that Gamvik had special powers.

## Healers in the period 1935-1970

In Chapters Five and Six I will discuss in detail two present day healers, Nanna and Sigvald. I was fortunate to interview other present day healers, although not in the same detail as for Nanna and Sigvald. Yet these healers do provide excellent comparative material. Various healers known by my informants span the period just prior to World War II and shortly after.

### *Healers*

My reindeer informants employ the term *noaidi*; but the Coastal Sami do not and instead use “these kinds of doctors.” Reindeer herders related that Johan Mahtte and Nillas Ailu were active before World War II. Coastal Sami recalled Gette Hans, who was active before World War II, and Benne Ante and Untsgård who were active after World War II. These healers did not have the same reputation as Kaaven and Gamvik, or at least their reputation was not as extensive in Porsanger. Karen stated, “I never asked Nanna why there are no more *noaidit* like Kaaven and Gamvik.” Sigvald asked Karen, “Why do you think so?” Karen responded, “I do not know. They tell about a man in Kautokeino. His name is Johan Mahtte. Then there was also Nillas Ailu.”

Per recalled:

It is said that Nillas Ailu could even stop cars. He is no longer living. The story goes that Nillas Ailu had requested a ride from a man, who answered that he had no time to wait until Ailu was ready to depart. The man started his car, which ran, but the car would not move forward. So he went into Ailu’s house, where Ailu said to him, “Oh, so you have returned from your trip?” He asked Ailu to release him, so that he could drive. Ailu answered, “I am not holding you. I just asked you to wait for me.” Then he waited for Nillas Ailu and eventually they traveled together.

Gette Hans from the village of Gieddi, which is on the North East Coast of the Porsanger Fjord, passed away approximately in 1960. Benne Ante and Untsgård were grandchildren of Johan Kaaven. Benne Ante, son of Kaaven’s daughter Benone, died approximately in 1985 when he was 70 years old, and Untsgård was active in Vadsø around the 1960’s. (It

could very well be that the healer observed by Pentikäinen mentioned in Chapter One, was Untsgård.) Ole and Sigrid knew Gette Hans. Ole told:

There were these kinds of ‘doctors’ in those days [before WWII] and they could do a lot. I know. I tried them. I can give examples, Gette Hans. I had pain in my shoulder, so bad that I could hardly walk. Then Gette Hans came to visit us. I knew him and told about my pain. Gette Hans was just looking while I was telling about the pain. Then Gette Hans took a very big Sami knife. He circled it around my shoulder and arm and said, “This will be healed.” After that I have never felt pain in my shoulder.

Ole also consulted Benne Ante:

We had a man here called Benne Ante Kaaven. He was really a ‘Kaaven!’ I got something in my back. I was using the tractor. The seat on the tractor was covered with a soft, waterproof material but there was a hole in it, so I got wet. The autumn came, it was colder and my back got very bad. It was so bad that I walked croaked and when I went to the shop in Billefjord I used a ski-stand to walk. It was there that I met a man from Karasjok, who said he knew who could help me, if I would just go to him. So I went to this man [to Benne Ante Kaaven in Karasjok] and after that treatment I have never had pain in my back. My son was driving a truck and jumped onto the road and got a very bad pain in his back. I told him to go to Benne Ante Kaaven in Karasjok. My son said that he did not know if he would do this. Then I said, “Then you will have pain.” He went to Karasjok and visited Benne Ante. When Ante had finished, he said to my son, “Go out and run.” My son didn’t believe it, but when he got outside he did check it. He ran and all the pain was gone.

Several people recalled that Benne Ante dealt effectively with eczema. Ole related:

Benne Ante treated a lot of people. Once I had eczema on my hands, painful and bleeding. I had not been thinking of Benne Ante, suddenly he was in our house, visiting us. I said to him, “You are sent here at the right time.” He asked me why and I showed him my hands. He was looking and said, “They don’t look well, but I wonder if this does not disappear?” There was a newspaper and he took a part of it and cleaned my hands with it. And the eczema – very soon it was gone. I could hardly believe how quickly. These people – these healers!

Sigrid had also been in contact with Benne Ante:

My daughter had eczema behind her ears, head and on her chest, very bad, bleeding. The bleeding had been so bad that the shirt would attach to the skin. I knew that Benne Ante was in Lakselv so I drove to Lakselv and took my daughter to him. He made a salve and also took a newspaper, crushed it, and smeared this onto the skin. He cleaned it and afterwards said that he should see the girl once more. We came home and after a few days all the eczema was gone. The eczema reappeared for a while, but only for a short time and after that not again. So we did not visit Benne Ante a second time as he suggested.

Ole also recalled Untsgård, Kaaven's grandson:

It is unfortunate that these people are not around. Before, they were also in Tana and in Vadsø. In Vadsø was Untsgård – I had called Untsgård about my back and when I went to Bente Ante he said, "So, you have called Unstgård!" Johan Kaaven was Untsgård's grandfather. Untsgård traveled around by bicycle and also stayed with relatives in Billefjord. Benne Ante was also a Grandchild of Johan Kaaven. He was Johan Kaaven's daughter's son. There were different mothers.

The healers mentioned above share traits in common with Kaaven and Gamvik: the capacity to stop a vehicle and foreknowledge. The chronicle of Johan Kaaven by the Billefjord schoolteacher Ole A. Thomassen (mentioned above) states that Kaaven was successful in the treatment of skin ailments, rheumatism and nervous disorders (he is diagnosing from a Norwegian perspective). The above stories of successful treatment show the same assortment of ailments: eczema and back pain.

## Present day healers

Some scholars, Britt Kramvig and Jens-Ivar Nergård have published recently on present day Sami healers. I will first present their material, followed by information from my interviewees.

### *Britt Kramvig's Ingmar*

Britt Kramvig, an anthropologist whose main research interests are the Sami issues of ethnicity and indigeneness, gender and marginalization, did fieldwork in the

community in which Ingmar, a Sami fisherman, lived, for a period of two years at the end of the 1990s. Ingmar was a Coastal Sami from the Alta Fjord born in 1910. In September 2001, Finnmark University College held a symposium on the topic *Nature and Identity*. The book based on the symposium contains Britt Kramvig's chapter on "Nature, culture, dreams and healing" (pages 167-187). She explored the relationship between nature and culture by studying the life of Ingmar, then an elderly Sami fisherman. Many people in his environment said they received 'help' from him. Kramvig argues that in Ingmar's view nature was not looked upon as 'the other' to humanity, but that "flows of substance connected nature and culture, and created a language in which reason and destiny could be connected" (Kramvig 2003, 168).

Kramvig relates that Ingmar, having observed that her fingernails had white spots, diagnosed the spots, saying, "It is envy that has taken root." He advised her to cut her nails on three consecutive Thursdays and burn the clippings in the fire. Thereafter she would be rid of envy. To Kramvig, Ingmar's diagnosis and treatment are a result of his long experience of participating and observing nature. "The envy conveyed by others could lead to illness or an accident, and Ingmar indicated that these 'bad thoughts' could accumulate over time. Envy became a substance that could be transmitted from one person to the next....Envy was not only capable of sticking to people, it could also be attached to fishing nets, and if it was, one would not get fish. The net had to be brought out of the boat and washed. Envy was removed through washing, and the harmony needed for the relationship between the fish, the net and the fisherman to work well was re-established" (Ibid., 176-7).

Kramvig writes that Ingmar related receiving instructions by a deceased friend in a dream. These were instructions on how he could get rid of an illness he had. The illness should be buried in the graveyard and then he must 'read' what was assigned. In the dream he then carried out these assignments. According to Kramvig, dreams are seen as offering important guidelines for life and Ingmar could follow the guidelines for healing provided by dreams, while at the same time have a strong belief in God. Kramvig notes that in Ingmar's coastal environment modern medical institutions were respected, but that it additionally was found important to know someone who could be phoned in the critical phase of an illness.

In Ingmar's dream it was a *deceased* person who provided the healing information. Connections are important and illness and healing proceed along the lines of relationship. Although Kramvig discusses the transmission of "substance" between people and or between people and tools, Ingmar seems to be more concerned with relationships. There is something connected to Kramvig's fingernails, envy or bad thoughts, which can also become connected to the fishing nets. The methods for releasing the problems involve (re)-establishing life furthering relationship. The

relationship to nature is also one of connections. Someone is telephoned for help during illness and a connection is formed.

*Mikkel Gaup*

Jens-Ivar Nergård's contact with Mikkel

The anthropologist Jens-Ivar Nergård did fieldwork in Finnmark during the period 1988-1993. In *Det Skjulte Nord-Norge* (The Hidden North Norway) (1994) he presents his results. Nergård thinks that the folk medicine tradition is still present and concludes that the modern helper/healer is the modern form of the old *noaidi*. He devotes a chapter to Nanna (pages 133-135) and a chapter to Mikkel (pages 127-131). I will be treating Nanna's material in the following chapter.

Nergård (1994) writes that Mikkel uses the term shaman, when speaking Norwegian, and *noaidi* when speaking Sami when referring to his skills and power to help others. Mikkel's parents were reindeer herders, and he was born in a *lavvu*. Both parents died when he was young and he grew up with his grandparents. Throughout his life he helped people with illnesses, their flock and the land. Only in the last eight years did he become a shaman (if I should judge what Nergård suggests, then the date could be around 1985). This was after a known shaman from Kautokeino came to Mikkel and asked Mikkel where he could set up his *lavvu* on Mikkel's farm. Mikkel commented, "This man was not alone." The old man said he would not take his knowledge to his grave. They were together the whole summer. In the autumn the man returned to Kautokeino to come back again the next summer. When he then returned to Kautokeino after the summer, he fell ill. Mikkel visited him before the old man died.

As shaman Mikkel is busy most days to help people that come to him or telephone him. Mikkel does not tell Nergård in detail about how he helps people. Nergård found that Mikkel read people's eyes like a book. Mikkel said, "I look in people's eyes and I see what is wrong." Nergård notes that Mikkel has an impressive knowledge about physical illnesses and also what can be called psychological knowledge. He comments that Mikkel's eyes give one a security and safety that binds, and people can see themselves and their own life. Mikkel can massage away a stiff neck like a physiotherapist. When he has finished he symbolically takes the pain out via the legs and throws it away. Nergård thinks that the release of tension felt in the body when Mikkel has finished is also affected psychologically.

Mikkel will on occasion visit an offering stone, and "charges up the batteries". At his stone he can rid himself of what he is carrying of other people's pain. According to Nergård's understanding Mikkel is part of a "contract relation" in which people give him the powers he controls. Mikkel assigns his powers to what he calls "the Great Almighty Spirit" and states that the contact at his stone is religious. Therefore this "contract relation" has a deep religious side. Nergård is impressed with Mikkel as a

philosopher, as a researcher of society and as a therapist, saying that Mikkel interprets the Sami and their problems, speaking of shared experiences and of a unity when these problems are shared (Nergård 1994, 127-131).

#### Interviews with Mikkel

I interviewed Mikkel over a period of four years, between 1993 -1996. I worked with a variety of translators. Mikkel spoke either Sami or Norwegian and my notes were hand-written. At the time of the interviews, Mikkel was retired from reindeer herding, which had been his livelihood. The lifestyle includes a yearly migration between winter and summer pasturage. Mikkel's migration route was between Kautokeino and Alta. With retirement he settled in the area of his summer pasturage nearby Alta. He and his wife had nine children and many of their children and grandchildren also have permanent dwellings on this location. Mikkel was known as a healer by reindeer herders who followed the same migration route. Consulting healers is not uncommon for these groups of reindeer herders. I heard that Kautokeino herders consult healers in their summer pasturage in Troms in addition to consulting Mikkel. Unlike other healers I spoke with, Mikkel used the epithet *noaidi* and shaman to describe himself. He thereby attracted attention to himself. He was consequently interviewed and filmed by people from outside of his direct milieu. Mikkel interprets the attention he has received from people coming to him from as far away as the United States of America in terms of the other's need. His gift is from the Almighty Spirit, and with the gift comes the application to help when asked. Mikkel said:

Many people are coming now, maybe too many. They come from all over, even from America. People come because they have problems that the doctors can not help them with. I can not say "No" because what I have is a gift from the Almighty Spirit. Therefore I can not refuse to help anyone who comes and asks for help.

During my interviews between 1993 and 1995 Mikkel expressed concern about who would take over from him, because he had no potential candidate in sight. In 1996 I understood from him that one of his sons had agreed to take over. In answer to my question "What do you consider to be the most important to pass on?" he answered that the most important were the rituals he performed four times a year at his stone. These should continue to be performed. He said that the stone was a special place that had been passed down through the family, and that the four-times-a-year-ritual was insuring the continuation of life. In addition to the four-times-a-year-ritual, Mikkel would go to his stone when he felt the need to meditate and for advice. He said that when other people accompanied him, a hawk often swept down over them. He said, "At the stone, I am not alone." When he feels the need he goes to the stone and 'calls up' his former teacher and

receives his help. Mikkel sings the teacher's signature *joik* to 'call' him. On one of my visits Mikkel showed me a drum and hammer, explaining that he uses the drum at his stone four times a year to ensure the continuation of life. When I told this to a colleague of mine who has worked in Kautokeino where many of Mikkel's patients live, she said that his patients would be shocked to know that Mikkel had a drum. The drum is strongly associated with heathen practices, and the Sami in Kautokeino consult a healer within the context of Laestadianism.

In answer to my question about transmission Mikkel said, "I cannot make anyone into a shaman; only the Almighty Spirit determines who will be a shaman."

When Mikkel said, "I am not alone," and stated about his teacher, "This man was not alone", he was probably speaking of God's presence. Mikkel said, "I cannot make anyone into a shaman," i.e., it is not the individual but the spirit who chooses. Like Nanna, Mikkel was concerned and on the look out for a successor. Mikkel's teacher had done the same; he searched out Mikkel saying he would "not take this knowledge to his grave."

Mikkel commented on his direct environment as well as on the global environment. Openly critical of activity that he considered disruptive of a good balance, he commented that when he looks around him today, he sees that "people have lost the basic understanding of the Almighty Spirit. They recreate it everywhere else, as in money. There is a built-in logic to money: money makes one want to want." He also spoke critically of over-use, whether of motor scooters and snowmobiles by herders, or over-fishing: "When people over-fish, the fish punish the people. This is so in every situation where something is misused."

Mikkel stated, "when over-fished, the fish punish", which in the Sami language can be expressed by the Sami term *máddu*. *Máddu* means root or origin of the species. Sigvald said, "the original ancestor" and explained, "You meet the *máddu* when over-fishing, you have to take the consequences of your actions." With misuse one meets the ancestor/origin of the species.

One of my translators, during our visit to Mikkel, told Mikkel of an ongoing problem, an uncomfortable feeling in her heart. Mikkel had her sit on a stool and standing behind her, brought his hands lightly from the top of her head down to her shoulders. After the treatment, he demonstrated that he had expended much energy by drawing our attention to how profusely he had sweated. My own experience of treatment was a direct statement. Mikkel said to me, "You know your problem. I also see your problem." He added that this way of speaking about the problem is often how he will start with a patient.

Mikkel received attention, as he mentioned, "even from America". Non-Sami visitors may have introduced Mikkel to the term shaman and to drumming. A resident of Lakselv told me that Michael Harner (an anthropologist from the United

States) had visited Finnmark around 1990 and gave drumming workshops. Harner may also have visited Mikkell. Mikkell accepts the epithet *noaidi*; visits a sacred stone where he calls up his former teacher in order to receive advice from him and performs a ritual four times a year to ensure on-going life; and is convinced that the Almighty Spirit is responsible for determining who will be a *noaidi*/shaman. Therefore Mikkell can be seen as taking his practice beyond Christianity. His practice is further consistent with his notion of not being a Christian, but he stills conceives God as being present (The Almighty Spirit and “At the stone I am not alone”).

### *Hjalmar*<sup>58</sup>

Hjalmar is Nanna's second youngest child and the younger brother of Sigvald. Their shared childhood activities included fishing and trapping. During their youth they went for many days at a time into the mountains to fish in the rivers and lakes. Hjalmar attended boarding school, after which he traveled abroad working as a tour guide. Through his travels he met his future wife who is from Denmark. After their marriage in 1974 they settled in Hammerfest and Hjalmar worked for ten years in tourist management. Then he moved with his family to Lakselv, where he worked in insurance for five years. Stomach and back problems required hospitalizations, but after an operation on his back in 2003, he slowly recovered and today has normal use of his body. He and his wife have three children. Hjalmar has interests in genealogy and is in the habit of travelling. He is a rather outgoing person, talkative and sociable. He maintains contact with many people outside of his municipality of Porsanger, often travelling by car throughout the province of Finnmark.

Hjalmar has been active as a healer since approximately 1994. His inheritance proceeded as follows. It was during one of his trips that Hjalmar met the man he credits later passed his gifts to him. Hjalmar was on his way to West Finnmark and stopped at a shop. Hjalmar related:

I went in and the first that was said was “Oh, you came at last!” The man who spoke was crooked, not tall and I was sure more than 100 years old. He then said, “No, you don't have an appointment, but I have one with you.” I said, “But we have not been talking?” He said, “No, we have not, but I have an appointment with you and now you have come.” Then he said, “Turn your back to me.” He put his finger on my back and said, “You have pain here.” His finger was exactly on my back where I had pain. When I was young, Uncle Per and I had been logging in the valley

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58 My interviews with Hjalmar were videotaped in 2000. I took hand-written notes in 1999 and 2002. English was spoken.



and a tree fell and I was hit. A branch hit me just under the shoulder blade, and the man put his finger exactly on that point where I have had pain ever since the accident. I said to the man, "Yes, I have pain there." Then the man had me sit and stood behind me. He started to tell. He told my whole life history. You know what happened? I got a shiver - a shudder went through me. He told many incidents in my life - far back. When he finished he started to tell about my wife, also told her past. Then he said, "Now you understand what man I am." I answered, "Yes, I now have a picture of you." It was a scary experience to hear mine and my wife's life history and never having seen this man before. Then the man told me that he was growing old, told where he came from and that he had been doing 'this'. He also told how 'this' was used in the area where he came from: There was a tradition, the natural methods. There were no doctors for many kilometers and one had to cross many fjords to come to a doctor, and you were even lucky then to come to a doctor. I finally bought what I came into the shop for, came home and told my wife what kind of man I had met. Some years passed and the man died. Right after that, things started to happen, unexplainable and some I don't dare to talk about. But I went on with my business. Then one day I came home to my daughter, who cried, "The canary has died!" I took the bird and said, "This bird is not dead," then threw it into the air. The bird flew. I did not say anything about these things before the incident with the girl in the hospital.

Hjalmar kept his understanding that he had inherited from the old man to himself until an incident in which a girl was hospitalized with blood poisoning. Hjalmar related, "[In 1994] there was a scandal in the hospital in Hammerfest. An operation had failed because they cut into the intestines by mistake and this resulted in blood poisoning." Hjalmar related he 'saw' and could predict what would happen, he stayed in telephone contact with the mother, and the daughter eventually recovered. After this incident people credited Hjalmar with healing capacities.

When later I visited the hospital, the first thing I was asked by one of the nurses was if I was a laying-on-of-hands healer? I answered, "No, I can't heal with my hands over the telephone." The Head [of the department] Doctor came to me and I asked him if he believed in all this, because he is a doctor. The doctor answered that after what they had experienced with Tove [the girl with blood poisoning] they didn't have a choice. A lot of what happened there, they had no answers for,

and they simply had to accept, it is possible that they believed already early on in the process. What also had an impact was that the mother was there the whole time and she had good contact with me.

Hjalmar said that he often works over the telephone and will first ask the caller's name and birthday.

If I can say a few things that it seems for the person that I know what I could not know - I may say, "Why did you not tell this problem," and the patient answers, "How did you know that?" Then they tell much more. I get inside the person, sometimes even before they call, even when they think they will call me.

Hjalmar emphasizes the connection and presence of God.

It is important to have very good and close contact with what is on this earth, and handle with respect all that nature has given you. Because it is to use the nature with all that is there. Then, that there is God. Not only that he is there in name, but that he is always there to help you. That he is there not only for you but he is there also to help other people. When I am helping others, he is there.

Prediction/foreknowledge is often employed in Hjalmar's healing method. He uses products from nature and he considers the connection to God to be a necessity. Hjalmar thinks he should not ask for payment.

In general it is okay to earn money, but people who get these skills, almost without knowing where they came from, cannot use it for making money. It is different if people give you something, then it is okay, but you must never ask for payment.

There are limitations on what and how much he may tell to others about his healing faculties, and he may not step over this border. It will result in the loss of the capacity. Hjalmar related a story that demonstrates this loss for a man who could stop bleeding.

A man who 'could a lot' said, "I can prove it." He took a lamb, cut into the lamb and it was bleeding. The lamb died. To prove it, is to loose it. It must stay inside a circle – not told. I see things that will happen and it is hard, but it is not to be fixed, I may not tell.

The restrictions include that when one is not using good forces, these forces can be returned and be destructive for the one using them. Hjalmar stated, “Ones that are maybe not there anymore, those that used the bad to get results eventually met the bad themselves.” The bad can be returned to the one who sent it, and to make claims is inadvisable.

## Discussion

The individual healers, Ingmar, Mikkel and Hjalmar, are to a certain extent representative of their local geographical area as well as their family tradition. The elements found in their particular practices can therefore not be generalized for the whole area. The larger geographical area represented by these healers contains cultural divisions between inland reindeer herders (Mikkel) and Coastal Sami (Ingmar and Hjalmar), as well as the cultural differences between the Alta Fjord (Mikkel and Ingmar) and Porsanger Fjord (Hjalmar). Hjalmar, Nanna and Sigvald demonstrate their understanding that one should never be explicit or claim to have special powers. Mikkel invited media coverage, was outspoken in his use of the epithet shaman and *noaidi*, whereas the others are silent or disavow the word. Mikkel has a place he calls the Sami Church, a sacred stone. Sacred stones were used in the pre-Christian religion. The other healers do not associate themselves with pre-Christian practices. When at his stone Mikkel *joiks* his (dead) teacher to receive his help in difficult cases. This dead teacher appears to Mikkel when Mikkel sings his *joik*. The others do not *joik* for their teacher's help. Some Sami associate *joiking* as well as drumming with the pre-Christian religion.

Mikkel had an extensive period of instruction. Hjalmar had very limited contact with the one from whom he inherited. There appears to have been no period of instruction other than their one time meeting. The healer chooses his successor, as in the case of Hjalmar and Mikkel, and the transmission of the capacity to heal was understood to have occurred after the death of the former healer. Help is perceived as available after establishing a relationship with someone dead: During a dream, Ingmar received instructions from a dead friend and was thereby able to rid himself of an illness. Mikkel treated illnesses and problems throughout his adult life but only after the passing of his teacher did Mikkel receive the capacities of a *noaidi*/shaman. Sigvald stated concerning Kaaven's transmission that he possibly received it from more than one previous *noaidi*. Transmission is not necessarily through a family line, but it would appear that Kaaven's grandsons are seen as inheritors of his gift. In all three of Qvigstad's examples the capacity to heal follows an encounter with the dead and it is the dead who offer their services and promise to be available upon request.

The leading principle, one could say the healers 'inside knowledge', is that a 'correct connection' is required. Ingmar, assessing that bad thoughts/envy can

attach themselves to people and equipment, demonstrates his knowledge of correct connection. Mikkel knows that the correct balance is required, otherwise punishment will follow. The basic understanding the healers entertain for their special capacities, is that they have a special connection to God/the Almighty Spirit.

The notions 'to send back' and 'to correct' can be related to baptism and conversion. They are key terms in the discussion that refers to *noaidi* as well as Christian traditions. The concepts of rendering immobile and inheritance also play a central part in that discussion. Rendering immobile must be done for a just cause, which is a binding or marking of, for example, the thief, that later can be released. This concept evokes the Laestadian Keys to Heaven (see Chapter Two), which are the binding and unbinding Keys given to the congregation. Laestadian concepts of the Keys are also reflected in the notions of *noaidi* inheritance. The reception is via the one who has 'it'. "It can be given" is the expression Nanna used when speaking of transmission.

To say a healer is a shaman would, of course, not be appropriate in the context of Christianity. At the local level, the context of discussion is Christian. Consulting a healer is acceptable within Laestadianism for the majority of the patients. In my informants' stories, the extra capacity of a gifted person is rarely specified. For Sigvald, this extra capacity is a special connection to God. It is used to heal by a *noaidi* who then can be more specifically referred to as a *buorideaddji*. For Ole only a *buorideaddji* has this special connection to God, and it was given by God to heal. In the Christian context good activity is consigned to God and evil activity to the devil. The definition of *noaidi* has been influenced by this Christian context, which viewed the activity of the *noaidi* as consorting with evil. However, some people still view a *noaidi* as a doctor, helping people in their time of need. The interviewees Ole and Nils have been most outspoken in their rejection of the *noaidi*, stating that the *noaidi* is condemned in the Bible. But they still relate to the concepts that other interviewees associate with the *noaidi*: rendering immobile, prophecy, and healing. The younger generations do not have the same resistance to the concept of the *noaidi*, but they associate the *noaidi* with the past. After World War II healers are not called *noaidit* by my interviewees, and Nils and Ole will not even call the earlier healers, Kaaven and Gamvik, by the epithet *noaidi*. Usually Kaaven and Gamvik may be qualified as *noaidi* with some caution. The reticence of my interviewees to name Kaaven and Gamvik as *noaidit* perhaps reflects a basic component of the worldview. Naming is powerful and an incorrect naming could come back to you. One would understandably avoid risking 'correction'. My consideration in this respect is due in part to the fact that only after ten years in the field did I come to know that Nanna's father had been a Laestadian lay-preacher and also that Ole is a Laestadian lay-preacher. To directly name someone a *noaidi* is, in itself, a challenge; the one who can correctly define is the strongest. What is not challenging is to tell a story, and we can note that this device was often employed.

In the contemporary arena we can note a complex discourse. The artist mentioned in the newspaper *Min Aigi*, Merja Aletta Anttila, does not answer to the challenge, expressed by a few Lutheran and Laestadian viewers of her paintings, that she is making *noaidi*-art and is a female *noaidi*. Mikkel does accept the challenge and specifically calls himself a *noaidi*. He welcomed media coverage and researchers. However, he possibly does not employ the term *noaidi* when speaking to Sami patients, rather reserving this discourse for outside researchers and the media. The newspapers often use the term ‘Sami shaman’, side stepping the controversial term *noaidi*. When the term *noaidi* is used it is loosely defined, seen as referring to the past, to the one who employed the drum, or to the one who competed with another proving who was the strongest. The anthropologist Robert Paine (1994) whose fieldwork was in the 1950’s, in a Coastal Sami village in Finnmark, only writes *noaidi* in his caption: “Wizards (Saami noai’de; Nwg. Trollkar)” (Paine 1994, 356) (see also Chapter One). We are led to surmise that the Sami speaker has said *noaidi* or, when the Sami individual spoke Norwegian, has used *trollkar*. We do not know if *noaidi* was employed or whether it was controversial for the local population in Paine’s village. Paine does indicate that the community spoke of ‘believers’ (Laestadians) and ‘non-believers’ when there was a recent death: “A believer who is dead does not harm the living (any more than he or she would have when living), but one cannot be at all sure about a non-believer” (Ibid., 354).

Gamvik is called a doctor and both Gamvik and Kaaven have been known to make medicines, using natural ingredients. The stories speak basically about two abilities: (1) the ability to prophesy and (2) the ability to immobilize. The healers mentioned briefly by my interviewees who were active between 1935 –1970 exhibit similar qualities. They could stop a vehicle. When the stop is employed, the situation should indicate that it is used for a just cause. The healers could take away pain, cure eczema, knew to arrive when they were needed and also knew when the patient had consulted someone else. These features agree with those mentioned by Robert Paine, who writes that the wizard (sometimes a woman) is prescient and can *will* persons to do his or her bidding, and he can be in two places at the same time. The most common occasion for a wizard to use his or her powers is to abort theft. The wizard is able to render the thief immobile until the time the wizard releases him. Sometimes the wizard is consulted to put a curse on one felt to have injured the consultant, while others go to a wizard to have such a curse removed (Paine 1994, 357).

A major portion of the discussion at the local level concerns *bijat*. When understood to mean that someone is harnessed with a ghost, the placing of a *bijat* is very close to sorcery. However, there is also an understanding of *bijat* that sees it function in a variety of ways. For example, there are other options for placing a *bijat*, and not only ghosts are employed. When the *bijat* is not just, it will not ‘stick’. Then

the *bijat* will return to who sent it. In the story of Kaaven and the Whale, Kaaven himself received a correction from another *noaidi* and the *bijat* he had placed was returned to him. Kaaven was once chosen by the community to arbitrate justice, in a conflict between Sigvald's grandfather and a ranger. The policeman, after speaking with Kaaven, realized that "justice would not be done as he had imagined." Another time Kaaven was sought out for his ability to enforce justice. The story was told that by holding a boat Kaaven forced the thief to return the stolen goods. Gamvik concerned himself with a haunting (*eahpáraš*) that disrupted the peace of mind of villagers and 'cured' the path for the community by putting the haunting to rest. The tenor of these stories indicates the healing of the community, which has been mentioned by Sigvald to be the activity of a *buorideaddji*. The *bijat* is used as a correction. Concerning the Norwegian term *gand* Sigvald said, "*Gand* is also about correction" (see also Chapter One). That interpretation is shared by the social scientist Nergård (1994) in his chapter on "Ganning – magi eller kulturell kontrakt?" (Ganding – magician or cultural contract?). Nergård considers the sending of *gand* as a potential tool for justice within the community. He states that the Norwegian understanding of *gand* as sorcery is not correct. In the Sami society, *ganding* is a part of a justice system, the one who is considered to be *ganded* has broken social norms. Nergård states that though *ganding* is feared, the uneasiness probably does not lie in the fact that one is threatened by evil forces, but that one is threatened by the community that one is a part of and would lose its protection. When *gand* has been misused, a remedy from the healer can relieve the *ganded* one of the *gand*. When the *gand* can be lifted it is judged to have been unjust, and this judgement 'hits' the one who placed the *gand*. It means a loss of power for the *gander*. The *gander* is therefore basically 'forced' to implement a *gand* only when it is just. A *gander* that is always incorrect will eventually lose his capacity to *gand*. This can happen due to the fact that the *gand* spirit can turn against the *gander* when the *gander* does not pursue the just course (Nergård 1994, 137-142). This concept of justice refers not to Norwegian law but to an order of things seen as an order desired by God. The correct connection is determined according to a cosmological order rather than according to a legal justice system.



*Sigvald and Nanna during an interview.*

## 5 NANNA

I first met Nanna in 1993 and returned to the field in 1995 with the intent to focus my attention on the area in which Nanna lived and her position as healer. She was willing to participate in my project and also used it for her own project, to identify her right inheritor and pass on her gift. This chapter is composed of Nanna's life, the transmission of the gift to her, the practices, her patients and her discourse. The method employed allows Nanna to tell her life story in her own words. I combine several interviews for the narrative. The interviews with Nanna were videotaped. Sigvald and Nanna sat at her kitchen table and I monitored the camera. Sigvald interviewed in Sami, employing the questions I had prepared that also invited Nanna to speak further as she wished. Later, Sigvald and I viewed and translated the interview into English. The interviews with Nanna's patients were similarly set up. Sigvald and I visited them at their home, Sigvald sat at the kitchen table, spoke in Sami, and I monitored the camera.

### Nanna's Life

The youngest of eleven children, Nanna Johnsen was born on 16 May 1909, in Sandvik on the coast of the Porsanger Fjord. At that time Sandvik contained six houses and had a population of approximately 33 people. Nanna's family lived from small farming and fishing, as was the norm for people living in the other small hamlets along the coast of the fjord. Handcrafts were another important occupation and an additional source of income. Nanna related:

My mother's mother came from Northern Sweden. My father's mother came from Kautokeino. My father's father drowned when my father was seven weeks old. His mother was alone with the boy. Then there came a man from Lyngen. They fell in love, and my grandmother left her son. But there was Aunt Martha, she found the boy alone in the house. No one knows how long he had been alone there. So Martha took care of him, and he grew up with her. My father used to tell about when he was little and it was always Martha. But he was a happy man, who laughed often. He would tell that earlier it had not been easy, but since the time I was there - I am the youngest - he said it was a good life. I remember one day when I was little I asked my father, "Didn't you have either a



mother or father?” And my father answered, “Yes, I had Aunt Martha.” He grew up that way with Aunt Martha. But, I have to admit he was fond of alcohol. He drank when he could afford it. He used to travel, trading in reindeer meat. That is how he provided for us. Times were hard, but we did not go hungry. When we sat for dinner, there were two tables. I wondered how my father provided for such a large family. There were many poor people around, and my father also gave to them. My mother would say not to give so much, but he said to his children, “I wish that my children will do the same.” I was the youngest and would say as a child, “Well, I am not giving to the poor people, I can’t afford it.” Three or four brothers died later of the Spanish flu. A brother drowned in the sea, another died of cancer, one fell off the dock, and one died in Oslo. The Spanish flu took a lot of people. As I grew older I started to learn handcrafts. I wanted to travel, but I could not afford it. But as I wanted to travel, I went to work in a shop in Honningsvåg. I worked there for a half year. I was seventeen, but my mother became ill and I had to go home. When my mother recovered, I had decided to go out into the world, but then there was no money. You had to work three weeks for ten kroner. Then I met my future husband. We married. The people around me said, “Oh, you won’t be able to manage those people in Stabburnes.” I came here [Stabburnes], though, and moved into the same house with my husband’s parents. They were the best people I could have had.

### *Life in Sandvik*

Nanna’s father, Per Johnsen, traded in reindeer meat and handcrafts, in addition to small farming and fishing. Nanna’s father brought reindeer meat to Honningsvåg from Karasjok or from Skoganvarre. Honningsvåg is a harbor town largely populated by Norwegians; Karasjok and Skoganvarre are inland settlements where reindeer herders lived during the winter months. The Norwegians in Honningsvåg were good customers for Nanna’s father, since they did not have access to reindeer meat directly from the herders during the winter months. His customers in Honningsvåg bought the better larger pieces of meat. It was her father’s custom to give those pieces of the reindeer that the Norwegians in Honningsvåg did not buy, to the poor people in his area of Billefjord. These pieces could be from the leg, the head or the stomach. The whole reindeer was always used in some way. Her father transported his cargo by horse and sled, traveling on the ice when possible. He also rented horses to augment his caravan when needed. Nanna’s father’s traveling and trading brought his household into contact with people outside their direct environment, but they were never really isolated. It would appear that there was regular contact with people

in settlements all along the coast of the Porsanger Fjord. The boat was an easy and often used means of transport. Nanna's father spoke Sami, Finnish, Norwegian, and a sort of pidgin Russian. This was called Pomor Russian from the Pomor trade (see Chapter One) that was active until ca 1920's. Nanna's father traveled regularly and was often a guide or travel companion to people. A regular visitor and travel companion of Nanna's father was Gamvik and it is he who passed on his gift to Nanna. Nanna's father was also a Laestadian lay-preacher. He traveled inland for Laestadian meetings with reindeer herding *siidas*, particularly in Skoganvarre. The attitude and atmosphere within Nanna's family was one that encouraged visitors. One regular visitor to Nanna's home was the local schoolteacher. She said he even lodged with them, and this was not the general rule for the local schoolteacher. Nanna has fond memories of this teacher (which was Ole A. Thomassen, the Indre Billefjord schoolteacher mentioned in Chapter Four). She said, "He was one of us." I questioned Nanna if this meant that he was Sami? By her response, which was somewhat dismissive, I have concluded that for her the question of someone being Sami is not as important as the belonging that is created by participating in life together.

Nanna went to school in Billefjord, a few kilometers from Sandvik. She started in 1917 when she was eight years old and continued for six years. She attended school throughout the year. Until ca 1907 the youngest school children had six weeks of school in August and September and then again during May and June. The older children went to school in the winter, in January and February. The teachers traveled to each small community to give the lessons. The government policy concerning language in the schools changed in 1915, just two years before Nanna started school.



After 1915 the policy prohibited the use of Sami in school. Nanna said that the language rule was not rigidly followed and depended on the individual teacher. Her experience with her schoolteacher, Ole A. Thomassen was positive. However, Nanna thought that where this rule was rigidly followed and Norwegian was exclusively spoken in the school, the first few years of school were essentially lost, because when Sami children started school they usually spoke exclusively Sami.

*Nanna in Sandvik in 1927.*

Nanna related that she had plans to travel. She wished to study singing. The singing culture around Sandvik, in an area within a radius of twenty kilometers, was already an important part of the life there. Traditionally there are no musical instruments. Singing unaccompanied by a musical instrument is an accepted and enjoyable part of the Laestadian meetings. The singing culture in which Nanna was participating had developed a style that was different from the more traditional Sami style of singing called *joik*, and had already aroused outside interest. According to Nanna a specialist from the University of Tromsø came over to record songs when Nanna was a young adult. Nanna's plans changed, first due to her mother's illness, and then again because she met Lars Persen, the man she would marry. They met when he was fishing in the fjord close to Sandvik. The fishing in the fjord close to Sandvik was excellent during her youth. It was customary for local residents to provide lodging in their homes for all travelers, including fishermen. Nanna married Lars Persen in 1930 and moved seventeen kilometers south along the Porsanger Fjord to Stabburnes. She said that she did miss her own family, not only because she lived in Stabburnes, but it so happened that within a year of marriage the only one of her family still living was her sister, Sofia. Nanna told me that her siblings teased her about her ability to deal with the family into which she married. How successfully she actually managed is demonstrated by the following story.

### *Life in Stabburnes*

Within a week of Nanna's arrival in Stabburnes as a new bride, she was confronted with an urgent problem. The farm was threatened with confiscation to pay for back taxes. New laws for the local population were being enforced. Each adult male's income was taxed at the end of the year. Four adult men lived on the farm at the time, the father and three sons, one of which was Nanna's new husband, Lars. They all needed to pay the tax, and none had any money. The men had no solution and apparently Lars retreated to his bed and stayed there. A reindeer herding *siida* was grazing close to the farm. This *siida* consisted of people Nanna knew well from her childhood. It was the *siida* her father visited as a Laestadian lay-preacher. She asked them to loan her the money to cover the taxes owed by the Persen men. Reindeer families in those days were about the only ones who had large amounts of cash. They agreed to loan the money. Nanna paid the taxes and later repaid the loan. Nanna was then the actual owner of the farm. She said she did not make an issue of this fact since basically everyone worked well together. Nanna told me that only once did she make her position as actual owner clear. She noticed early in her marriage that her husband, Lars, would be away for periods that she could not account for. She noticed one time that his parents were going back and forth to the barn. She went to the barn and found Lars drunk. She then said to her parents-in-law that this must never happen again, that they must not cover-up Lars' drinking. She gave strength to her words by saying, "If I leave, I will take with me what is mine."



*Nanna with great-great-grandchildren.*

### *Children*

Nanna bore ten children. Her first child, a boy, died during infancy. Nanna had five daughters and three sons who reached maturity. In order of birth: The oldest daughter was Magnhild, and she died in 1987. Nanna's daughter Petra lives in Lakselv. The second daughter Laila lives in Alta. Then comes a son, Egil, who also lives in Alta; daughter Dagny married and lived in Tromsø until she died of an unknown cause when she was 32; daughter Astrid died at the age of twelve years also of an unknown cause; then a son, Sigvald. He is the only one who studied further. He has an engineering degree. He married later in life, divorced after twelve years, and has two children. He takes care of the family farm in Stabburnes, lives in the original house and built a small house on the property for his mother. Next in line after Sigvald, is another son, Hjalmar. He started traveling abroad soon after he finished basic school, and worked as a tour guide in Europe. His wife is from Denmark. After his marriage he settled in Hammerfest. He has lived in Lakselv since 1990. He had physical problems, so he is no longer employed. He has three children. The youngest of Nanna's children is a daughter, Elvy. She is a nurse and lives in Oslo.

### *Making a living*

The changes that Nanna has seen over the years in the area she lives in include a reduction of the population, and transitions to other means of livelihood. Before World War II the hamlets were larger.

It is in this way that there are fewer people here now. Earlier there was basically farming with cows and sheep. They made a lot of products from that. Then fishing in the river, and handcrafts for the women gave some income. They did a lot of hunting – grouse, lynx, wolverine, otter, ermine, hare. They could go up on the mountain on Sunday evening and be there for a week. Fishing in the sea was not done much here, but it happened. People from Stabbursnes fished in the fjord and would come to Sandvik. This is how I met my future husband. He was fishing and would stop at Sandvik. Sometimes there were so many fishermen that there were not enough houses to accommodate them. Fishermen from Lakselv came also – it was good fishing just close to Sandvik. They used small boats and they sailed. This was the way to travel to the fishing areas on the fjord and back again. A lot of the fish was sold, when there was anyone who would buy it. This was not always the case, so we cut the fish into filets and hung it to dry. When the fish was dry, we tried to sell it. That was how people lived. There was a lot of salmon, but the price was so low. We had salmon in barrels – it could happen that it was still there the next year, then it was almost inedible. Fat fish can not be kept too long. We used to put the salted salmon in water for a few days and cook it, but it did not taste well. It tasted bad, but people had to eat. There was no money to make purchases. They sold the fish even if the price was low, so they earned some money. And a lot would be salted in barrels. There was so much salmon that it was cooked and fed to the cattle. Many people gave it to the animals. But it happened that they went to Karasjok before Christmas and they took fish [salted salmon] to sell. We took what we had made. Lars fished in the river, hunted and worked as a black smith. He caught a lot of salmon in the summer and made belts, bells and knives.

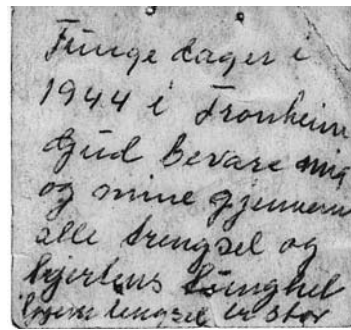
### *World War II*

During World War II Finnmark was occupied by German military. Nanna told that she worked cleaning the barracks of the troops. In October 1944 the German forces were making a hasty retreat pursued by the Russian troops. The German forces applied the scorched earth policy in Finnmark and evacuated the local population. Nanna remembers

that the German soldiers from the barrack gave her extra provisions prior to the evacuation. Sea transportation was provided for the evacuation. The Persen family, unsure (as all were) about what this would bring, went into the mountains to avoid the transport. Nanna had just given birth and they arrived in the mountains with the newly born baby they named Astrid. They stayed with a reindeer family. Nanna said, "I spent the first day in the mountains walking with the man from the reindeer family, looking for a place to bury the baby. No one expected her to survive." German forces found them and advised them to evacuate, which they did. Nanna said, "Looking back, evacuation probably saved Astrid's life."



*Nanna's identity document photo, Trondheim 1944.*



*Nanna wrote on the back of the photo her thoughts at that time:*

*Difficult days in 1944 in Trondheim; God save me and mine through all these troubles and melancholy of heart; huge homesickness.*

The Persen family was evacuated to Trondheim, later they lived on a farm north of Trondheim. In Norway the war was over on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 1945. In the autumn of 1945 Lars went to Stabburnes to survey the damage and assess the possibilities of returning. The Norwegian government placed Finnmark under restrictions, so that one had to apply to the government to return to Finnmark. Lars found that many people had stayed during the evacuation by escaping into the mountains. There they had built turf houses, which provided adequate protection during the winter. Lars returned again in the spring of 1946 and built a shelter. The government assistance for rebuilding was not immediately effective; therefore local people first used the planks that were left over from the airforce landing strip in Lakselv as building material. Nanna and her young children came to Stabburnes in the summer of 1946. Nanna considered the building inadequate for the winter months and returned south with the children. She said:

Had the children been older it would have been possible to stay. Those families that had stayed in the mountains during the evacuation period had older children and this made such circumstances feasible. The families that had stayed had turf homes and were relatively better off than returning families because the new building materials were inadequate, even when there was increased aid from Sweden. Those who were building new homes had to supplement their plywood structures with turf to be able to withstand the winter temperatures.

Nanna also considered the option of living permanently in the south. She saw that the economic circumstances there were so much better than in Finnmark. Her husband, Lars, however, did not feel comfortable in the south. The reasons for this, Nanna told, were “a combination of the strangeness of the culture, and in addition, he did not feel comfortable speaking Norwegian.” The family chose to return to Stabburnsnes, which they did in 1947. They lived the first few years in a temporary house, as did many others in Porsanger. In 1952 the family moved into their permanent home built by Lars. After the war new opportunities arose.

It was a different time after the war. They started to produce milk in Lakselv. Then one could sell milk, so the number of cows one kept increased. No one became rich from this, but it provided a little money. With Jovnna Berit [neighbor] we did a lot of work together. By weaving together in one place we gained one meter of weaving over what we could do separately. Most of the woven woolen cloth was sold to Reindeer Sami. But then after the war we found out that the prices were better for carpets and thick woolen blankets. Other people than Reindeer Sami, Norwegian people bought these products. So I suggested to Jovnna Berit to do more of these, but then it was better to work separately, so we did it that way. There was a big difference. I have made two big carpets for the hospital in Tromsø, also one for the hospital in Trondheim at a much better price. Back then a thousand kroner was a lot of money, and we were not used to that amount for what we did. In the beginning we got sixty kroner a meter for weaving – that is nothing. Still after the War, the fifties and sixties, there were a lot of handcrafts to sell. Bells and knives were made until the sixties. All this was how it was until the sixties, maybe even the seventies.

Changes in livelihood also transformed relationships between people.



People in earlier times needed each other, and they co-operated and did things together. Today, people are rich and they don't need each other. Before, you needed your neighbor to do work. They even shared tobacco. They would do a lot on one farm and then went to the next farm – help each other. Today, neighbors do not go to each other – as though it is forbidden. This started after the war, the economic circumstances improved. Back then, you were already rich when you had more bread than you needed to eat. Formerly one did things together, even when the farms were separate. People co-operated in collecting berries. Today, people collect berries but the berries collected are only for their own use. Earlier, we sold most of what we picked especially cloudberries. The traders who had shops [in Kistrand, Kolvik, Billefjord, Lakselv] bought the berries.

### *Life on the Farm*

Handcrafts were a major occupation in all the farms at Stabburnes. The upstairs of Nanna's home was like a factory. A woman friend of Nanna from the area came most days, and they would weave together. Other occupations were spinning and knitting. Winter shoes were made from reindeer skins and stuffed with special grass. Summer shoes were made from leather from cowhides, which was thick enough for the mountain environment of stone and hard earth. Nanna sewed all her children's clothing, but when they went to school some articles were bought. Nanna also sold her handcrafts. The reindeer herder families were not involved with handcrafts in the same way, and they bought the woven wool to make their clothing, and for the covering of the *goabti* and the *lávvu*. Nanna also wove for the local people who did not weave, and for them she made carpets and blankets to cover themselves on the sleds and extra blankets to cover the horse. Each region had its own design for their blankets. In Nanna's region the blankets for the horses were only in black and white, the blankets for the sled were colorful. Nanna was regularly busy with this work. She also did the slaughtering of the sheep and taught this to some of her children. Nanna's husband, Lars, did work connected to small farming and fishing, but he was also a blacksmith. He made bells used by the reindeer herders on the lead animals. His bells were particularly sought out for their distinct sound from a far distance but soft volume at a close distance. In 1957 Lars bought the first tractor in their area. This meant that he was asked to help the other farmers with their hay. He was kept busy mowing for a few years before other tractors were bought and he was able to earn well with this labor. As well as her work in the home, Nanna was engaged in the community health organization. Each municipality has a governmentally sponsored organization that includes the local doctor and members chosen by the hamlets. Their responsibilities include child care, mother care, elderly care, health in school, drinking



water – basically everything that is health related. Nanna was chosen to serve in this capacity and did so for some periods.

### *Dealing with Norwegian law*

Some customary use of the land and waterways was designated to be illegal under Norwegian law. Local people often found it difficult to deal with these new laws and people were often inventive in dealing with authorities. Nanna related some anecdotes on the relationships between local people and policemen who had to maintain Norwegian law.

Lars and Jovnna (a hunting companion who did not live here) went up to the mountains. A policeman came and asked for Jovnna and heard that he was in the mountains. The policeman took a guide with him and started up the mountain to arrest Jovnna. They arrived and spoke with everyone there. The plan was to take Jovnna with them – arrest him. What had he done? Up there they did not know. But it was too late in the day so they had to stay over night. There was a turf house where people stayed in the winter. The guide was a reindeer Sami and a friend of Jovnna. Jovnna suggested that someone should sleep in front of the door so that no one could go out at night. The policeman agreed. The Sami reindeer guide was placed in front of the door and all agreed that this was a good plan and all went to sleep. In the middle of the night Jovnna slipped out of the turf house. The next morning the policeman woke and asked, “Where is Jovnna?” So the policeman asked the Reindeer Sami where Jovnna was and accused him of not doing his job. He answered, “No, that was not my job [to guard the prisoner]. I was just helping you up the mountain.” The policeman continued to accuse him, saying, “You must have seen him go!” They could not find Jovnna. They came down the mountain and heard that he had gone up the mountain again. So they went up the mountain again. Jovnna kept them in sight but they could not find him. Jovnna was loose and, the policeman was tired, so he put the reindeer Sami in jail for two days. It happened like that in those days. Later Lars continued the joking and asked Jovnna, “But why did you leave the turf house?” And Jovnna answered, “I had to go to the toilet. I thought it was not necessary to ask permission for that.”

At times the enforcer of the law was himself Sami, as in the case of Klemet who was given a lesson from the local population.

They fished together, Lars and those from Dalvesatji [neighboring farm]. Klemet cut up their fishing nets. He was the police. They caught him in Lombola [a lake area], tied him to a pole and left him there. They took the pole and put it through a winter reindeer coat and put this on him. His arms tied to the pole, he had trouble just walking with this pole, and it was summer. So, it took time for him to come down, but he finally did. He came to Snik and asked Lude to let him in. But Klemet had done so much wrong that Lude was also angry and so she refused to untie him and he had to go further. Of course, he said, "I have to go to the toilet!" Even then, she refused. Finally, he came down to Anne Sofi and she asked, "What has happened?" He answered, "The boys have done this." You see, "the boys" had told him that if he should name them there would come more of the same. Anne Sofi untied him. He smelled terrible, he had shit in his pants and it was a warm summer. Anne Sofi's house was also a café and the police dropped in. They asked Klemet who did this? But Klemet answered, "Just some boys" – no names. The police asked Anne Sofi why this was done. And she told that he was cutting the fishing nets. Klemet used his position to harm people.

Nanna highlights the funny side of what were certainly serious social conflicts.

### *Relations with Reindeer Sami*

Nanna views the relationship with Reindeer Sami as changed. Earlier the Persen farm had a close *verdde* (reciprocal relationship with a delayed exchange pattern of products as well as services fostering continuity) contact that is now not as intensive.

The relationship was like people from the same house or family. Farming people were not so refined then as today, and that is also true for the reindeer people today, who are more refined now. We had a much closer relationship then. Reindeer people are as we are. You can compare the change to the change with the neighbors. There is less contact because we don't need each other now as we did then. Today we don't see reindeer people often, just now and then. We can see them walking on the road, but the visiting as before is gone. They now live more like the Norwegians, in their way of keeping house – the whole lifestyle. In earlier times, when they came in, they slept as they walked [did not undress to sleep]. With the farmers here, it was accepted that when they woke up, they were ready to walk – no need to dress. Not all the farms around here had the same relationship to reindeer people.

They could prefer others. It went both ways. Reindeer people were not treated the same or welcomed, as we welcomed them, and they went where they were welcomed. Some farmers did not even like us to have reindeer people visit at all.



*Pieras Piera from the Njeaiddán siida sitting at the Persen kitchen table.*

This picture from the 1970s shows that the norm of coming into Nanna's kitchen still fully dressed in Sami clothes for a chat, coffee and a smoke was still in practice. Taking off the shoes before entering the house is considered to be a Norwegian practice.

Now everything is changed. You can see today that when they come to you, they take off their shoes. They used to just walk in before, because Sami shoes are tied so that it is not meant to just take them on and off like a shoe. The siida structure is much different now, even though they migrated then along the same route as today. The contact changed, consider, don't you think that there was a need both ways? Trading went both ways; there was an exchanging of what each had. We had handcrafts and made shoes, while they had skins. It was needed both ways. When that worked well you had a special relationship and it stayed. When you had that relationship, and if they passed by without stopping to visit you, you wondered if anything was wrong, anything not paid? It is not strange today to pass by without visiting. We don't have that relationship now, it does not exist, those with whom I had it, are all gone. When the migration started, they would stay here even for a few months waiting for the snow to come. They stayed in tents in a goahti [this is a more permanent family tent than the lávvu]. They stopped here going both

ways. When they stayed for so long, you developed a good relationship to these people. The change is due to people having more money.

Nanna explains her view of the change in the *verdde* relationship as due to the increase of monetary wealth. Earlier the relationship included exchanges of goods, labor and accommodations, and 'the need went both ways'. More recently, 'now that everyone has more money', the option exists to buy goods and services, which in turn has influenced the ongoing mutuality of the *verdde* relationship because the necessity to maintain the relationship has been superseded.

### *Social problems*

Nanna considers the misuse of alcohol to have been prevalent in Stabbursnes.

There was more than enough alcohol use. People drank a lot (just the men), and they produced it themselves. I can remember an incident in my home: A young man, Pedar, lived here. He was young and the other young men lived on the other side of the river. One time, my mother-in-law went out to the cow shed. There was a bucket with a lid on that could not be opened. They had put it in front of the cow to keep the bucket warm. She comes in and asks what is it - although she knew - and then she just walked out. I asked Pedar if they had to keep it where it was warm enough. And yes, they were brewing. So they took this bucket to Dalvesadji to distill it, but my father-in-law knew all about it. Also Ovlla at Snihkkárnjarga did a lot of distilling. His wife, Elli, told me many years ago of an incident in which Ovlla was in a bad mood. It was spring and there was a lot of water in the river. He was planning to cross the river and Elli said there is too much water. But he had liquor by the river, and he went down and was drinking there. So he went out and Elli forgot to keep track of the time. He had been drinking and fell asleep. The water had been rising and she found him partly in the river. He was too heavy for her to move, so she went for help. Her mother-in-law and she carried him up to dry land, with the added help of a chance passer-by, Sammul. After this, Ovlla was always ashamed when he was around Sammul. Sammul lived at Enereng and they had a big house and they made their own liquor. It was too expensive to buy, so many of them used the barrels and made it themselves. It was illegal, so it often happened that one was arrested, the equipment taken and a few days spent in jail. They came out and started again with new equipment. It was not legal but they had to drink.

### *Laestadianism*

Many of the farms in Stabburnes hosted Laestadian meetings, including the Persen farm. However, not every farm, nor did all individuals attend the meetings. Nanna was an active Laestadian and she supported the stance against alcohol misuse. Sami, Finnish and Norwegian languages were used in the Laestadian meetings, indicating a dynamic cultural mix.

The Norwegian language was used and was then translated into Sami. Then also Finnish was used and translated into Sami, because many Finnish-speaking people came to the meetings from Lakselv and Billefjord. Some came directly from Finland. People here spoke a sort of Norwegian, just enough to get by when needed. The books were in Norwegian. Lars translated from Norwegian into Sami. Maret Ovlla translated from Finnish into Sami. It was this way, very often the people were mixed: Norwegian speaking, Sami and Finnish speaking. It started that way, so it was not possible to have a meeting just in Sami. So it was normal to have a meeting in Norwegian and Sami, or a meeting in Finnish and Sami. Most people here were Sami, but I don't remember even one meeting only in Sami, always Norwegian and Finnish people came. But they were not so Norwegian that they did not understand a little Sami. Norwegian people were not here in the beginning, when they started coming I can't say exactly. People came from Billefjord and Lakselv, and in Lakselv most people spoke Finnish – today, there are not so many Finnish speaking people in Lakselv as then. The books were in all three languages. The Bible, the Psalms and all the other books, and the language would depend more on the language they could read, rather than about who were at the meetings.

## Healing

Nergård (1994) devoted a chapter to Nanna (pages 133-135), the result of his fieldtrips during 1988-1993. Nergård writes that people in Nanna's environment say that she is a 'helper', and that medical doctors have sent patients to her. Nanna provided him with very little information concerning how or 'with what' she helps people. However, she did say, "People don't need to tell me where they have pain. When I touch someone, I feel the pain in my own body." She added that the pain often sits in small local infections in the muscles, and she would use cupping to support the bodies own cleaning system (Nergård 1994, 134). Nergård interprets some of her help in terms of psychology: she gives advice

and guidance to patients on how to live. To Nergård's question about inheritance, Nanna answered that a man from Hammerfest had installed her as a helper through a shake of the hand. Nanna would not be associated with shamanism, her understanding being that it deals with casting spells. Nanna was careful to tell that her activities are based on what is good and that she is a Christian helper. Expressing her approach to the help she provides, Nanna said, "I know about need myself and can not refuse to help" (Ibid., 133-135).

This is a condensed version of Nergård's chapter. However, it appears that I received more information from Nanna than she divulged to Nergård. I have assessed this difference to stem for the most part from the fact that I functioned as a kind of catalyst for Nanna in the process of giving her gift to Sigvald.

The practice of healing spans Nanna's whole life. She commenced at a young age and continued until she passed away at 93 years of age. It appears that people have consistently consulted her for her help over these many years. The normal way that this occurred was to visit Nanna at her home (with the advent of the telephone, a prospective patient contacted her first via the telephone). They would sit around the kitchen table and Nanna served coffee. The patients would speak about their problem. Nanna diagnosed the problem and would decide whether she would treat the patient. Then she would suggest treatment. A diagnosis could lead her to suggest that they consult a medical professional. Often the suggested treatment was to cup. The cupping treatments followed a certain rhythm, Nanna advised the patient to return for a cupping session at each new moon, and this continued for sometimes three months or up to a year.

### *Cupping*

Pain is the most common complaint for which cupping is applied. The cupping method is as follows (see appendix): First, a razor is lightly and quickly tapped on the skin forming surface incisions, the incisions are always made in the same direction, to facilitate the closing and healing of the cuts. A cup is applied to this area and a partial vacuum is produced extracting blood. At each cupping session several cups are applied, the location being determined by Nanna. The cup is several times removed and the blood is rinsed off the cup in a bowl of water and the cup is reapplied to the same location. Cupping sessions will be repeated when needed. During Nanna's youth the cups were made from horn and the partial vacuum produced by applying one's mouth and sucking. The horn cups were later exchanged for glass, and rubber caps were used for the suction. Nanna was chosen to learn cupping by her parents, something both her parents could do. Her parents started her in this direction by having her assist in the delivery of lambs when she was fourteen years old. Her father used the method of cupping on animals. She was instructed to try it out on her father, even though she said she did not like to cut her father. The theory of cupping which her parents and the other people in Sandvik applied was that the old

blood is tired and not working well enough. By cupping, the old, tired blood is removed stimulating the production of new, active, blood that then functions well. Nanna used the cupping to examine the blood. She observed the blood, and its behavior. Does it separate and when? What is the color? Is it thick or thin? In different places in the body the blood can have different characteristics. Nanna would observe for example that the blood in a certain part of the body would be yellowish and watery. For Nanna there may be different reasons behind the behavior of the blood. Thus blood may reflect an influence that comes from food and emotions. The training to cup that Nanna received from her parents included this method of observation. Her parents trained her to cup, but she received more training and a gift from someone outside her family. She was chosen by Gamvik to inherit his gift. So healing as practiced by Nanna is comprised of a variety of elements. According to Nanna she combined what she got from Gamvik with her activity of cupping. In her opinion she was doing more in her practice of cupping than what she was taught by her parents. Nanna specified that she can not speak about what she sees in the blood when the observations go further, an interdict that accompanies the gift from Gamvik.

I will not tell about the different kind of blood people have. I am not allowed to tell. If I should judge people by what their blood says [pause] it is not possible, one can't talk about people's blood and let it out. I can say, though, that some people have weak blood and thin, and some have very thick blood. The weakest blood is thin. People with bad circulation have thick blood. It can happen that in some areas the blood is thick and then thinner in other areas. Because, just as water flows, the blood is tired and the thinner blood will be flowing. As far as I understand, it is so. I can't say it exactly.

From the stories of the life in Sandvik it would not seem unusual to be instructed in cupping. In these stories it is told that every one had been cupped and many people were cupping. However, when Nanna was young, a subtle shift was underway. She explained:

A new knowledge was coming in [referring to the modern medical knowledge plus the modern scientific viewpoint]. People were cupping but those doing it were careful. They only did what they had learned and if it failed [gave no beneficial result] the method was questioned.

Nanna was not only the youngest in her family she was much younger than her brothers and sisters. Some were already adult when she was born, and she told that many of her brothers had died in young adulthood. So the question could be raised, did her parents teach the other children to cup? Nanna has answered this question only with respect to

her sister Sofia. She said that Sofia did not want to cup. Sofia did not want to help others nor was cupping of any interest to Sofia. By the time that Nanna was a young woman she remembered only three other women in the area of Sandvik and Billefjord who did cupping.

When I was fourteen years old, Mama taught me. All that I have, I have learned in my childhood home. Mama learned from her mother, who came from Sweden. I used to talk to my sister Sofia, but she was too proud. I helped everyone, no matter whether they were rich or poor. My sister did not want to do this, and she said to me that I should not do it so. But I answered her that I have this law in my pocket.

Nanna related Sofia's refusal to learn cupping to pride, but not being a secure source of income also played a part in Sofia's refusal.

At that time there was little money, and as people were poor, they tried to heal by cupping. I have always heard that cupping is good. When this Swedish woman came here, she told that cupping is the oldest way healing was done. My mother, who came from Sweden, also practiced cupping, and so I learned from her. I don't know who is after me. Now my 'home help' asked to be cupped, after Easter. I've told her to go to the doctor. She told me that this medicine is not helping – she has a lot of medicine and it has not helped. That is the way requests for cupping come here.

Cupping was a common practice during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nanna credited lack of financial means as one reason that cupping was then so prevalent. In the example mentioned (that is from 2001) she considered the choice to consult her as stemming from the lack of success of previously consulted medical help. Nanna was unique in her environment. No one else continued to cup or taught the practice to the next generation.

There are no other people around here doing this, not in this whole area. At that time [when Nanna learned cupping] people dared to do things. Now it looks like people are more afraid to do things like cupping, maybe too nervous. In Sandvik and Billefjord people practiced cupping, but they did not increase their knowledge, did not widen what they could do, did not keep trying new things, only did just what they had been taught.

Nanna, on the other hand, told that she constantly strove to increase her knowledge.



When I came to Stabbursnes, there was no one else doing this. When I came here and practiced cupping, Joavvna Lemet said, “You are going to make people here impotent.” Then I was going to cup their son, Pedar, and the wife said, “And you are going to cup Pedar? Do you think he can stand this?” I said, “Well you are his mother, you can cup Pedar.” Pedar was already a grown up man. The mother took the cups, and before she had even fastened the cups Pedar fainted – lay on the floor. She said, “You see, I know my son.”

Apparently people feared that cupping might drain one’s strength.

The people around here came for cupping. Most of those from around here have died, but I have cupped almost everyone here. I even cupped Karen Hjalmar, a very healthy man. After he had moved some years ago to Lakselv, he called me to cup him. I went there and would cup him. His wife asked, “Is this something to cup? Just kill him.” I told her to go out, and asked him if this was their way of being together. But I think it was just empty words, because Hjalmar died normally.

Nanna’s style of speaking was colorful. She said herself that she adds “salt and pepper” when telling a story. We can note her humor in the above when she speaks of cupping Pedar suggesting to the mother that the mother could cup him, and again when saying that Hjalmar died normally. She was joking that his wife apparently did not kill him after all, the wife’s language having led one to wonder if she wanted him to die. Nanna indicated that a variety of attitudes existed towards cupping but that basically cupping was frequently resorted to during its heyday. Apparently Nanna’s cupping activities increased after her husband died.

Time passed, the children were grown, my husband died, and many more people came to me. Then a Swedish woman came here and stayed for six weeks. She brought my name out into the world. In that time Karen [Reindeer Sami from Njeaiddán siida] was slaughtering reindeer here. I think that may have been too much for the Swedish girl, because she left shortly thereafter. I described how the skin was taken off the reindeer leg and the Swedish girl said, “Oh! This is awful!” Karen was busy just outside the house here.

I understood that the Swedish woman stayed for some weeks with Nanna and that she was a Swedish Sami producing programs for the Sami radio. Through the radio program

Nanna became known for her cupping activities as well as her singing and handcraft. At that time, the radio was a new way to reach people. It also gave credence to Nanna's healing method.

I acquired more and more friends out in the world. If all the neighbors come to visit you, that is one thing, but when I had people come to visit from outside, it was wondered, "How did they get your name?" But I don't know how they got my name. We used to sing a lot when I was young and that became known. People visited because of the singing, which they taped. But, of course, a lot of people came because of the cupping.

The additional attention given to Nanna from people outside her environment was sometimes for her neighbors a source of jealousy. However, Nanna was instructed by Gamvik not to become angry and she complied with his teaching.

I was the only person cupping, and there was so much to do. The one [Gamvik] who has taught me all this has also given me advice, "Whatever people say to you, don't be angry, show that it does not affect you." So I have tried to do that. And I am very grateful to Gamvik, who has made me what I am. People can say what they want, it does not affect me.

Anger certainly could have been prompted by some of Nanna's neighbor's comments. She related, "Janet's father once said directly to me, 'You are so backwards!'" Cupping probably became a source of income, but Nanna never made a point of what she received, emphasizing the value of friendships. Nanna's caution not to ask for payment is a tradition within Sami healing. However it should be noted, as determined by law, that asking for payment proved that one was a quack salver.

In 1672 the Norwegian/Danish laws "Medicis og Apothekere" restricted the practice of medicine in the Kingdom to educated doctors and allowed some wounds and injuries to be treated at the barbershop (see Steen 1961). This law was intact until January 2004, at which time it was revised and received attention on the Norwegian television. Nanna did not ask for payment but would accept gifts or money that was offered:

When people asked how much they should pay, I answered, "I will accept what you give." When that was found out, some from Lakselv only gave one krone. That is a long time ago. But I can't think in a way that people would only say positive things about me. I have to be just where I am. I hope that my children will do the same – a very unexceptional way to be that brings you friends.

The attitude to cupping gradually changed. In the past, cupping was widely spread and generally accepted. Later on, cupping was viewed as primitive and backward by specific neighbors. More recently, its value is acknowledged again and it was accepted as a possible additional help by the medical profession. Nanna told of a neighbor who viewed cupping as primitive but was recently advised by a medical doctor to consult Nanna:

Janet went to doctor Johnsen and he said, "I can't do anything with your problem. You should go to Nanna." She came, of course, because the doctor told her to. But she had a resistance to coming here. I asked her, "How is it that you come to me?" Janet said, "Doctor Johnsen sent me." She had a great resistance to coming to me. Their whole family had formed a low opinion of me. I did not have a good name among them. So I asked her again, "How did it come that you ended here?" She gave the same answer. I cupped her, but we did not use our time in talking. Janet's husband was here, and I asked him to stay for coffee. We were cupping in my bedroom. When we finished, Janet left the room, and I was busy in the bedroom cleaning up after cupping. I came out and they were gone. We have not talked since.

We can see that although Janet obeyed the doctor and consulted Nanna, the atmosphere was not convivial and the strained relations did not improve. We can also note that Nanna played with the situation by questioning her twice, "How is it that you ended here?" Nanna had a reputation for being knowledgeable and capable already from a young age. However for some people her help was viewed as potentially against the law. As mentioned above, Norway has until recently had a law against practicing as a quack salver, so that there was a certain risk involved, especially with respect to receiving payment for treatment. The following incident occurred during World War II and the German occupation of Finnmark. Nanna was asked to help the blacksmith, but a neighbor, Anne Sofi, feared to be an accomplice.

The blacksmith in Lakselv, Bert-Ole, was working for the Germans. He got a splinter in his eye. Per, who lived close by here [Stabbursnes], brought him with the horse to our house. He was bleeding a lot – lying on the floor. I said, "We are going to get the splinter out." They said, "Don't do that!" I said, "If I'm to do nothing, why did you come here?" I got my razors, put them in boiling water, cut into his eye and got the splinter out. There was a lot of bleeding, but it got better. The blacksmith asked to stay here. I said, "OK for three days, but no more." So he got better and quickly went back to work. Then he sent 25 kroner

through Per to bring here – 25 kroner was a lot of money then. So those 25 kroner were first at Per's house and his wife [Anne Sofi] said, "Call the police! What has happened with the blacksmith is not correct." So the police came to our house and made a report. The police then brought a doctor out here. The doctor asked me what had happened and I told him. He said to the police, "You see all that report making? Throw it into the fire there." The policeman said to me, "Throw it into the fire." I answered, "I won't. If it goes into the fire, you can throw it." And he did. Later, Per's wife kept talking to people about the 25 kroner, but Per told her to stop with this, and she stopped.

### *The inheritance from Gamvik*

When Nanna was chosen by Gamvik to inherit his gift, he first asked permission from Nanna's parents. Nanna was only sixteen at the time and according to Sigvald such a procedure would be understandable:

She was very young. You may not go and just start teaching another man's child. A parent's opinion in that time would have something to say. Nanna indicated that she felt her parents pushed her to learn about healing, the other children had simply refused to learn. It seems to be not eagerly accepted. Nowadays when there is interest to learn these methods there is another reason - personal advantage.

Sigvald indicated that healing is not to be acquired lightheartedly or for personal advantage, and that Nanna's siblings refused to learn, finding it too great a burden. Sigvald thinks that today when there is active interest, personal gain has become a motif. Nanna's narrative of her inheritance indicates that it was not an easy process.

I was sixteen years old when I got this. I grew up with a secret. I kept it secret. I did not want to show anyone that I could do this. It started with the man who has given me what I have, Gamvik. He often went to Karasjok. He came from Hammersfest and would come straight to our place [Sandvik] and stay a couple of days with us. Then one time Gamvik asked my father to talk with his youngest daughter [Nanna]. Father asked me if I would accept what Gamvik offered. I answered, "No, you should ask my older sister, Sofia." And Gamvik was looking at both children. We could not understand anything of this. My oldest brother, Anton, thought something strange was going on. Anton asked Gamvik what he was going to do with us? They did not know. Then

Father and Gamvik were going to Karasjok, and Gamvik came to say goodbye to the children. I was washing the dishes. He came to me and asked if I wanted to go with him. I answered, "No, I don't have a reindeer fur coat, so I am not traveling." Gamvik asked if he could say goodbye to me. When I gave my hand to say goodbye, Gamvik said something, but I could not hear what. I could not sleep that night. When I told her, mother asked what Gamvik had said to me? I said that he had only said goodbye. My mother asked, "Didn't he say something else?" My older sister said, "If he said something it was probably dangerous." I started to ask my mother and sister whether maybe Gamvik had caused something bad to happen. Mother said probably not. My older sister said maybe. I myself was very unsure what to believe.

Even though the family was involved and informed, there was an element of secrecy. Nanna kept it secret, but even she did not know what Gamvik had said to her. In this hidden message the gift may have been transferred. The transmission to Nanna, "when I gave my hand", caused Nanna to be unable to sleep that night. Later she received instruction from Gamvik during his regular visits. When she was seventeen she went to Hammerfest for three days and was tested by Gamvik.

Then when Gamvik visited us he always wanted to talk with me - just the two of us so that others could not hear what we were talking about. He is a kind of teacher for me now. Back then, when he took my hand I did not hear what he said. And so it is.

She wanted to transfer the gift herself, but clearly thought that the use of alcohol was not compatible with it.

I now hope that one of you [of her children] could take this over - just do not to use alcohol, just do not use alcohol! I use alcohol myself but it is only a spoonful everyday, the doctor's advice. I don't have any in the house now. Gamvik also advised me, not to become addicted to alcohol. But Gamvik also made it so that I could not participate in parties. If I took alcohol at that time I threw it up.

Like Gamvik, she had the capacity to render a person immobile.

Once a couple came and I cupped the woman, she said to her husband that they should pay. The man said that he did not think it was necessary

to pay for cupping. He seemed to think that he had spirit powers. He was rude and the couple left without paying. Within an hour the woman came back. She told that her husband had collapsed walking up the second hill and asked if I would come. No I would not come and said to get an ambulance. But the woman kept asking and finally I said, "Here is a glass of water from me. Tell him to drink it." The woman said that he would not drink it. I said, "Yes, he will." Indeed he did drink the water and could then move on. Later he came and apologized for his rudeness.

### *Diagnosis*

Gamvik's special gift provided Nanna with the capacity to diagnose. It is clear that it is not through her knowledge of cupping that a diagnosis is formed. The method of diagnosis, I observed, is as follows. She took the left arm of the patient and followed the pulse up the arm with her fingers. How much a role the pulse actually plays is questionable because she would do this over a shirt as well as on naked skin. She has explained to me that once she is at the upper arm she is 'in.' I have asked her on several different occasions the same questions, "How do you diagnosis" and "What is the treatment." In each case, the answer was different, dependent on the context. On 25 April 2000 Nanna was examining me and I asked her how she diagnosed. "I start to follow the artery up the arm. Then you get that contact that you can feel the other person's body." I also asked her how she treated an illness.

I do what I did now with you. Then I ask them to go home. The first night when they go to bed they may be very restless. Then they may call me and say it was not right to come to me. I answer that I haven't asked them to come. It starts that way. I'm not doing anything but telling people to go home, but the reaction can be when they get home. The first night, the disease may even be worse, it can be difficult when the disease starts to leave. I treat some with cupping. When it is right to cup, then it will have an effect.

Nanna did not tell me what she saw but instead moved to the effect of the treatment. Two days later, on 27 April 2000, I asked the same question, "How do you diagnose?" This time she did not answer me, but responded to Sigvald who was interpreting: "You will experience that yourself if you take over. If I can say it right – it is as though you get it in your head. In the beginning it is very difficult, so that you maybe are scared of it. But don't be scared. You must be strong." She added an example:

Jan Erikson had been sick for twenty years. The doctor had tried everything. He asked me if I could look at him. I answered, "I have

nothing to examine you with. But if you ask, I will do what I can.” So I continued by asking, “Have you been to hospital?” He answered, yes, that they have done a lot of checking but could find nothing. I said, “Why should an old Sami woman be able to say more than the hospital?” Then I told him that his intestine walls had grown towards each other. He answered, “Is it true that my old intestines do that?” I asked him to promise not to tell anyone what I had told him, and he promised. So he went to the doctor who could not say anything about it but referred him to the hospital in Tromsø. He was examined in Tromsø and they found that his intestine walls had grown towards each other. Jan phoned me afterwards and told me that it was correct.

Then she described in more detail what she saw.

You know, if you get all of this, you are going to be sometimes a little scared of what you see. [Draws a circle on the table] I will explain: It was like a bowl. In the bowl were intestines and there were two fingers which were trying to keep the intestine walls apart. On the phone with Jan, I asked him, “What did the doctors say? Was it correct what I have seen? Did you tell the doctors what we have talked about?” No, he had not. And so it is. It is not that I have easy days. No matter how I am, I always have something to think about, and see, and have to take care of. I have been thinking lately that I should resign, but it is not easy just to cut it off.

The visualization can also imply that Nanna experienced the pain of a patient.

I try to do what I’m able to do. When people call, I ask exactly what is wrong, and then people start to explain. Then it can be like sticks in my body. It was exactly like that with Jan Erikson I felt it in my intestines. That way, I can be very sure what is wrong, but it leaves immediately.

When Sigvald inquired how she treated people, she explained:

I try to advise them, or agree that the patient will come here, and I use cupping or the tying method. If you take this over, you will learn it faster and faster. You have always in your thoughts what you could do. It can happen that I sleep very little, because I’m busy thinking of these things. It is not that I see, but things come in my thoughts and tell how s/he is. And I consider what Gamvik has told me – to take good care of

people who tell. And I get much more power when I take care of what they tell about. And you always learn. It is like an angel is coming and telling you and opening visions/knowledge. But you don't need to be scared that you see things.

In this way Nanna was already instructing Sigvald as she wished him to take over from her. Two months later on 25 July 2000, I again explored the procedure of diagnosis and asked Nanna how she diagnosed a disease. She directed her response to Sigvald demonstrating the technique to him by taking his arm.

I never name any disease. I will give you an example [takes Sigvald's arm]. I take your arm. I come to a point and I can say, for example, you have pains there, naming a place in the body. The person can say, "I never had a pain there". Then I do it again, and have again the same result. I find it by a response in my body to where you have illness or pain. When I have come to the elbow and follow the arm upwards, it is like feeling the person's body from the neck and then downwards. I start from the elbow and follow the arm. When I follow and have a response, for example, in my stomach, then there is something wrong in your stomach. And when I follow the arm like that, I will always respond where the person has a disease.

Nanna did not know the name of the disease but she could visualize it.

I can't exactly say what kind – by name – but I can say what I perceive it to be. For example, you have something in your lungs, chest or heart – that I can say. That is how I did it with Jens-Ivar. He said he had been to the doctor and nothing had been found. But I had already seen once. And he just said he had nothing. So, when I saw it the second time, I felt I got angry. I said, "It will be a wonder if you are not operated on within fourteen days!" When fourteen days had passed, the telephone rang. It was Jens-Ivar. He asked for my forgiveness. I asked him what had happened, and he told me that he would be operated on that same day [by-pass-heart-operation]. I said, "Wasn't it you who had nothing?" He answered, "Excuse me, I was just testing." It was my anger that had made me not give up. No matter what kind of people – young, old, poor or rich, or what kind of position they have – each must accept what comes.

Visualization is the core of the diagnosis. "No matter whom I see or who I look into, I can see diseases. I don't have to ask. I don't have to say anything about this to anyone. I can't



say to a person when they are sick, 'You are sick', just like that." Nanna could not explain why she visualizes the disease.

I can't say the reason I see it. Let's say I have a person in front of me and a picture may form itself between the person and me, it is like a picture on glass that forms between us. Some weeks ago someone was sitting at this table – I did not dare to look at him, the picture was between us.

Thus the diagnosis was formed by what Nanna felt and/or saw. Commencing to diagnose, Nanna took the left arm and felt the pulse starting at the wrist. She moved up the arm until the shoulder. Half way she started to feel the patient's body in her own body, saying that above the elbow she is 'in'. Nanna diagnosed by feeling the pain of the illness in her own body, thereby she 'knew' where the illness was located and her pain would depart immediately. She described this as "like sticks in my body". She might also see a picture of the illness. This was the case with Jan Erikson. She saw in front of her the picture of two fingers separating an intestine wall. The illness might already start to leave after the first visit, noted when the patient after having arrived home was restless. Nanna took care of what people told her. This increased her ability to help. She made distinctions concerning her anger. Her anger could be the message that she must insist on her diagnosis. However she was not simply telling everything she saw, she might see an illness and not speak about it. When she received information she likened the experience to an angel coming and telling or opening visions. She said to Sigvald during the interview on 27 April 2000, "And you always learn. It is like an angel is coming and telling you and opening visions/knowledge. But you don't need to be scared that you see things." Sigvald made the following comment concerning an angel coming and opening visions:

When you have to teach someone? How can you teach about angels?  
A question of becoming familiar with thoughts and ideas, you can say an angel, but it is a landscape that you can not just know. I am talking about the landscape of thoughts. When working you are 'in' something. Which sense is sensing or visualizing it? Maybe it is that which is given on, a kind of communication.

Sigvald found that the capacity to diagnose is not simply taught, "How can you teach about angels?" Rather the capacity to diagnose is that which is passed on, it is the gift, and with the gift one becomes familiar with thoughts and/or visions. One is 'in' the landscape of thoughts, which is a kind of communication. Once Nanna had diagnosed the problem, she might suggest to cup or she might advise the patient to consult a medical doctor. Alternatively, people might come and talk with her, and so she might get a clearer and

clearer picture of their problem. Nanna said in the 27 April 2000 interview in response to Sigvald's query on treatment, "I try to advise them, or agree that the patient will come here, and I use cupping or the tying method." Nanna never explained the 'tying method' further, but I did ask Sigvald to explain. He said that the tying method collects the separate parts of the problem and that this can work to 'clear up' the problem. In the subsequent chapter Sigvald explains the tying method. I understand the method to be a collecting (bundling) of the different parts of the problem, which is facilitated by the attention of the healer to what the patient is telling. Sigvald will call this 'bundling' rather than the tying method. The healer listens carefully to what the patient tells and together they are 'bundling' their thoughts. When working together the problem can be 'cleared-up' and to do this, it can be important that the patient visits and talks with Nanna and/or Sigvald.

### *Nanna's discourse*

Nanna only referred to what she got from Gamvik and was not explicit. She said, for example, "It can be given." I have called Nanna's 'it,' 'the gift.' Her expressed concern for passing 'it' on before she died made my interviews privy to a dialogue with Sigvald. I am quite sure that otherwise I would not have heard these more explicit remarks. She fielded questions placed to her by Sigvald giving him answers that instructed him and stimulated his interest. Nanna accepted my interest but said I would need to master the Sami language (I never intended to be the recipient). Sigvald finally agreed to accept the transference in May 2000. They did a ritual (to which I was not privy) on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May, after which Nanna taught him to cup. She passed away on 26 February 2002. Nanna gave the injunction not to speak openly about what has been passed on. With due respect for this injunction, I have not pressed for information, but can report a few items. Nanna said to Sigvald after the transmission, "Cupping is a front." With this statement she was indicating that people have a reason to visit her that is acceptable for them. Therefore, even though cupping was perceived to be physically effective by both Nanna and Sigvald, it is not the whole story. Sigvald said, "Cupping takes care of a lot." Nanna told that cupping has been done for generations, and it is considered to be efficacious. However, she was clearly unwilling to teach only cupping. Requests came to her for instruction in cupping and she always refused. She wanted to pass on the gift together with the knowledge of cupping. Nanna learned cupping from her parents and related that her parents even cupped Gamvik.

In Nanna's assessment she did more than just cupping. This more - observable in the story of her ability to restrain a person's movement, in her ability to diagnose and in her influence that unsettles a patient when they return home - she 'got' from Gamvik. Nanna stated, "I am very grateful to Gamvik.... The one who has taught me all this....Who has made me what I am." Therefore cupping, which she learned from her parents, and the gift from Gamvik are perceived as two different things.

Nanna said, “Gamvik gave me what I have....I was sixteen years old when I got this. I grew up with a secret. I kept it secret. I did not want to show anyone that I could do this.” Nanna’s patients perceive what she does as only cupping or may suspect that there is more. She did not say to her clients that there was more, but gave a measured response when she was directly questioned.

When a person calls and asks if I can help, I don’t like that kind of question. When a question is so posed it is like I am being ordered to do it. They can not decide what I can, because they do not know about my forces. There was a man who called and I said, “I can’t say to you that I can.” The man asked, “Are you a clear woman?” I said, “Well, you can come and see how clear I am.”

The question “Are you a clear woman?” is for Nanna too direct, in this context it means ‘Are you someone who can see what is hidden?’ Nanna described the feeling of ‘being ordered to do it’. This is a challenge that invites a competitive response, which Nanna would not engage in. She would not boast. The man could come and see for himself. A challenge involves certain risks. Successfully challenging a healer includes correctly defining the healer, however when the definition is not correct the enterprise backfires, and such an event was related by Nanna. Her story involved two other healers. Healer X visited healer Y because healer X “was not satisfied with what had been given and was interested in getting more.” With this in mind healer X visited healer Y and “tried to correct him. He answered, ‘Well, if you talk like a child, you will stay like a child.’ After this she [healer X] lost a lot.” Nanna considered healer Y to be ‘correct’ in his definition of healer X, because Nanna said that healer X “after her visit became quite nervous.” We see in this story that healer X is ‘corrected’ (a definition that ‘stuck’) by healer Y and thereby lost what she had originally been given.

Gamvik taught that Nanna should help people on an equal basis: “It is also because Gamvik had said that all people are the same - poor or rich, old or young - you can’t only help rich people. ‘They’ eat you up! And I am satisfied with what I have learned and what I have done in helping people.” Sigvald explained Nanna’s statement “They eat you up” (if she should not treat all people equally) by stating that she would be disturbed by her conscience and by the reactions of those individuals that were refused help. ‘Eating’ is a familiar way to indicate ‘destruction’ in the Sami language. For example, Sigvald said that his watch was ‘eating up’ the material of his sweater around his wrist.

Nanna gave several injunctions to Sigvald such as the injunction above to treat people equally. A second injunction was to ask spirits one knows: “A woman was praying to spirits for assistance; to spirits this woman did not know to whom or to

what they were connected. So the result will be unpredictable. How stupid! You ask spirits you know!” Nanna indicated that spirits are ‘connected’ and the connection can be helpful or harmful. Nanna herself would not ask for assistance from unknown spirits. A third injunction mentioned earlier was to abstain from alcohol: “I now hope that one of you could take this over – just do not use alcohol.” A fourth injunction was not to speak openly about what is seen in the blood of a cupped patient. This was also the case when I was cupped. After rinsing the cup with blood in a bowl of water, Nanna closely observed the behavior of the blood in the water. I asked but she would not tell what she saw other than that I was basically healthy. The abstention from speaking is a necessary element to maintain the power to heal. In the following interview, Sigvald asked Nanna about the power to heal. Nanna answered:

If you receive these powers, don't tell anything further about what you see and hear. Because every time you do this, you throw away some of your power. But, if you can keep it for yourself, there will come more and more. Do you understand?

Silence will yield more knowledge, speaking entails loss of knowledge. Nanna related:

What I now tell you, you shall not tell anyone, not to your sisters or brothers, and not to anyone with whom you will live together with. It is your secret. You shall keep it for yourself - sealed like a bottle. It is no use that you have learned it. If you see something in other people, don't tell it. Then you will also see if you have seen correctly. In that way you start to grow. But if you tell, “I saw and I saw, this and that”, it is like throwing it out into the garbage when it is spoken about. Do you understand? And sure that you do? To help people in this way is very valuable. A lot of people just complain and have nothing to give – no help to give.

You do not share your knowledge with sisters or brothers, or with the patient. Even the patient should not know what you see: “All about helping people, it is to hide away all that you know about them. When I am helping people, I can't tell them all that I see about them. When people are sick, you can't add to it by telling what you see.” You can still talk with patients and if you give them the right suggestions, this will make you stronger.

What gives more power? Say someone comes to you to tell you what kind of problems he has, and you talk with him. This works because people have thoughts and those thoughts work badly for people. You can then suggest how things could be done. In that way you will make

yourself stronger. Do not speak negatively. You must believe them when people tell you they have problems. You can help in that way.

In her advice to Sigvald, Nanna stated that he must not speak further about what patients tell him, and that he will build his power to heal by observing this abstention. Gamvik trained Nanna in this method when he said, “Take care of what people tell.”

What Gamvik passed on to Nanna could be described as the ability to rid a patient of whatever bad thing is oppressing the patient. Not everyone can be cured. Nanna related that there are limits. “If someone comes to me because they are ill, but the one who brings them is not good – has powers that are not being used for that persons wellness – then if I cure them and they get sick again, there is nothing my healing can do. That person will be ill.” Thus the role of “the person who brings the patient”, usually the partner of the patient is crucial. When the powers of that person work against the patient, there will be no recovery. As a healer, Nanna was thinking constantly about her patients.

You have always in your thoughts what you can do. It can happen that I sleep very little, because I am busy thinking of these things. It is not that I see, but things come in my thoughts and tell how s/he is. And I consider what Gamvik has told me: to take good care of people who tell. I get much more power when I take care of what they tell about.

Being open to thoughts and caring for what patients say were important features of Nanna’s practice. Her refusal to describe many features of her activities was an integral part of the necessity to maintain her ability to help others. Her thoughts guided her and ‘revealed’ the diagnosis. The source of the thoughts is not specified. Nanna mentioned one should only ask spirits that are known, otherwise the ‘connection’ is not known and the outcome may be adverse. The ‘connection’ is a decisive factor. Sigvald explained that the impact of spirits connected to a dead criminal and spirits connected to God, will be quite different.

At 93 years Nanna still had stamina and a keen intelligence. She was thoroughly present and not visibly influenced or impressed by foreign visitors. She was ready and willing to help all those who consulted her. She did this with sureness and without bravura.

#### *The discourse of Nanna’s patients*

Among Nanna’s patients interviewed are a couple living in Lakselv (Reindeer Herding Sami), Nils and Anne, and a couple from Sandvik (Coastal Sami), Ole and Sigrid. They are elderly and close to eighty years old. I also interviewed a patient in her mid fifties (Coastal Sami), Ruth.

Nils and Anne

Nils and Anne recalled how Nanna cured their daughter.

We first came to Nanna because of our daughter, who suffered from polio at five years old. This was forty years ago. The Doctors had said they could do nothing more. [With a photograph in hand:] Look at her now, healthy, married with two children. There is the result of Nanna's work.

Nils related how Nanna treated the illness by 'catching' it.

So small were her knees and legs, like a finger. And then we started to work with Nanna. At first she was not able to stand. Her feet were swollen and hard with inflammation. Nanna worked three springs with her, and I'm not sure we know all the good she has done, even today, not all of it. Nanna would cup. The disease was moving and trying to escape. The disease was doing this. It was a question of catching it. Nanna would say, "Now it is there, we will follow it." Nanna sees where the disease is: "Oh, there it is!" Nanna followed it until she caught it, and now there are no problems and it is many years now with no problems with her legs. It happened that four or five years later the legs would swell up a little but it was not serious, and the swelling went down again, and now not at all. Nanna has probably taken it all out.

Anne herself also received cupping by Nanna. "I've been to Nanna for my eyes many times. She has cupped. I'm diabetic and I sometimes see poorly. Then we cup and I can see better, I'm diabetic for thirty years now and am careful what I eat." According to Nils that treatment was also effective. "After cupping she can see much better – it is that little help. Nanna is so old, but still there are people visiting her. Anne has eczema on her hands." The treatment created a relationship and Anne reciprocated with products of her handcraft:

I was planning to have both hands cupped where the hand is thickest, to take some out. There is probably an inflammation inside the hand, maybe not only on the skin. Cupping has an impact on the whole body. I have had the hands cupped hundreds of times, even the fingers. Some places will disappear forever. I know that Nanna wants her visitors to come early in the day. She doesn't take someone late in the day. It is not easy when one is old to work late. And the work is better in the morning. I have gone to Nanna for many reasons and she knows all about me – she sees all my threads. I have been doing a lot of handcraft since I have

been going to Nanna, and I have given this to Nanna. Once I prepared some skins and sewed them. This is for all that she has been doing. So I try to help with what I am able to. I did what I did from my side because it helped. It is so: people do things for money. What Nanna has done, these things are more than money can buy. She was so strong and her help so powerful. Even my son, Per, has been visiting Nanna and he is a young man. He probably found out that it is useful to go to Nanna. Our other daughter visited her because of her back. It is good that these kinds of people exist, but there are hardly any now. We have a village, Lakselv, I don't think anyone exists here like Nanna, other than Doctors.

Nils and Anne compared Nanna's work with that of doctors and thought it was effective in many domains where doctors could not do anything.

Doctors are good when it is needed to cut something away, but hardly for anything else. Doctors can't do much about other things. We have tried a lot, both of us. It is hard to find medicine that heals. We have tried, because we have been sick. We have a lot of experience with being sick.

Nils even proposed that the work of doctors threatens life and prefers Nanna's approach.

The doctors' way of working is threatening life. How Nanna works, it is not threatening life. The doctors anaesthetize, so you don't feel anything after they have done what they have done. You don't know about the pains you have. And you hear that they have done something, but you don't know if it will be better. You can see it with people who have been operated on. When Nanna heals, there are no half parts left – there are no diseases afterwards. Anne, after her operations, is very sensitive to weather conditions. Bad weather, it can take her life. And I see it with myself. I have just a little scar. I had nine stitches on my head. In bad weather, it is like this scar is totally open. When Nanna has treated, you don't feel anything afterwards. So I give her a grade which is above the doctors.

He had a bad eye as well as a kneecap treated by Nanna.

There was the time I went to Nanna because of my bad eye. They were going to send me to hospital and I'd lose the eye. I could not accept this. Yes, they were going to take the eye. I asked Nanna's advice. Nanna said, "We can look at it. If it does not help, then you must go

to hospital.” [He still has his eye.] Then I hurt my knee, crushed my kneecap. I was visiting the doctor many times and they said my leg would stay stiff. They wanted to send me to the hospital in Tromsø because of the leg, but I refused to go. I had no time for this. I had a lot to do with the reindeer. We had our summer siida far north at that time, because of my leg we had to change the location of our summer siida. We needed to have the siida closer to the roads. So we changed to Nieaiddán siida. If it had not been for my knee we would still be where we used to be, far north in the summer. I went to Nanna and asked if she could do something. Nanna said, “We can look at it.” I went three times during the spring and it was done. You can see the result, and the kneecap was crushed. It is even better than the other leg.

Nanna also diagnosed a heart disease in Nils.

Nanna diagnosed by following the vein. I said to Nanna, “But I have pains here.” She said, “Are you going to diagnose or am I?” There is no use in hiding. Nanna follows the vein on the arm. When she did this with me, Nanna told that I have a heart disease. And so it was. I went to the doctor and she was right about that. I had been working too hard. The doctor recommended medicine that I could take when I felt the effects of working too hard. Working with reindeer was very hard back then, catching reindeer with the lasso, especially when one had a lot of female reindeer.

Nils is impressed by Nanna’s capacity for coming with the right diagnosis.

One time when I came with my foot to Nanna, I showed her where it hurt. She said that we would not cup there because we could cut an artery. She said we would take the other side of the foot. I didn’t know this and wondered how she knew this. Nanna told me it is to feel where the arteries are. I can’t feel it. Nanna said, “I will cup where the disease is, and not where you tell me you have pain. If I should cup where you want it, we could take all your blood. It would cut an artery. Then you would be lying under the table very soon.”

Anne, Nils and their children have consulted Nanna over the last forty years. The complaints for which they were treated include polio, an injury in the knee, foot, back, eye, and eczema. They state that Nanna cupped and diagnosed with accuracy. While cupping,



Nanna was said to follow the disease and remove it. Nils' speaking of Nanna when she was cupping and following the disease of their daughter described her as exuberant. Which reminded me of Turi's description, "When the person talks the strange tongue when he is exorcising a specter or a devil, it is so wonderful that it is impossible to describe it" (Turi 1966, 166). Nanna was not remunerated in hard currency, "what Nanna has done is more than what money can buy", but she was given what they made or produced.

#### Ole and Sigrid

Ole and Sigrid live from small farming and fishing on the coast of the Porsanger Fjord. Sigrid related her visits to Nanna.

I had a lot of pain. It started in the time of the lambing. I got very tired and had no joy in anything. I was missing something and it got worse. I thought it could be my nerves, but also I had over-worked. I visited doctors and physical therapists. When I was at the physical therapist, I felt immediately comfortable, but there were no long-term results. I had a lot of pains. There were two spots that if one pushed there then the pain went to my head. Besides the physical therapy I took medication for one and a half years. Ole suggested that I should visit Nanna and try cupping. In the beginning I thought not to go, but at last I went. Nanna told that there is a certain timing that one should come three times consecutively to get cupped, and that there is a certain time between. Then between treatments was a year, so the second year repeated the first year's schedule.

She thought that the cupping was responsible for her recovery.

I think it is the cupping that took my pains. From the cupping it comes directly out. When I was young, they often did cupping, much more than now. Every woman could cup back then, and they did it to each other. I would not dare to do it, because you have to know where to put the cups. I think it helps. I have not visited Nanna since I have been well, but I would go if it were ever needed.

Ole related that in the past cupping was frequent. He speculated that it could have prevented heart disease in the past.

Today we have heart disease. Maybe when people were cupped, things were taken out so that heart disease was not a problem. Cupping

took out what was thick and the blood was flowing better – that is a possibility. In that time, when people had pain in the body, they cupped. I remember this time well. We are talking about fifteen to twenty years before the War. There was hardly a Sami walking here who had not been cupped. Nanna's mother cupped. My grandmother did it and, for sure, whenever she had pain she was cupped. Many people cupped.

Sigrid emphasized that in the past people themselves took care of disease.

Now it is the health department that is active. Before, the activity was here. It was done together. It was among us that care was taken for health. People helped each other, like my grandmother. She knew about skin problems, this was her area of knowledge.

Ole referred to the people who used to heal as 'doctors': "There were these kinds of doctors in those days, and they could do a lot. I know I tried them. It is unfortunate that these people are not around. Before, they were also in Tana and Vadso." Sigrid thought that in the past, health was the concern of the community and that the inhabitants in the community each had an own area of knowledge. Ole related that cupping took out the thick blood and after cupping the blood will flow better. Before World War II almost all Sami in his environment used cupping for curing pain. Ole commended 'these kind of doctors' and regretted that they are no longer to be found.

Ruth

Ruth grew up in Billefjord. Her parents lived from small farming and fishing. She now works and lives in Lakselv. Ruth told about her visits to Nanna that, at the time of telling, were ongoing.

I had a lot of pain in my body. The doctors diagnosed it as Fibromyalgia, but could not do anything. I was sick and could not work anymore. I tried to re-school. I had not worked since 1993, but now I am back at work. I have been now thirteen times for cupping. After the first time three weeks later, again three weeks and then six weeks between meetings. Then again the same program of meetings, three weeks, three weeks, three weeks and then six weeks in between. The pains went away very fast, but it was still not totally good. Now even my arms and shoulders are good. I had a lot of pain in my hip and had difficulty in walking. I also got dizzy. I started work just last October. I clean buildings and now my hands are also strong.

Ruth reported significant benefit from having been cupped. She came with debilitating pain, which was diagnosed as Fibromyalgia by the medical profession.

## Summary

During Nanna's life, major changes occurred influencing the fabric of local life. Before World War II, the means of livelihood included local products augmented with trade. The inhabitants of the Porsanger Fjord area were small farmers and fishermen, and handcraft men and women. According to my informants there was still co-operation among the local population at that time, and the relationship built up over a significant period of time called *verdde* with the migrating reindeer herders coming into the area during the summer months, was still close. After World War II the economy changed to a monetary system and the co-operation among people became less intense. Prior to this change, activities that required larger amounts of ready cash were simply not options. Specifically concerning health, medically trained doctors were not readily available, and knowledgeable local people were valued. The change that occurred over several decades from Nanna's youth to later adulthood left Nanna eventually alone in her position. No one else was cupping in her area. She credited the change that other people did not continue to cup, to the increased prevalence of modern methods. It can be noted that people continued to consult Nanna. She said referring to the period from her arrival in Stabbursnes until the 1970's, that she had cupped everyone in her community. She continued to receive requests up until her passing away in 2002. The people that consulted Nanna expressed the benefits they experienced from her treatment. Nanna clearly had a capacity to diagnose. She explained her method of diagnosis by saying that she experienced the afflicted place in her own body or alternately would have a picture of the problem. Nanna credited this capacity to having received a gift from Gamvik. It is a capacity that can not be learned but may be given. She learned cupping from her mother and father. Her patients expected more than benefit from the physical procedure of cupping. For the most part, her patient's view her healing capacity within the context of Christianity (even though not all Christians approve of her methods), but they are to some extent aware of a Sami healing tradition. Nanna herself emphasized that she was Christian and was doing 'good'.

The patients especially referred to the technique of cupping as a cause of the cure. Nanna would ask a patient to come for a cupping session at each new moon for several months. She would suggest repeating this rhythm as long as it was needed. Nanna's patients usually reported improvement over this period. In addition, a patient could return for the cupping series years later after having been symptom free for the intervening years. The most common complaint for which Nanna applied cupping

was pain. Prior to consulting Nanna, most often the patient had enlisted the help of medical professionals without obtaining appreciable results. Nanna said she would cup when this appeared to be the correct method, but depending on the diagnosis she would send them to a medical professional. Thus she has sent a patient to medical professionals when she diagnosed a heart condition, an intestinal blockage and a growth she considered cancerous. She had a reputation for being able to assess and treat physical problems. In cases where medical professionals have not been readily available, her help was consulted. We already discussed the case during World War II when a blacksmith had a splinter in his eye. In recent times with the improved infrastructure such help has not been requested. But there have been patients who consulted Nanna on a regular basis for a variety of problems, preferring her treatment to that offered by medical professionals. Today, the local population is only to a limited extent familiar with the practice of cupping. They view it as a practice that was common for the generation prior to World War II. The younger generation may have heard of cupping and associate it with the cupping they understand to be in practice in Russia or China. The older generation knows more. Sigvald observed, "It is known by those who have tried it." I think that no patient had any idea that Nanna had received her healing capacity from Gamvik, who is currently relatively unknown. Nanna mentioned Gamvik by name as her teacher to Sigvald and to me. I was the chronicler of her life. Her patients do not mention this inheritance.

Of the patients interviewed, Nils and Anne give some reference to special capacities, for example, Anne said that Nanna sees 'all my threads', which is a way of expressing that Nanna can see what is further invisible. Some of Nanna's patients already had a relationship with her prior to consulting her for cupping. Sigrid lived in Nanna's village of origin. Nils and Anne are members of the *siida* that herds their reindeer near to the Persen farm, and with which they have a *verdde* relationship. However, not all patients who consulted Nanna were previously familiar with her. People came from all over Finnmark. The common way in which Nanna first became known for the individuals outside her direct environment as someone who could help, was by word of mouth, which may have involved several telephone calls in which first inquiries were made that finally led them to Nanna. Nanna did not wish to advertise or even talk about her healing capacities. After consulting Nanna, a relationship could develop into a longstanding friendship but it did not always become a closer relationship. Prior to World War II and shortly thereafter, Nanna could attest to having cupped almost everyone in her village, but after World War II her methods were increasingly seen as not keeping pace with modern times by some of the villagers. But more recently, during the late 1990's, some medical professionals have referred patients to Nanna. I would assess their referrals to represent the changed attitude of medical professionals towards complementary medicine. Nanna, after so

many years of practice, had gained a reputation even among medical professionals, who possibly considered her treatments in terms of the psychological benefit.

Nanna dealt with pain and eczema, she had the capacity to diagnose and to render immobile, and she could predict. During treatment she followed the disease and could expel it, which was done with some excitement. In Nanna's own description of her activity she emphasized 'thoughts'. The patient's thoughts or the thoughts of their partner may be working against them. In her advice to Sigvald she said, he should (1) pay attention to what the patient tells him, (2) contain his thoughts and then they can work for him, and (3) expect thoughts to come that will guide him.

## 6 SIGVALD

My interviews with Sigvald span a period of several years, 2000-2006. I used a variety of recording methods such as hand written notes, tape recorder and video film. Sigvald and I agreed on a structure for the interviews that allowed for ongoing clarification, so that topics and events were often returned to and elaborated on. The spoken language was English, which is presented here with minor grammatical improvements. Sigvald's life story is presented in the first section of this chapter. Sigvald tells his own life story. I add an overview in which milestones are marked and the chronology of events is clarified. The second section addresses healing, views the inheritance from Nanna, the practice of cupping (see the appendix for a series of pictures of the cupping procedure) and Sigvald's discourse. Throughout this chapter I follow Sigvald's discourse and discuss his comments.

### Sigvald's Life

Sigvald Persen, born on 26 June 1948, is Nanna and Lars' seventh of nine children, and the second of three sons. He is the first child born after the World War II evacuation (see Introduction). Sigvald remembers his early youth:

Growing up was a very natural life. Even when we were little, we were a part of all that was done here. We started when we could walk. It was to do something, to be a part of what other people were doing. Already before going to school we participated in the farming and fishing on the river. When there was fishing going on, even if we could not do so much, we could hold the rope. The first that we did was to walk along the river and fish, and in the winter, to hunt around the farm. There were grouse and we trapped. These were the first things my younger brother, Hjalmar and I did on our own. I think we started this in our way already when we just started school – eight years old. We could ski alone. You don't have to go that far to make a trap for grouse. So it was just around the farm in the beginning, putting the traps along the river where the grouse used to come. So it grew gradually, this hunting.

At an early age Sigvald participated in fishing and independent of adult supervision set

traps for grouse. The life at school was in sharp contrast to this outdoor life. Sigvald attended the Billefjord boarding school.

We started school at seven. A special thing I can remember, traumatic one could say, because after a while I did not want to go to school at all. I don't know. I had not a clear feeling, maybe because the school was so different from what we were used to, because of the rules there. We could not use our own language, so it was not good for us Sami speaking people. So I did not want to go back there.

The Norwegian language constituted a serious impediment to learning. The children attending the boarding school were Sami and in their home environment they spoke Sami. In some cases Finnish was additionally spoken in the home, but not Norwegian.<sup>59</sup>

We were all Sami speaking children [at the boarding school] so together we could talk Sami, our own language. But in the classroom we could not do that. In the school system it was just Norwegian. So it took many years to know what was happening in the classroom. The first years we were just there and could not understand a word, sometimes just a suggestion. So, I did not like it. And that has been sitting in me the rest of my life. I did not understand then, much later I have worked on this – it is a problem.

The language problem had a lasting influence on Sigvald.

We were Sami speaking children, without the Norwegian and we were not allowed to speak Sami in the classroom. When you don't have any idea about what is going on, you participate in your own way, you don't have the language and we just learned the answers. That I did well in school is surprising, because what I learned I learned in very few years, because it took the first four years to learn Norwegian. I did well in mathematics, physics and English. I did very poorly in Norwegian, which I still continue to consider so. Maybe it is left over from not knowing Norwegian when it was needed. But the Norwegian we learned, we learned correctly, compared to some Norwegian people,

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59 Earlier an option had been to attend school in Lakselv. Lakselv was prior to World War II a Kven settlement and therefore the local children spoke Finnish/Kven. Among the older generation Sami people one still finds people who are fluent in Finnish and Sami.

when I see their writing, I am seeing that they make mistakes. But how it felt, well, it felt like being another person. It seems this has been following me my whole life, being two persons. Depending on which environment one was in, one was the one or the other.

The school system gradually reinforced the separation between life at home and life at school.

Well, in the beginning we could go to school for four weeks and then have a break for another four weeks. The school was then six days a week. In the beginning we traveled by bus to Billefjord. Later on, one or two years later, we lived there the whole time. And that was a big change. We lived there all the week and sometimes also many weeks without coming home. Most children went home for the weekend. I did not do that always. It could be, if my parents were not here [on the farm], we stayed there for a couple or few weeks.

Sigvald experienced that Sami values did not count in the school system.

Different children reacted differently to the system. Some have not good memories from school; they may have experienced that the rules were applied physically, which I did not experience. For me, it was bad enough to know that your language and values were worth nothing there. I had to learn other values and the language. I did not think so much about that then. It was just how it was. For a child you just have your feelings about it, yourself then. What was from your home did not count there at all. That was how it was.

At home, the values of living in nature, making a living and Christian values were taken for granted.

What you grow up with, that is what you know, and for us it was living in nature and free. It was natural to participate with what was going on, with what father and mother did, both were busy with handcraft, with mother we did weaving and knitting, father was a blacksmith, making belts and bells for reindeer. There was also a religious part in it, Christian values, which are to love each other, to be helpful – it not being a question of being helpful only when you like someone. School was quite another world. Of course a child follows the rules that are there, we did not understand why.



Over the course of his adolescence and early adulthood Sigvald built up a double identity, Sami/Norwegian. During his early years the activities of his parents were the norm. The topic of *noaidi* was not discussed at home, but Sigvald was aware that Nanna was practicing the technique of cupping.

We were at school playing, and a boy from the next village said, “Your mother is a noaidi.” I did not know. I had never heard this word before. I was about eight years old. When I came home, I asked my mother, telling what the boy had said and there was silence. I don’t remember the words she used, but I understood out of that, “We are not talking about noaidi,” her activity would not be spoken about in terms of noaidi. I knew about cupping [as a child] but was not interested. It was just what she was doing. We grew up with it. I knew it was to help physically, but did not know anything further. For some of my sisters and brother it is still so. And the other people, who knew that my mother was cupping, would not have thought it was more than the physical cupping.

Sigvald attended the Billefjord boarding school from when he was eight years until he was fourteen.

I finished the school in Billefjord at fourteen. My sisters said, “Go to school”. So I started in Lakselv at fourteen and I did well in mathematics and English, but I quit after four months. I was not motivated and also the environment in Lakselv was not so good. Lakselv was not good for being Sami, the school in Billefjord had been Norwegian but the environment around Billefjord was Sami. Lakselv is not a Sami environment. It is harder, mixed with Kven and Norwegian. It is mixed and there is a tension. I was not prepared to go into that at the age of fourteen. So I quit and stayed home for two and a half years. When I had made the decision to continue at school at fourteen, maybe I was motivated but not prepared at fourteen. My parents supported my choice when I went to school in Laksev and also accepted that I stopped. They thought, “It will come out all right” and they were right. When I was some years older, I knew a lot more about what I wanted to do. The Lakselv School had been an academic direction. My background was about doing with your hands, handcraft, so it was a natural choice I then made to go to a school in Alta for carpentry and building houses; a natural choice because when I was home, I worked on the house. All the time this was my interest.

Sigvald fulfilled the educational requirement at fourteen and commenced with secondary school, but stopped after four months and stayed home. During those years at home he hunted, fished, worked on the farm, and also helped the reindeer herding families that were in the area during the spring and early autumn; in spring he helped with the fences and in autumn with the slaughtering. Nanna had taught Sigvald the techniques for slaughtering sheep and calves when he was thirteen. Before him, his older brother had done the slaughtering. Laestadian meetings were hosted by Sigvald's parents, as well as by other families in the community. He attended meetings up until his fifteenth year and then he no longer participated.

The environment in Alta was different, even though it was a Norwegian environment; I was outside the area where you had all these conflicts. In Billefjord, I experienced a lot of conflicts. There was a tension between being Sami and not being Sami. That was different when I went to Alta, you were outside this conflict area, you could choose to be Norwegian and everything was okay. You did not go into where you experienced a conflict; you did not have to be a Sami person in Alta. So I didn't. I was Norwegian there, learning something and it was a good life. I finished in three years. I was offered a job to teach in Kautokeino. I did not have the education to be a teacher, but I was doing well in school and I had what I needed for Kautokeino. I had the Sami language. You really have to have the Sami in Kautokeino. So the situation was that the teacher was the youngest person there. Well, I liked it. I had the language [Sami]. I knew their way of being. But at that time I decided I was not going to be a carpenter or a teacher and wanted to study more.

After having been at home for two and a half years, he returned to school in Alta for carpentry and building. Within a few years, he completed the training and was invited by the school to teach. He was assigned to teach building and carpentry in Kautokeino. During this period he decided to continue his education. He went to the Engineering School in Tromsø, which he completed in 1974. The same year he was hired as an engineer for the municipality of Porsanger. Sigvald's experience of conflict was determined to a certain degree by location. During his first years he went to school in Billefjord and it was in Billefjord that he continued to experience the conflict between being Sami or Norwegian. In Alta, even though it was known that he spoke Sami (he was assigned the teaching position in Kautokeino in part because he spoke Sami) he functioned in the society as a Norwegian. Being Sami was associated with making a living from the land and sea, and higher education was an automatic entrance into Norwegian society.

I started work with the municipal agency as an engineer, measuring for the roads and for the new settlements that came. After a year, I also started to lead the projects to build new roads and putting in water pipes. That I did for another year or two. Then I got the job of taking care of the housing program, mainly for Sami people, beginning in the Skoganvarre area where I was responsible for the houses there. Then this project was combined with the projects that I had been doing already from the beginning. We extended the Sami housing project to include the whole of Porsanger. The government did not give money for the project that included the whole of Porsanger, even though it was needed. The government had given money for the Sami housing project in the areas Tana, Nesseby, Karasjok, Kautokeino and Skoganvarre; even so, I was working in housing projects all over Porsanger and did this for many years. I was assigned this job because I could talk with these people. There had been Sami housing programs before, but the Sami who were being provided with a house, had not been consulted, so the result was very bad. We had to start this project and involve the people, asking what they needed in their houses. And, we did the best we could.

Sigvald had a vision of how the building project should be done. The housing project should take into consideration the actual use to be made of the home. Sigvald's approach was to talk with people and find out what they required in their home. The municipal offices for Porsanger are in Lakselv. Lakselv is sixteen kilometers south of Stabbursnes and Sigvald lived on the family farm in Stabbursnes. When he moved back home in 1974, his parents still lived there, but his siblings were all out of the house. Sigvald's father passed away in 1974.

After many years, I got another job. I became the leader for the department driftsavdeling: water supply, roads, buildings, and at the same time I was deputy of the Fire Department. I did this until the reorganization of the administration of Porsanger municipality in 1996. After the reorganization I was offered a leading job, leading the new department that was almost the same as what I had been doing before. I decided not to take the offer. I had taken a leave of absence during the reorganization process and studied the Sami language in Kautokeino for four months. After the leave of absence I continued to study in Kautokeino another year and combined this with work. I had accepted to work in the Purchasing Department. But, I found I did not want to continue in purchasing. I had already worked part time in preventative fire security, so I suggested working full time in fire prevention, which

then included administrating for the Fire Department. This I did, until I went to work as manager of the Billefjord Sami Center.

Sigvald met his future wife in 1978. They lived together from 1980 and married in 1984. They have two daughters. The marriage ended in divorce in 1994. For many years, Sigvald's mother, Nanna, lived in the same house. Sigvald built her a separate house in 1988. Sigvald now lives alone in the original farmhouse, and Nanna continued to live alone in the house built for her close by. Sigvald maintains close contact with his daughters. After his divorce, he took a year's leave of absence from his municipal position and studied the Sami language at the Sami University College in Kautokeino. Apparently over the years he developed a more active interest in Sami language and culture. In May 2000 Sigvald agreed to take over Nanna's healing gifts. In September 2002 Sigvald left his position in the municipality and accepted employment as manager of a newly started Sami Center in Billefjord. His new employment is indicative of his interest and investment in Sami culture. All his life Sigvald has been interested in fishing and for him fishing is emblematic of Coastal Sami culture.

### *Fishing rights*

Although Sigvald grew up with fishing, he does not presently fish. He is very much involved in the struggle for fishing rights regulated by Norwegian law.<sup>60</sup> He thinks the regulations have worked towards disunity, dividing the community, and additionally dividing the community and the reindeer herders who spend the summer months in Stabbursnes. A central issue is a disputed terrain that includes the Stabburs River, a salmon-river, which runs through Stabbursnes and the Stabbursdal National Park. Sigvald thinks the local population is treated as an obstacle to governmental plans: the river is to be used for sport fishing and not for local livelihood; and the National Park land is for preservation and tourism, not for local use.

I was fishing up until 1978, fishing the way we fished in the Stabburs River, which was to have nets for salmon fishing. The fishing was not done to sell; it was for own consumption. In 1978, the nets were forbidden. And in 1987, it was further forbidden to use nets for char and trout in the lake by my cabin. I didn't fish after 1987. It was a lifestyle – we also hunted grouse, but that was not any longer so frequent compared with earlier. Without fishing the whole life changed, a changed culture not to be busy

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60 Norwegian Law, Norges Lover 1687-2001, states (author's translation) "*Kings resolution*, 27 May 1775, §6: The rights until now have been for people living in villages....fishing in the ocean or rivers shall remain as they have been. 27 Feb.1930, § 16: On river and sea the landowner has the right to fish; §34: The department makes regulations about timing and equipment."

the way you had been. And it feels wrong, because the lifestyle is about participating in what nature is giving. And, it is the way that the laws are giving the availability to nature, and that is, the laws just support sport. Not to be apart of the river, then the river does not flow. The flow stopped because it is not anymore a part of living. It is just a physical thing that is there. And when you have people coming from outside having more access to the river than locals, it is not fair. Then it is better to be a tourist than to keep the traditional lifestyle. We were using this same argument a couple of years ago when the Stabbursdal National Park was extended [2004]. When looking at their proposed regulations, it is obvious that this is for people from outside, tourists. It now goes to the government representative for Finnmark to make a plan for how the Park shall be used. We want local use. The problem is that there is one law for the National Park, one law for fishing, and so what we have to fight against is so many departments. That is our problem. We cannot go to one man or one department. They say, "Well, you have to go to another department to talk about it." And that makes it almost impossible to make a whole plan that fits for people living here. And not only for us, but also, for all people in Finnmark, I think that it is the same situation everywhere. The government said fishing with nets was dangerous for the salmon and there would be too few salmon. Fishing with nets stopped in 1978, but since then, the amount of salmon? I'm not so sure that the nets took so many salmon, but nets were annoying for the sports fishermen. Nets are still used in Tana. It has not changed there. Here, the sportsmen have taken over the river. The rules and regulations follow the sport fishing.

Sigvald did not fish after the change in regulations in 1987 that prohibited the use of nets for char and trout in the lake by his cabin. He felt that regulation was unjust and that it did not support local life. His feeling of alienation is well expressed when he stated, "then the river does not flow." Norwegian policies continued to support the reindeer herders, not Coastal Sami. Herders are permitted to fish along their migration route. In Stabbursnes those reindeer herding *siidas* coming into the area during the summer months that border on the Stabburs River, may fish the river. This is a sore point for the majority of local fishermen; they do not have fishing rights because their land does not border on the river. In earlier years herders and coastal dwellers had agreements concerning their mutual use of the resources.

What was before the War was a common understanding for the use of the land between reindeer people and people in the villages; as Per Guttorm [reindeer herder] said, "It was an agreement." These earlier

agreements between reindeer herders and the village were because of the verdde relationship, in which the understanding was they all needed to get the resources out of the same land. For example, there were small pieces outside the farms used for hay that were not fenced in. So it was an agreement not to keep reindeer where the hay was harvested. This verdde relationship was much more: it included the exchange of handcraft products, reindeer-meat and skins. It was close and a relationship like a family. Also this kind of close relationship existed between people in our village and people from other villages. People needed to have that; it was another economic situation. After the War money came in and the use of the land changed. Farmers previously had taken in the hay from all over the surrounding area, later only from their own field. Therefore the land further from the farms was not in use by the farmers anymore. After the War things changed with the new economy and it happened quickly. It happened that reindeer came in without an agreement. The state was the clear owner of the land and the small local rights people thought they had earlier, were now open to all, people saw the possibility to hunt and fish in other localities than their own.

In Stabbursnes and its vicinity, a local landowner's association *Stabbursdalen grunneierforening* was established after World War II by landowners whose concerns were aroused by the changes that were occurring around fishing rights. Commencing in the 1930's there was increasing outside interest in sport fishing the Stabburs River. After the War, the question of fishing rights was taken to court by the local association. Sigvald told that his father was an active member, and said in court, "We have been fishing all over the river." The court answered, "You can not prove it." In 1955, the court ruled that only those with property bordering on the river had fishing rights and fishermen could fish with a license on state land, which is a large portion of the river. Restrictions on the traditional Sami fishing techniques (boats and nets in the river) followed in 1978. Nets were no longer allowed in the river, only sport-fishing techniques were allowed.

The landowner's association established here was not only the landowners with fishing rights; it was organized for the whole village. So people without fishing rights were included. It was more a way of thinking of a siida: it must be done together. So that was the situation in the fifties. Of course you had all the problems with sport fishing interests. It used a lot of energy to argue with these people. After World War II the landowner association went to court. They wanted the right to fish in that part of the river that was now state land. It was an important principle. They did not call it ownership but what they claimed was quite equal to what the

## 6. Sigvald

western countries would call ownership. But they lost. They went to a higher court and they lost. My father was one of those who went to the court. He could not accept the law.

Sigvald felt strongly that his father defended an important cause and considers the defeat in court as unacceptable.



*Three generations of fishermen: Grandfather Piera, Father Lars, and Sigvald.*



From 1970 onwards the local association shared responsibility with the government by administrating the state land as well as the locally owned portion of the river. However, the landowners association experienced internal tensions between the landowners with fishing rights and those without. During this period, Sigvald was elected chairman and tried to work out these tensions.

Then [1970] there was a new contract made and the landowner's association got the administration over the state land. But then it happened: A lot of people within the organization who had no land to the river questioned the rights - the rights were not correct. But the rights were based on Norwegian law. That is, rights are based on land ownership and not to the people. This was not fair, seen from the familiar way. It was not fair from the way that people were used to thinking, which was to share all this. So trouble started inside as there were many members, and only a few had fishing rights; some wanted to have all the land rights bought out and let the state keep it all. After a while we could not live with it, but we stayed within the association. I became the chairman of the association and started to find a new basis for how we could live peacefully within one association – all people. But it was not possible; we were too split as people.

The problem centered on the Norwegian law that only landowners having land bordering on the river have fishing rights, and because this law was incompatible with local customs, it divided the people. There was a campaign launched by non-holding villagers to bring the whole village into an equal position and to have all rights held by the state. The state appeared to support the movement because a government official came and directed the general meeting in 1988.

Then what happened: There had been a lot of noise. The other members without any fishing rights got help from outside to try to get what they wanted. So, in 1988 we had our annual meeting and what happened there was very unusual. The state came in and ruled the annual meeting, just to get what was in their interest. It was so traumatic that we had to leave – all the landowners who had fishing rights left the association. We started anew. We had to have something that was protected by the law, and at the same time, we wanted to have something that would work based on our ideas as a group, as a *siida*. That is what we are used to, whatever you call it. And that is what we have now.



Thus the interference of the state official effectuated a split into two associations. Sigvald and a few others that have land bordering on the river left *Stabbursdalen grunneierforening* and formed a new association, *Stabbursdalen elveeierlag*. Sigvald is chairman of the new association, which he calls the fishing association.

Sigvald further related that in 1987, when the regulations prohibited fishing with nets for char and trout were introduced for the lake by his cabin, members in the landowners association tried to bring Sigvald into discredit. A policeman kept watch during the summer of 1987 to be able to arrest Sigvald for fishing with a net. However, Sigvald did not fish during these months. Even so, he was summoned to the police station and charged. Through this incident the fractures within the landowners association became very visible. Sigvald has the right to fish in the river that borders to his farm, however, since 1978, he may only use a rod and reel, which are sports fishing implements. He continued to fish with nets in the lake by his cabin until 1987 when the regulations prohibited nets. Sigvald does not consider it an option to become a 'sport' fisherman. The earlier local fishing techniques with boats and nets were employed for their efficiency. Fishing was an integral component in the livelihood that included stock farming and handcrafts. All these activities went into a decline, with increasing speed after 1970. For example, the last herd of sheep in Stabbursnes was kept until 2003. Sigvald no longer fishes; his activities are concerned with the administration of the river.

The landowners with land along the river left the association in 1988 - all of them small holders, no big properties. So we were outside for nine years and administered only our own small rights on the river. The former association was administering the state's part of the rights. It was very confusing for the sport fishermen. They never knew where they could fish - a problem. The state saw there was a need to make it one river. And, they saw we were not planning to come back. So, we got the contract to also administrate the state's part of the fishing rights in 1997. We were negotiating with the state and province. We wanted the possibility to have some income from the resources, as it had always been. This we achieved. We also wanted to adjust the rules just a bit and have the state adjust. We did not achieve that. We are still working on it. The river has always been an important resource for the people here. I'm the chairman of the fishing association. We are trying to negotiate with the state. Local interests are not represented and we try to put this question forward.

The fishing association, *Stabbursdalen elveeierlag* after having the mandate since 1997 lost the mandate to administer the state land in February 2002 to the landowners association,

*Stabbursdalen grunneierforening*, which is the competitor for the mandate. The sport fishing associations, the reindeer herding associations and the landowner's associations lobby to get what is in their interest. Norwegian regulations have worked divisively for the local community.

### *Sami identity*

In September 2002, Sigvald left his position with the municipality, and accepted employment as manager of a newly started Sami Center in Billefjord. It was an important decision for Sigvald, which he connects to the feeling of being alive. In 2003 he stated:

Officially I still have this municipal job – I took a leave of absence. I will have to decide before September 2004. And, I have decided to take the risk of continuing as manager of the Sami Center. The risk is a financial question. Will the Center continue to receive funding? It is a better life to be where I am; I will take the risk because of that; I find it more meaningful. [The municipal job is] a safe package, but you are dying, so I take this risk. Also I feel about my people: they are 'packed' into something, economically safe, a good economy but 'bought out' Nobody is starving. How fast do you have to die before you call it killing? If a man survives ten days, you are not a killer. These are the questions I ask at the Sami Center. It is life. It is work with identity. I ask, "Is anyone alive?" From somewhere an answer, "Yes, we are living." We can go into a crowd and no one knows. As long as there is a need to honor your parents, this question of roots is coming. I heard it formulated differently by a biologist during a seminar on fishing in the Porsanger Fjord (the project title was "Porsanger Fjord, Back to Life"). He said, "We are dying so slowly that we think we are living."

By changing employment Sigvald is taking a financial risk, but he takes this risk to work with issues he finds central for his and his people's identity. The financial security that he and others have enjoyed is experienced as a way of isolating them. Sigvald experienced how it feels to come out of this isolation and come to life again. Sigvald's change of position, from a respected municipal employee, an educated man and skilled engineer, to manager of a Sami Center, was taken with forethought. He was well aware that this would be unwelcome for some. Some people met the news with stony silence. A shopkeeper in Billefjord, a man who has a Sami background but is openly Norwegian, stated something like, "You, an educated Sami? I have no words." In his village of Stabbursnes, a Norwegian woman said to Sigvald after hearing of his new employment, "When Sami things come here, I will leave." Sigvald pointed out to her that her husband, who was present, was

Sami. But she did not respond to his comment. Sigvald's work at the Billefjord Sami Center involves him in questions of identity. As manager of the Sami Center he confronts his own old wounds concerning his Sami identity and how he moved away from the non-Sami identity he maintained at his municipal post. Some of the challenges and rewards of his new employment concern the conflict he has felt in being Sami, because by returning to Billefjord he returns to the locus of his initial conflict: boarding school and the creating of a dual identity.

This being Sami and what hurts; the area where one feels this conflict is in the area you grew up in. It is so different when you are outside of this area, for example, when you come to the Netherlands where this conflict does not exist. Parts of this conflict exist in the whole of Norway. Where you have this conflict, it is like circles and it is where you grew up and experienced all these things. So when I started to work in the Billefjord Sami Center, I was going into the middle of the conflict that I had experienced earlier, but now able to help whom I am.

He takes comfort from the fact that more and more Sami take the risk and register their Sami roots.

And now I realize there are a lot of people in the same situation, which is like a struggle. For example, I can recall the reaction of a young woman when I raised the Sami flag in Billefjord. I was raising the Sami flag on Flag Day. This year [2003] was for the first time an official Sami Flag Day, official for the whole of Norway, and a young woman, about 40 and only Norwegian speaking, said when she saw the Sami flag, "I was moved." This in Billefjord, which has been a very Norwegian village and for me Billefjord is connected to my school years. So even among these Norwegian-speaking Sami people, they have realized their own roots and that belonging to the Sami is not a question of the language you speak.

The relation of language to Sami identity is complex. There is increasing loss of language skills and assessments are needed to improve the effectiveness of having Sami taught in school.

That is a big change that is going on, it is moving a lot, more open. Of course there is still a lot that is leftover from the old system. It is 'hanging in the walls' in Porsanger municipality and in the schools. You have these old people from both sides. A funny situation, it is still very difficult

to learn Sami in school. We at the Sami Center want to know what is actually done in the schools, because if it is not changed, there is no future for the Sami language. It is not enough to have the Sami language just as a subject in school. It does not work, because outside it is Norwegian. For a minority language, you have to have it in school for the whole day. Another problem is the parents of the present day pupils. They are from my generation and have been the boarding school children. They are not speaking Sami at home – even if they want to, something is hanging [that says ‘no’]. So at the Sami Center we make a project on this. It was decided a few months ago at a meeting with the Sami Language Center in Lakselv, the municipality of Porsanger, and our Center to make a project on the question. What is the future for the Sami language? Only old people are speaking Sami and so little is coming from the school. So the goal is to assess what is happening in the school and what is happening in the Sami Parliament; assessing what is said, what is done and checking the results, plus, bring in the experts on these questions.

In Sigvald’s new employment the question of Sami identity is important for him. He is heartened by the response from the younger generation towards a renewed sense of Sami identity, but knows that his generation, having lived in a boarding school away from home, is saddled with unspoken conflicts. People of Sigvald’s generation are the parents of the younger generation and often Sami is not spoken in their homes. So today, very often the younger generation does not speak Sami. Sigvald would like to see the schools do a better job of teaching the Sami language.

Even though he fosters renewed interest in the Sami language, Sigvald does not think that the Sami language should be used as *the* marker for Sami identity.

My daughters do not speak Sami. But they have their identity, which is the Sami culture. They have to decide for themselves and in their own environments if they will be at any time more obviously Sami. It is up to them, now they are not visibly Sami. But defining Sami? A generation ago it was defined by what you were doing. But I see that identity is especially about how you give the answers to life, answers for what you are doing. The culture is not what you are doing but how are you solving problems. You put all of your values in the way you are solving the problems of how you live. And not what you do. We grew up in contact with nature. Now a lot of Sami people do not grow up in contact with nature. But they are still Sami. And are even Sami without speaking the language. Sami culture must be defined

also by what is happening today, otherwise we are placing ourselves outside and into a museum.

Sigvald sees Sami identity as connected to certain values, and finds that Sami culture includes modern developments. Although language is not a necessary condition for Sami identity, the preservation of place names remains an important issue.

When the Center started, we had a project to systemize the place names between Stabburnsnes and Billefjord. The place names show the connection to the land how the land was used, and tell about the land itself. When we had the names systemized in the computer, we saw that certain areas had particular activities named and used for place names. For example, one area had a lot of names about hunting. In the area of Stabburnsnes we saw that the great majority of the place names have a spiritual reference. But we did not always understand what was meant by some of the names. It has been interesting for me to try to understand what the place name is referring to. One example is the name “River Dog” at a place along the river. By coincidence, when I was reading Adolf Steen’s book [1954], I noted that he mentioned a report from a missionary describing the offering to the God of the River, and that what usually was offered were dogs. So a reference to the sacrifice is a possible explanation for the name, River Dog, at this location. Another question I had, concerned the area near to where I have my cabin, the English translation for the place name might be ‘atonement’. When I went up there with my father we were always quiet. I wondered afterwards why; it was not explained why. That this was a religious place is probably why.

The name may inform one about the nature of the place. Sigvald’s father was respectful at certain locations out in nature and Sigvald felt this attitude was imbued with a religious quality. As manager of the Billefjord Sami Center Sigvald has become involved in many of the questions that are currently pertinent for the Coastal Sami. Examples of these activities include a project that codifies the Sami place names in Porsanger and lobbying for local participation in the seal hunting in the fjord. Sigvald has also spearheaded new developments. In an interview, 2 December 2005, Sigvald related that he is invited to speak to the Sami Parliament on the social consequences of Norwegian fishing policies. This invitation came because of his Center’s active support of a new fishing association, established May 2005. Sigvald is the secretary of the new association, *Bivdi* (one-who-hunts-and-fishes), which represents all Sami fishermen along the Coast of Norway. Sigvald said the Center’s main message is to build up a network for local knowledge.

The last six months [December 2, 2005] I have been busy organizing, with the aim of taking care of local knowledge. In the past, local knowledge was handled by the so called outside world and then it becomes an explanation rather than how the knowledge can be lived in the local environment. In my opinion, it depends on how we organize it whether it is kept local and as knowledge that has a value. I could compare this with the Laestadian movement: local people owned it and lived it. One example of local knowledge was told fifty years ago, recorded in the minutes of a fishing association. There was told the outcome when the big boats would continue fishing in the fjord. We can see it has happened as they said that it would. The fjord is out of balance with too few fish.

Sigvald thinks that local knowledge should be under the control of local people to retain its value. Without being used locally, the knowledge is merely an object of study for historians. Sigvald compares the local control of knowledge with the Laestadian movement, which was, in effect, carried by the local population. The meetings were held at local farms and preachers were local people chosen by the local congregation. Already fifty years ago Sami were aware that the big boats would be disastrous to local fishing.

The social consequences we see: They emptied the sea of fish and in the 1990s it was decided to cut back. The fishermen received a quota. However, in order to keep this quota the fisherman had to catch each year this certain amount. When there are no fish, you can't catch your quota. Then you loose your permit to fish. Today an experiment from Russia is coming into the fjord, King Crab. You need a license to catch the crab that is based on what you have fished before. So it happens that the fisherman living along the fjord does not receive a permit but those from south Norway have a permit. People are frustrated. What happens far out on the sea determines the social life of individuals along the coast. When it is over-fished the fisherman can not fill his quota, looses his permit and potentially looses what he paid earlier into the pension fund. We see the fjord fishermen are the looser in this system and these are mostly Sami. Fishing was formerly combined with other activities and current laws place a Sami fisherman at a disadvantage by favoring exclusively fishing for the livelihood. At least now [2006] the new Ministry of Fisheries has announced that they will look at this system of quotas.

The Norwegian regulations create a disadvantage for the small local fisherman and have far reaching social consequences. A fisherman can loose his livelihood and his pension,

and will then stand by passively watching non-local fishermen reap rewards. Norwegian regulations dictate how to use the natural resources and cause a break with the local customary use. For the Sami, social relations out in nature determine social life. Sigvald hopes the Finnmark Act will bring a change for the better, but he has said he is realistic and actually does not expect a lot.

The respect for another person has changed. More people want this 'open land' as their playground and the traditional way of looking at this is in the minority in Finnmark. It is not only the law that determines how things go but how people are living it. After the War the economic circumstances became better with more leisure time. Earlier, within the small villages decisions were made about the limited resources, the lakes and grass. Now Sami people themselves want this 'open land'. The Finnmark Act is now agreed upon and the board will start functioning in 2006. The Sami Parliament will elect three members in December 2005 and Finnmark Province will elect three. How I understand the Finnmark Act is that now people here are treated as the people in the rest of Norway. The problem in the province of Finnmark is that there is a break in the tradition. In the rest of Norway the laws are based on the local traditions. So we have a big job now to document land usage.

The Finnmark Act was passed by the Norwegian parliament, the *Storting*, on 8 June 2005. The Finnmark Act recognizes that the Sami people and others living in Finnmark have rights to land and natural resources in Finnmark. Other people's corresponding rights elsewhere in Norway were recognized a long time ago. The Act enters into force in July 2006 and the previously state owned land (96 per cent of the land in Finnmark) will be transferred from the Norwegian State Forest and Land Corporation (*Statskog*) to the new Finnmark Estate (see Introduction).

Two things are happening at the same time, the Finnmark Act and the planned enlargement of the National Park. The government said you could claim compensation for what you lose because of the expansion of terrain; Finnmark Act is saying if people can document earlier land usage, they could even be given ownership to the land. Which means if you can document it, it is yours, this could also be the village. First we need to document what was taken away earlier and then apply for the compensation now. I am making interviews and find it interesting that what old people tell, is the same as when it was claimed and taken to court in 1955.

Previously, the people living in Stabbursnes used the surrounding land, combining the holding of sheep and cattle, with fishing, trapping and logging, etc. for their livelihood. This use of the land was experienced as a relationship between the people and the land built up over many years. The way the land was used was considered an integral part of the identity. Compensation for the loss of land usage treats usage of land as a monetary commodity. However, the local understanding of the loss is not a loss in monetary terms, but a loss of identity. The history of Sami and Norwegian presence in Finnmark provides the context of the underlying tensions. The Sami as the indigenous people became a minority population over a span of a few hundred years. Sami developed various tactics for living with Norwegians. Sami often shed their identity in the presence of Norwegians. An overt expression of one's Sami identity can be interpreted by Norwegians as intending an affront, especially when there is any mention of Sami rights. A leading topic in Sigvald's narrative is his deep frustration with Norwegian policies and their influence on the life of the Sami. It is clearly articulated in his account of his early school years where language was an obstacle, later in the issue of fishing rights and the changes in livelihood that were connected with the sea and land. He has a positive attitude towards modern development, which in his view does not detract from a Sami identity. He does not see the Sami culture in terms of preservation, but as an ongoing way of living one's life. Sigvald's arguments contain key concepts of what it is to be Sami. They include the contact and use of nature, language, and social, cultural values. Contact with nature was not only important for one's livelihood, but there is also a religious element connected to the contact with nature. In terms of the Norwegian school system, Sigvald overcame his initial 'handicap' of lack of familiarity with the Norwegian language. He successfully pursued available educational opportunities and as an adult was an engineer employed by the municipality. Later, he more actively pursued his Sami roots. For Sigvald, these are the values of his parents. Like his father, Sigvald is engaged in his community's conflicts in relation to the natural resources. It is from his mother that he got his values with respect to healing.

## Healing

### *Prelude to inheritance*

Sigvald helped me interview his mother. As mentioned above, Nanna also pursued her own plans during these interviews. She used the interviews to communicate with Sigvald. Initially, she communicated her concern that no one had been found to take over from her. She expressed her observation that none of her children had ever asked her what she had been doing all these years. She was directly challenging Sigvald. Nanna communicated that she had first considered her youngest daughter as a possible recipient



of her healing gifts, but later saw that her daughter was “a too nervous type”. Moreover, her daughter, who was trained as a nurse, was “committed to modern methods”. Nanna had considered Sigvald’s oldest daughter, but she was (at that time) too young, being only fourteen years of age:

It would be a very good thing if one of my children could do something: healing, helping. I hope for that. I plan to retire. Ingeborg could be a possibility, but she is still a child. It is not a shame to have these skills. It does not matter when people say, “This does not help.” You can’t listen to that. Always there are people who say that. Hilmar [a nephew] asked me, wanting to take over. I don’t want this. If nobody in the [immediate] family will take it, I’m not giving it away.

Nanna increasingly appeared to consider Sigvald as her favored choice, and, after approximately two years of interviewing, Sigvald agreed to be the recipient of Nanna’s gift. During those two years, Nanna answered some of the questions posed to her during the interviews with answers that directly involved Sigvald. Thus she answered to the question, “How does one have the power to see what others can not see” by saying, “One does not tell to others what one sees and thereby the power increases”. When Sigvald asked her to explain further, she said, “You mean if you tell?” She was presuming that Sigvald requested the information for himself. Nanna was adamant during the interviews that, should Sigvald accept the heritage, he would have to abstain from alcohol, a subject that she otherwise never mentioned. Nanna indicated during the interviews that certain individuals and families held the opinion that her healing methods were outmoded, not keeping pace with modern times. She also knew that other people viewed her methods in a positive light, and that these people attested to having received great benefit from her treatments. Some people asked Nanna if she would train them to cup. In the previous chapter we noted that cupping was a common procedure during Nanna’s youth, but that Nanna was the only one in her environment who continued to cup in later life. Nanna used the cupping technique together with her inheritance from Gamvik. Nanna did not point up her heritage from Gamvik, and for some of Nanna’s patients she was seen as simply cupping. Nanna had clear designs for her combined heritage. I was privy to Nanna’s reaction when a request came to her to teach cupping, which occurred on several occasions. Her reaction was a sure dismissal. Nanna did not consider it an option to teach anyone simply the physical cupping method. She would only teach cupping to the one she chose. She would only commence teaching when this individual accepted to take care of ‘the rest’ of her inheritance. Sigvald was well aware of Nanna’s concerns for her inheritance and her intent to teach cupping only in conjunction with her gift. He thought that her reasons for not teaching cupping were based on her insight into the

capacities of those who requested to be taught, and that she wanted to pass ‘it’ on within the family:

Nanna spoke to me about those who had asked to be taught cupping. It seems there was no flow. Maybe she saw there was not enough interest. Maybe she saw people were not able to meet what is coming. Also she wanted to have it passed to someone in the family.

It was evident that Nanna would pass her inheritance to only one individual. Sigvald explained, “The connection is like a telephone line. You can only give it to one. I have never heard of it being split.” The notion is that there is only one successor, however the successor, may inherit from more than one person. In Chapter Four, we noted that Kaaven could have inherited his gift from more than one *noaidi*. In Chapter Three an incident was related in which Kaaven appeared in a dream to someone who had acquired a stone belonging to Kaaven. Nanna knew that the dreamer was not being chosen by Kaaven to inherit from him. The story suggests that the heritage can continue via an object of the dead.

Sigvald agreed to take over, provided that he should prove *able* to take over. His caution was further a qualm of being ostracized. It should be noted that he accepted to take over Nanna’s gift prior to his change in professional employment. The critical reactions he later received concerning his employment as manager of the Billefjord Sami Center were challenges that he had first anticipated when he would accept Nanna’s heritage. He told me that the restraint he felt was the anticipation of how some people in his community might view him when he “would be a healer in the line of Nanna”. He was active in his community, and he wanted “to continue to feel close to those I am fond of.” Fear of ostracism may also indicate that separation from the community is a part of the tradition of healing. Kaaven was viewed with fear.

### *Transfer of Nanna’s gifts*

In May 2000 when Sigvald accepted the transfer of healing from Nanna, she set a date for a ritual in a few days time. Out of respect for Nanna’s injunction to Sigvald not to tell, I did not ask Sigvald for details concerning the ritual. I knew the date, 12 May 2000, and why Nanna had chosen this date. The day was a Friday because, as Nanna told Sigvald, he might not sleep well afterwards and this would be easier to deal with if the following day were a Saturday. Nanna related her own experience of not being able to sleep after ‘it’ was ‘given’ to her by Gamvik (see Chapter Five). I surmise that on May 12<sup>th</sup> there was a ritual that included some physical elements as well as spoken words and that this ritual was the first step in the inheritance.

Nanna passed away on 26 February 2002, in apparently good health. There were no visible signs of her impending death. It has been generally concluded that

she timed her own death. She had said to Sigvald three days before, “It should be enough now.” Sigvald had a dream that same night in which Nanna blew into his eyes. Sigvald realized in his dream that after her breath went over his eyes, he could now see. He could see before, but compared to this, he was not really seeing. The dream conveys the image and experience of receiving clear vision through Nanna’s breath over Sigvald’s eyes; it speaks of the transmission of second sight. The word for breath in Sami is also the word for spirit, *vuoigna*. Both Sigvald and Nanna have spoken of their own dreams in terms of the prediction of future events, saying, “I saw xxx happen, and the next day xxx happened.” Prediction is considered an important ability of the healer. Apparently the second transfer in Sigvald’s dream completed the first transfer in the ritual on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2000.

Before Nanna’s death Sigvald was in training with her for about two years.

### *Cupping*

After the May 2000 transfer Nanna commenced teaching Sigvald to cup. She told him, “People that come get this, some will feel there is more, others will not.” Nanna kept cupping and the inheritance from Gamvik together. Sigvald understood that she found this combination to work well. By keeping the two together, Nanna would not invite inquiries into her activity. The emphasis would be on cupping. Sigvald said:

She experienced that it was a good combination. I can understand why. Those who are healers are asked to heal, and there are many ways to do it, it can even be compared to praying. When you are cupping then the focus is “you cup”. [I understand Nanna’s reasoning] you want to help people without focusing on what you are doing [the non-visible healing]. It is like having a hook to hang things on. That is what you do, “you cup”. In old times many things were together. I don’t know. It is history, but I can feel it could have been this way. What we see is that people try different healers - just a hope. It would be difficult for me to promise healing. So I cup and Nanna cupped.

Sigvald explained that the combination is found to be advantageous not only to divert direct inquiries but also because it is culturally unacceptable to make assertions that one has healed. To claim that one can heal and also to have healed is to ask for payment and this is not done. The activity is a giving. Sigvald said, “Also it belongs to the culture not to say ‘I can.’ Not to say ‘I have worked and I get paid.’ When giving - no pay.” After being cupped it is acceptable to respond with a gift. The Norwegian laws against the quack salver perhaps play a role as the law (up until 2005) defined a quack salver in terms of asking for payment. Additionally, monetary payment is a more recent practice within the

society, introduced from the South. Sami were used to the *verdde* relationship in which exchange was delayed. This fostered an open, ongoing relationship where paying was not necessary. To some extent, such ongoing exchange relationships are still in practice within Stabbursnes and between the villages along the coast. Sigvald knows that in his culture such relationships are acknowledged and he is also aware that one does not make claims.

Even though for Nanna and Sigvald cupping is not the only thing they are doing, they express the conviction that the physical procedure is helpful. Sigvald said, “When cupping, you see a lot and understand why it is making trouble for your health – you can see it. There are many things impacting – not just physical – many ways to take this. People tell how they feel afterwards [i.e. after the cupping], [They tell that they feel] it is a whole other body.” To cup Sigvald makes small incisions on the surface of the skin and places a suction cup that extracts a small amount of blood just as Nanna did. The cup containing the extracted blood is repeatedly rinsed in a bowl of water and observed. The location of the cupping is important and Nanna’s instructions included the correct placement.

Nanna commenced instruction in cupping immediately upon Sigvald’s acceptance of her heritage. Nanna assigned a patient to Sigvald; a male patient she knew would be coming for a series of treatments. She assigned Sigvald the task of cupping him for the complete series, which took place over several months. The cupping rhythm followed the new moon. It is considered advantageous to cup at the time of the new moon. Sigvald explained, “To cup at the new moon is preferred because, just as mowing the hay and other activities, the drying process is quicker during the new moon.” After this series of treatments, the patient remained well for almost a year. The patient returned to be cupped again by Sigvald when (after a year) his complaint returned. The patient originally consulted Nanna because medical doctors had been unable to relieve his pain.

Sometimes during the two years of instruction Nanna summoned Sigvald to observe an unusual blood formation in the extracted blood when she was cupping. After the cup was released from the patient it was rinsed by being swirled in a bowl of water and the extracted blood was observed. Sigvald explained that there are influences that ‘come into’ the blood. For example, by a shock, the blood flow can stop. When one is scared, angry, or stressed it affects the blood. He said that the influence does not settle in the big veins, but in the small veins. Cupping cleans it out. The positive results of cupping proceed from the natural healing capacity of the body, stimulated and supported by cupping.

It is this idea: basically the body is able to heal itself. But at certain points there are coming things and the body is unable to do that. Particularly in the modern world where a lot is changing, for example, the food, and then the body can not always act. Then cupping can help.

Sigvald seems to express a formula of ‘intrusion’ as the cause of illness. The food in our modern times can build up in the body as a foreign element, and this needs to be worked out of the body. This is something the body will do on its own, but the body may not expel ‘enough’ and then cupping will help.

During the two years of Sigvald’s apprentice period, all cupping treatments took place under Nanna’s supervision and at her home. During that period I had my own experience of being cupped. Sigvald cupped me at Nanna’s home after a horse stepped on my hand. Sigvald did the cupping and Nanna felt deeply into the injured hand. She went deeply with her fingers into the injured hand but never hurt me. After the cupping session Sigvald explained what Nanna had done with my hand.

She was feeling if there were any injuries in your hand, or if something was broken from the horse stepping on your hand. She was feeling if bones, muscles or tendons were broken or injured that would come back later and cause pain. She thought something was injured here and she said you must be careful until it grows together again, otherwise it could loosen again. You had a big weight on the hand. What we did was to cup you here and took out [pause]: Because what happens with an injury, in the beginning there is a swelling up, this is a protection. What then happens is that the blood itself changes and to heal that, to start again the new flow, we cup. It happens that it stops; the life stops in your hand, the flow stops and gives you pain later. We cupped and took out what had been there for some days now – not really blood, but what was meant was to take out that which had been a protection, to start again a new flow in your hand and heal it – something fresh.

Sigvald explained that what is removed is not so much the blood but the liquid which is the swelling after an injury. By removing this, a flow is set in motion that furthers the recovery. That which nature made for a protection, the swelling that restricts movement, becomes an impediment blocking the natural flow in the body. Sigvald said that with cupping the ‘pain’ is taken. “Cupping is just to help the flow to go on, to take the pain. You have this in the whole of nature: in nature when something is injured, something is put to help. It is always a balance between what should be and how it is.” When Sigvald asked Nanna what he should do when he would cut too deeply and thereby cause undo blood loss, Nanna said, “You will stop the bleeding.” Sigvald is familiar with this reputed capacity of the healer to stop bleeding. When he was fourteen, he returned from the dentist bleeding profusely. Only his sister was at home. They decided to telephone someone they thought could help. As soon as this man answered the telephone the bleeding stopped. A healer is a master in the behavior of the blood, knowing the balance, able to improve its flow as well as to stop it.

*Nanna's further teaching*

As I have mentioned earlier, because of the unique moment of my interviews with Nanna, I was privy to information that I otherwise doubt I would have had access to. Nanna was on the lookout for her successor and used the interviews to interest Sigvald into accepting her inheritance. She also instructed Sigvald during the interviews. The translation of the interviews was a joint project by Sigvald and myself, and Sigvald elaborated on and explained Nanna's statements to me.

Nanna gave Sigvald specific instructions to encourage the right attitude towards other people, which would facilitate their being helped as well as increase Sigvald's capacity to help. The teaching focuses on 'when to speak/when to listen' and the 'correct/incorrect' intent behind listening and speaking. Sigvald was instructed to listen carefully to his patients; Nanna had received that instruction from Gamvik. Sigvald related:

She said that you must listen to people and take them seriously as they are – not make jokes about all these questions. It is the way you are towards people. You don't talk about other things than the subject at hand. You should deal with that and show you take it seriously. She finds that very important. Also, it is how she has learned it and is bringing it back and taking it further – an important way of being.

It is important to keep the patient in mind. Speaking should reinforce this attention and reflect what the patient is expressing. During an interview Nanna expressed how Sigvald would increase his power to help:

Say someone comes to you. That person tells you what kind of problems he has and you talk with him. This works because people have thoughts and those thoughts work badly for people. You can suggest how things could be done. In that way you will make yourself stronger. Do not speak negatively. You must believe when people tell their problems. You can help in that way.

Nanna taught that thoughts could be working against a patient. After listening carefully, Sigvald can speak with the patient about their problems and make alternative suggestions. The important issue is to listen and communicate with the appropriate intent.

Nanna encouraged an attitude that was concerned with not 'taking in' the negative thoughts of other people, that is, to not become angry. This was done by not participating in the anger. It required self-control so that the results of anger, which are 'bad thoughts', would not get started. During an interview, July 2001, Sigvald related:

[One's attitude is important because of anger.] With anger maybe you are taking in things which do not belong to you. So it is a way of being neutral in the questions. As soon as you are a part of it then your feelings follow a line and your meanings and all that – then you are a part of the whole thing. You have to hold yourself outside, do this by control, to know where you are. As soon as you get some angry feelings, you are a part of something while you should be outside. It can happen that your anger is wrong, because other people can have a good meaning and be right. Therefore just being quick to anger can be wrong and sometimes it is important not to take it in completely. This does not mean not to be angry when it is reasonable, but when one is too involved in the question when you should be outside then you are getting weaker. This is a question of how strong you are. Are you strong enough to control yourself? And this is an important thing to know. Talking about strong or weak is about how able are you to control yourself and deal with yourself. Bad thoughts soon follow anger. This is the connection. She mentioned that it has happened with her also.

In stating that with anger one 'takes in' things that do not belong, Sigvald evokes the model of 'intrusion' for the cause of a problem.

Of course they [bad thoughts] have an influence, because when they come into what you do, or into what you think, and when you are to do good things, you need to keep control over the bad things – need to control your anger. It is also where you can be, that is in the flow of a lot of energy. The energy is taken by being angry, so you move to a very destructive and negative way to think and work.

Thus Sigvald was instructed by Nanna to control his anger and to exercise control, otherwise there would be a loss of energy. Participating in anger is draining. The healer can not heal from this position. The healer heals by a flow of energy. Sigvald described how Nanna dealt with negative thoughts from other people:

She tries to keep it outside her. She thinks, "Well, let them do what they do. I can stand it." That is how she does it. It takes a lot of training to think that way. But it does help – you can put the negative thoughts aside and correct easily and it is gone, forget it. Then one's own thinking does not use a lot of energy. It is how to be helpful to people. You need to want that otherwise it does not work. You cannot wait until someone

does something good to you. This way, you get a response and that keeps the energy. Also what comes back – if a negative way is started, you get it back and this is taking instead of giving.

Sigvald explains that the healer needs to start a positive movement, and this movement will return and be helpful. A negative movement will also return, but it is not helpful.

When one is too involved in the question when you should be outside, then you are getting weaker. Nanna said, “Don’t take other people’s weapons into your use.” She meant, even if you feel it is bad what is coming, don’t just hit back. You are accepting being good to others. But you may comment on what happens when it is not good and the not good thing is just sent back and it hits back where it came from. The difference is for yourself - you are not involved in the not good thing. It is to grow in your own use of the good.

There are activities that make ‘stronger’ and those that make ‘weaker’. One must not be haphazard in the way one participates. Participating in bad thoughts has consequences; bad thoughts will return to the one who started them and make that person weaker (a rule that applies to both healer and patient). But when you start good thoughts, you become stronger (increasing the healer’s capacity to heal). The strength that Nanna encouraged Sigvald to develop will increase by self-control and by the actual practice of healing. Sigvald said:

Nanna said, “Be cautious what you are dealing with. But as long as you do what is good for the people, and only that, nobody can attack you.” That could be a kind of rule. You are not using energy to answer, to have revenge, which takes a lot of energy and is useless.

A loss of strength results from indulging in revenge. Retaliation makes the healer vulnerable.

Another teaching concerned with gaining or losing strength was Nanna’s caution, “Do not tell what you see.” If one tells there is loss of strength. During my interviews with Nanna, Nanna emphasized this injunction by saying to Sigvald:

If you receive these powers, don’t tell anything further about what you see and hear. If you can keep it for yourself, there will come more and more. What I now tell you, you shall not tell anyone, not to your sisters or brothers, and not to anyone with whom you will live together with. It is your secret. You shall keep it for yourself – sealed like a bottle. It is



no help that you have learned it. If you see something in other people, don't tell it. Then you will also see if you have seen correctly. In that way you start to grow. But if you tell "I saw and I saw this and that" it is like throwing it out into the garbage, when it is spoken out.

Sigvald was encouraged to bundle his thoughts rather than to speak them out and disperse them. Strength is gained by not sharing, not even sharing with close relatives. One should keep silence. We have already noted that Nanna kept silent about what she observed in the patient's extracted blood. Sharing is a Sami value, but here strength is gained by doing just that which is not a normal social value.

Nanna also tested Sigvald like she had been tested and instructed by Gamvik (see Chapter Five). Sigvald said about Nanna's test:

The test was about what we have been talking about [participating in another's anger that leads to bad thoughts]. Gamvik was trying her on these questions and also giving her advice about how to do it. It is a whole way of life you cannot take it as a part of 'nine-to-five' thinking. Then you loose a lot, because your thoughts are always going. You can't just say it is only a part of you. It takes a lot of training to think that way and also experience living among people with different meanings and different ways to do things. Very soon, if you are not awake, you are following lines that are taking you to something negative. So it is especially a way of thinking, which is the beginning of something that ends with all you do.

Gamvik apparently opted for another environment, in this case Hammerfest, to encourage Nanna to make distinctions and to become aware of her own thoughts and to not simply participate in the thoughts of others. Nanna herself had her own way of encouraging Sigvald's growth. During the summer of 2001 she told Sigvald that she had sent something to him, but that it had not arrived, and she got it back. I understood this to be a way of encouraging him to be alert and receptive. Concerning this incident Sigvald commented:

Yes, that is what she said. This may be a training to be able to receive things. One can try oneself – listen to your self. It is not just something one does, it does not happen if one has not been thinking this way for a long time, that is, has been trying enough to listen and receive messages.

Sigvald was encouraged to listen and be receptive, and at the same time to make distinctions. He should note when something is coming to him. It can be a non-verbal communication.

Nanna also instructed Sigvald, “You will make mistakes, but don’t let it hang over you.” Nanna’s instruction to Sigvald allows him to explore and not limit himself to conclusions dictated by people around him. Contact with forces can have an impact and Nanna encouraged him to trust the contact. Sigvald related:

When I am talking to Nanna, she sees the biggest problem is when you don’t believe enough. She said, “Then we are stopping ourselves.” She describes a way of doing which is a feeling through [moving beyond] to what a spirit is – not just thinking, but a way of doing. When teaching [in the fashion that is normally done] there can be speaking but only when doing and trusting a force that is really doing it [is one moving in this area of which Nanna is referring. And she is indicating that] not to trust it, is to stop.

‘Doing’, in contrast to ‘thinking about,’ or ‘talking about,’ facilitates the force that is actually healing. Trusting the force that heals is required and without this trust there is no participation and no force.

It is a question of how sure you are that there is something more than you can see. When I read the Bible, I can think of different ways to be connected. We talk about spirits based on our culture. The Bible is a different culture. One describes from within your own culture which way you are connected. Spirits themselves are the same. It is a question of how you place a thing like “what is it”? Which is something that is more than you can see. Now even in my culture there are differences between people about religion.

The trust implies confidence in a connection to something that is not visible. Sigvald thinks that the notions about such connections are determined by one’s culture. Spirits are ‘the not visible’ to which there is a connection. Sigvald speaks of a spirit whenever there is a connection (however interpreted) with the ‘not visible’.

Thus important elements of Nanna’s teaching (that were permissible for me to know) include: the correct way to listen and talk to the patient; the question of anger; keeping silent; the need for training in becoming receptive; and trust in the contact with what is ‘not-visible.’

### *Dreams*

Dreams play an important part in Sigvald’s development as a healer. A dream of interest occurred a week after Nanna’s passing. Sigvald dreamed, “I am busy taking Nanna’s belts

from her house to my house.” In the dream Sigvald is busy bringing what belonged to Nanna into his home. That it should be belts is interesting because early sources relate that in pre-Christian Sami religion a man used the drum to attain trance whereas a woman hung up her belt.<sup>61</sup>

Within a year of Nanna’s passing, Sigvald dreamed about a doctor’s office:

I went to the doctor’s office to get medicine for someone. I wait with others in the waiting room. Then there are only two of us left, a woman and myself. It is now signaled to come in. The woman said, “Is it your turn now?” I thought that there are two doors so she will be taken care of, so I went in. There was a family standing and a young woman was sitting on the bed. They said when I came in, “You are known, we know about you.” I excused myself saying, “I am just here to get medicine. I am not here for (without naming it). I understood that they were telling me, “You will heal.” They were expecting me to heal. It ended with the woman on the bed, to whom I had my back, I spoke to them and then I turned to her to see what was wrong. I did not think further about the medicine I had come for.

In this dream there is an invitation to heal and then Sigvald turns and focuses his attention on the patient. Sigvald is told, “You are known. We know about you. You will heal.”

Within two years of Nanna’s passing, Sigvald had a dream about a big fish:

I went into Nanna’s house and a very big fish would also come into the house. I had a sense that it had been living in very deep water and that it had a strong decision to come into the house. I wondered what I should do, not sure if I should fight against it because I did not know this fish. I went into Nanna’s bedroom and found a big book and in this book found out that it could survive in the house but that sometimes I must keep it wet - the fish’s skin could close.

In the dream, an outside force (a fish) forces its way into the house. Sigvald decides not to fight it, but to take care of it after he has looked it up in the book held within Nanna’s most personal area, her bedroom.

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61 Lundmark quotes Leem’s (1767) information regarding women who were present at a noaidi séance: “beautifully got-up in their best clothes and with a linen hood on their heads, but without belts round their waists.” Thomas von Westen (1723) reported that the women made spells with the belt. In addition, Solander’s account (1726) states that when a woman wanted to pray to “Passevare-Ollmaj, the holy men of the mountain, they hang up their belt and ask through it” (English translations quoted after Lundmark 1987, 167).

Sigvald related in April 2006 that he had been wondering, “How is it going with healing?” Shortly thereafter, May 1<sup>st</sup>, he had a dream, which he interpreted as an answer to this question. In his dream a voice said, “It comes in successive portions/ installments. Had you received it all at once, it would have killed you.”

### *Diagnosis*

Nanna’s diagnostic method involved the receiving of information. She compared it to an angel coming and revealing knowledge. During an April 2000 interview, Nanna described some of the experiences Sigvald could expect to have:

You will experience that yourself if you take over. If I can say it right – it is as though you get it in your head. In the beginning it is very difficult, so that you may be scared of it. But don’t be scared. You must be strong.... It is like an angel is coming and telling you and opening visions/knowledge. But you don’t need to be scared that you see things.... If you take this over, you will learn it faster and faster. You have always in your thoughts what you can do.... It is not that I see, but things come in my thoughts and tell how she or he is. And I consider what Gamvik has told me – to take good care of people who tell. And I get much more power when I take care of what they tell about.

Nanna was cautioning Sigvald concerning his first experiences. He would receive thoughts or visions that would guide him in his diagnosis. Without her explanation Sigvald might misinterpret these experiences as a fearful haunting. One of Nanna’s first instructions to Sigvald was that he must practice distinguishing between what is coming from himself and what is coming from outside. She said, “Don’t be afraid because sometimes what you feel is not you.” “Then it can be like sticks in my body. It was exactly like that with Jan Erikson, I felt it in my intestines. That way, I can be very sure what is wrong, but it leaves immediately.” Nanna said that she felt the troubled body part of her patient in her own body. Because she could distinguish between what is coming from herself and what is coming from outside, she knew that what she registered at the moment of diagnosis was from the patient. She was confirmed in this because the pain – “like sticks in my body” – left immediately.

After the ritual in May 2000, Nanna informed Sigvald that a man would come to him and ask for help. Sigvald understood that Nanna was predicting an event. This was not a man with whom she had had prior contact. Within a day or two a man did arrive at Sigvald’s door and behaved as Nanna had predicted. Nanna had instructed Sigvald to touch the man. This he did not do at that time, but the man telephoned later, and Sigvald said he could do more for him then. Sigvald was encouraged by

Nanna to feel differences when he touched someone, and to make a distinction between what is healthy and what is not healthy. When I asked Sigvald if he makes a diagnosis, he answered, "I am following what is going on." On another occasion, he spent some time in 'reverie', and saw a picture that he applied as a prediction for the outcome of the case at hand. Nanna's instruction had been, "There is always a thought coming. You will not be alone." The notion that one is not alone is important for this tradition of healing.

Visions and thoughts guide Sigvald in his assessment of the problem at hand. Apparently Sigvald also considers that by allowing a free flow of thought he may receive special information. Once, Sigvald was in the process of cupping a woman. At one moment the woman looked straight at Sigvald and said, "You really see me." Sigvald noted that he had been speaking to her during the cupping without a focused intent: "[I was] not intending to reveal anything, but I could see that she had felt 'seen'." There is a communication process, and in this case talking led to the vision. Sigvald indicates that by careful listening and talking with the patient he follows the problem to the point of greater knowledge.

In July 2004, Sigvald (telephoned by an older woman from Kautokeino) was asked, "Do you blow?" Sigvald did not immediately respond, and then she asked, "Sáhtat go lohkat" ("Do you read?"). Sigvald answered, "Well, we have to look at this together." In answer to my questions about this exchange, he explained:

I was not familiar with lesere [readers] even in Sami. Maybe reading has been used more often when speaking Norwegian. The first time I was asked, "Can you read?" I did not quite understand what she meant. Now [2005] I have heard more about lesere and I would say that this reading appears to be more directly connected to Christianity. In the Sami language, one heard that someone was using 'hands' to heal, but it was not called in Sami lohkat or the Norwegian lese.

During an interview, July 2000, Sigvald had asked Nanna, "What is 'blowing'?" She had answered that she had no powers or knowledge about 'blowing', nor any interest. Sigvald connects the question, "Do you blow?" to *ganne*, and therefore to a similar question, "Can you *ganne*?" Sigvald said, "Nanna was certainly asked in Norwegian, 'Kan du ganne?' or in Sami, 'Sáhtat go ganjet?' Probably she said 'No'." A healer would not make any claims in response to such questions. Sigvald stated that "when *gand* is used by Norwegian-speaking Sami in my area, they mean *bijat*."

However, the local usage shows that *gand* and *bijat* are not always considered to be equivalent. *Ganne* is also used in the Sami language when asking for supernatural healing and this is not the same as a request to place a *bijat* or to be released from a

*bijat*. Nanna and Sigvald answer appropriately to the requests they received, “Come and we look together.” This was Nanna’s response when asked if she could heal supernaturally. Nanna said, “You can come here and see how clear I am.” This response makes no claims and brings the patient physically to the healer. When the older woman from Kautokeino did finally visit Sigvald, she indicated that she had pain in her legs. Later she asked him if her troubles could be caused by a *bijat*. Sigvald concluded that her troubles were a natural result of the cold that she had been exposed to.

When I met her and she told how she had been living, then it was clear the cause was the cold. It was important for her to know that it [her problem] was only physical. I have not yet encountered such a case [where the problem is a *bijat*] but it could come. More often the question is psychological. If you can give an answer [for example, “you need not worry that the problem is *bijat*”] you can already rid them of a lot of worry. You have this question coming very soon and often among people from Kautokeino. [If it should be a case of *bijat*] there are different ways to do it. To send it back to where it came from can cause trouble for another [so this is not necessarily preferred]. [Preferable] it is to do something with the problem. You have an example from the story told by Rávdná. The young boy could not speak and Kaaven asked the boy’s parents, “Shall I send this back?” The parents said, “No.” [The reason they said no, was because the one who caused the trouble was an imbecile and therefore considered not to be fully accountable for what he did.] When speaking with Nanna about *bijat*, she was very careful with this part. It could be to end up in a fight with forces. You could say, it could be more dangerous to attack. There is a practical way to look at these things. To attack would mean you have to be sure what is going on and what if you don’t know what is behind there? Then it is a question of being honest and fair, which could mean that you don’t have any opinion about things. When you are going to ‘do’, you must ‘know’.

Sigvald has not yet experienced a case of *bijat*. He knows that it can be dangerous to become involved in it, because one becomes entangled in a fight. There is a need to ‘know’ before entering into a problem. In the Billefjord Boat Story Mikkel was asked for his help, and he answered that he would first visit the boat (see Chapter Three and Four). Sometimes people consider themselves helped over the telephone; a telephone call already does the job. In October 2004, a neighbor telephoned Sigvald asking for help because his truck would not start. Sigvald said that he would come by but before he actually set out to visit the neighbor the neighbor telephoned back saying that the truck had started. Later

the neighbor said, "It helped that I phoned you." The neighbor inferred that by having spoken to Sigvald on the telephone the truck had been 'released'. Sigvald considers it better/safer to 'release' the problem, rather than to 'send it back.'

### *Establishing Sigvald as healer*

Sigvald was acknowledged as the recipient of Nanna's inheritance by people in west Porsanger (his immediate environment) and from the area of Karasjok and Kautokeino. Within a week of Nanna's passing, he received requests for cupping. During that week when he was in Karasjok, an older woman who had formerly consulted Nanna said to him, "I am so glad it is being taken care of." When relating this conversation to me, Sigvald made the comment, "Those who know about it, want it." The news that Sigvald had been the recipient of Nanna's heritage spread with the news that Nanna had passed away. The question was asked, "Who received it?" Some people knew already that Sigvald had been in training with Nanna. Others speculated in connection to Sigvald's brother, Hjalmar. It was concluded that the heritage had gone to Sigvald because it was known that Hjalmar had received his capacity from another source. A woman from Finland said simply, "Yes, Hjalmar from elsewhere." Sigvald reflected, "In earlier times possibly the question, 'who got the drum?' would have been asked to inquire who received the inheritance. In my case the question could be, 'who got the cups?'" The reaction to Sigvald having taken over from Nanna turned out to be less confrontational than the reaction to Sigvald's change of employment from engineer to manager of the Billefjord Sami Center. This difference may stem from the public nature of discussions concerning employment in contrast to the dissemination of the information that Sigvald inherited from Nanna. This information traveled through the channels of those who were sympathetic to her healing methods. Sigvald found that the response to having taken over from Nanna was actually positive. In 2003 he stated:

The response from among those who feel it is important has been very good. And actually, I don't have any other responses. Because it also looks like there is not much knowledge about what this is. And maybe it is a tradition not to talk about these things. But among those who feel it works, who use it, they feel it valuable. It was known a generation ago, when it was more in use. Cupping was something that many people did, but even then it was different knowledge and skills. I don't know of any one else who is presently cupping. When I was in Alta [2003], a very young woman came to me and said, "Can't you teach me this?" Maybe it is the younger people who are more open to this. It is like it is acceptable and younger people are valuing it. This is different than what our generation was doing; my generation they grew up with this

very hard Norwegianization, when all what was Sami was not needed and also the Sami way of healing. So it looks like it is still working. My daughters, they think I am taking care of something natural and they see the healing is accepted outside our culture.

Sigvald notes that those who consult him value cupping and that the younger generation is not saddled with negative ideas about the older ways in the same way as his generation was. Sigvald's daughters find cupping to be accepted outside their culture, which I assess (in part) as due to my presence. I have been a participant observer.

People posed questions to Sigvald concerning his abilities. For example, one woman who had been regularly cupped by Nanna came to Sigvald to be cupped in May 2002, after Nanna had passed away. She first asked, "Have you ever cupped a woman?" When Sigvald answered, "Yes", she asked, "And the other things that Nanna did, are you going to do those too?" Sigvald replied, "I have promised to do so."

Sigvald's reputation as healer advances with the years. By January 2006, almost four years after Nanna's passing, Sigvald is regularly consulted. The frequency of consults is from one to five patients a week. Some of these are new patients and some are patients who had earlier consulted Nanna. The new patients have found their way to Sigvald via various routes, which include word of mouth. Sigvald is first consulted by telephone. Then he will make an appointment at his home, usually within a few days time. The normal visit proceeds from drinking coffee at the kitchen table, where the problem is discussed, to a cupping session in the comfortable warm bathroom. In an interview, 2 January 2005, Sigvald related how a patient came to consult him:

I recently met a young man in the café. I knew him. I had met him now and then from my work [for the municipality]. He had not come to Nanna before or to me. We started to talk. He had pains and was unable to drive the car from all his pains. He had done what was the normal way when there are problems. He had gone to a doctor, taken medicine for many years, and had been to a center for pain, but this did not help. I felt he was alone with his problem and I asked him – because he was open and had tried everything – if he was open for our way of attacking his problems. He came the same day and I cupped him. I guess he had had a very good experience of this talking and cupping because a couple of weeks later a young woman contacted me referred by him. Later he said, "You know what people are talking about you?" meaning that there is an idea about me, that I probably got what Nannna had. He was not saying more about what it is. He just mentioned that there is talk. I said, "No, I don't know" meaning you could tell me. So we were talking about things.



Sigvald listened with attention and in a variety of ways invited the young man to speak further. The young man opts for cupping the same day and was very positive about the effects. The young man's attitude towards Sami healing was one of interest and openness.

Sigvald commented that the social environment has undergone a change in attitude, because, unlike the earlier silence around Sami healing, one can now read about alternative healing methods in the newspaper.

It was remarkable that many young people were contacting me in December [2004]. It seems that Sami healing is more accepted now. I just read in the newspaper *Min Aigi* that there is a woman in Finland who is cupping. This is an example. Maybe it is not more accepted but more visible than a few years ago. All those things that have been done, now coming in the local newspaper, describing the activity on a more normal level. Before it was not shown what was being done. Perhaps nature healing is more accepted, like what comes from China, it is not bothered with all the problems that we had. There was a stamp on all Sami knowledge. I don't know how much it still is. The stamp is still there but there is openness to alternative healing. The alternative healing coming from the outer world is uncomplicated, which is different with Sami healing.

Sigvald finds that Sami knowledge is complicated and loaded with problems. He notes that earlier there was no openness and certainly no press coverage.

I understand that Sami healing was complicated by the condemnation of the *noaidi*. Sigvald would not call himself a *noaidi*, but a *noaidi* in the past would not have claimed this title either. When I asked Sigvald about the *noaidi* within the present environment he said, "The *noaidi* is dead." According to Sigvald the younger people are not burdened with the former controversies attached to Sami knowledge. He finds the topic of alternative/nature healing openly presented in the newspapers. In this way opinions from outside have entered into the local life. Some youth will view Sami healing as one of many natural or alternative healing methods. There are also young Sami who continue to share the cultural expectations of the healer's capacities. An example is a comment made by a young woman. She said to Sigvald, "You who can look through walls." Another young woman telephoned and asked Sigvald, could he please 'catch' a thief.

### *Sigvald's discourse*

Like Nanna, Sigvald does not explain to his patients that there is more to cupping than the physical procedure. In conversations with me, he does acknowledge this. He referred to Nanna's pattern of speaking particularly when it concerned the 'old' things:

Nanna's response to a question that was posed to her about her knowledge of the Kolvik Rock (reputed to be an old sacrificial site) was, "The woman can come here who wants to know about the rocks", a typical response from the older generation. The old ones don't just tell what they know, particularly when the topic is a religious one.

There is a certain silence around the pre-Christian religious practices. The older generation is more circumspect than the younger. Sigvald thinks healing, as did Nanna, has a religious dimension:

As soon as there is question about things that you don't see or don't understand, but even so, experience as happening, it becomes religious. Because then somebody is doing something that you don't see. What is working? What can a person do? It can be spirits and then it becomes religious.

For Sigvald religiousness is concerned with experiencing that which can not be seen. It is religious when someone works with spirits. Sigvald's standing as healer spreads without his directly acknowledging his ability to heal or of having influenced events. This is in accordance with Nanna's instruction, "Do not tell what you see." However, it is evident that he does not deny influencing. Sigvald's stepdaughter had been worried about a report from the doctor concerning her family's medical history. When the doctor came to the worrisome question in the report, the doctor said, "Well, we will just fill in 'no'." She later said to Sigvald, "What did you do?" by way of assigning the successful outcome to Sigvald's influence. Sigvald neither acknowledged nor denied that he might have influenced things. Sigvald considers the influence from the non-physical to be recognizable through subsequent events:

You have both visible and invisible things happening. It is easy to make connections when something is visible, but things happen without anything being seen. The invisible things you only see by the result and cannot observe anything other than that – you only observe by the changes afterward.

An invisible activity can be known by the results. Sigvald is critical of the view that a healer does magic and that this can be simply bought:

I don't like the picture that a healer does magic and it can be bought like in a supermarket – buy what you want and go on with what you do.

People have to go into themselves. I invite you to go into yourself and see what comes out.

Buying what one wants, as in a supermarket, and continuing with possibly wrong behavior was not the picture Sigvald advocates. He invites a person to look into him/herself and then results are shown by subsequent events. Sigvald referred to a statement he said was made by Jesus in the Bible, "You will know by the fruits." Sigvald invites a person to look into himself and the result can be peace. According to Sigvald peace can be the result of this method of 'bundling thoughts'.

A reindeer herder telephoned Sigvald and asked him to help. He had no rest because the reindeer were moving day and night. He was wondering about a possible *bijat*. Sigvald answered, "Let us gather our thoughts and see what happens." The herd became peaceful within a day. Sigvald suggested that he and the reindeer herder 'bind' their thoughts, which was followed by the 'binding' of the herd. Sigvald explained that he had invited the herder to go into himself. "When I say, 'let's gather something', people have to go into themselves, it is not just the flock."

Sigvald explained that thoughts when set to a task are helpers; the special energy comes from sharing a goal. In the past the term *noaidegáccit* referred to the spirit helpers of the *noaidi*. Nanna used the term *gáccit* to refer to the activity set in motion within a community by gossip, saying derisively, "Those small helpers (*gáccit*)". Sigvald explained:

One gets from the people around one. People have *gáccit*. You get energy from people and set their *gáccit* in to help. If you are going to have a goal together and they have a will to do that, they will also give a special energy, thoughts and ideas, it is spiritual. You could name it with helpers (*gáccit*).

In February 2005 Sigvald commented further on the connection between healing and the thoughts of the patient and his thoughts:

According to my experience, the body is pushing some way or deciding. What I am doing in healing would not be understandable for me without that the body has its own thought or idea. It is what Nanna said about doubt. How much do you follow something? You think, "What is that?" And depending on trust, you continue to follow it.

Sigvald must stay in contact with the patient's 'body thoughts.' It is important to trust and follow what the body of the patient is revealing. Sigvald thinks the capacity to heal is through a connection to something bigger, which he considers to be of a religious nature:

When it is about forces that are more than is human, this belongs to something outside of us. Healing, as we are looking at it here, is contact with forces outside you, but then to help people. There is a religious context, because contact with something outside of us is the spiritual part. For me, religion is a way to have connection to something you know is there, but do not see. You can reach and contact something bigger than you. Not only contact, but also cooperate, if one speaks of a *buorideaddji*. Then it is also bringing information and it becomes a religious part. A *noaidi* or healer has the capacity to heal by his or her connection to God. God is doing the healing, without God there is no capacity to heal.

The healer heals through his/her connection to God. The healing force is more than human and does not reside in the human being but is said to be ‘outside’. The healer cooperates with this force and God does the healing. Sigvald thinks that the non-physical plays an ongoing role and may still initiate a communication:

People have always been in contact or communication with something outside them, which is non-physical. Time goes on – the *buorideaddji* was active, visible and supported from the environment to keep these traditions – well it changed. Then what about the not visible culture? There is still that wish and it depends on how the culture is doing it or taking care of it. The wish? Difficult to describe. How? What? But there is something trying to tell us. It looks like there is a wish to have a communication in some way. It depends - in some way it will happen. If people are not taking care of it, well, then there come ghosts. ‘It’ is also choosing. It seems random but the ‘other side’, can be choosing the contact. When in the culture it stops, like the *noaidi*, does it go on? [It appears to happen so,] if you don’t [make the contact], ‘we’ (spirits) do it.

Sigvald argues that this special connection will not become lost, because the non-physical force appears to have a will and would choose someone for this connection. A former healer can choose his or her successor but when this does not get accomplished the ‘other side’ will choose the contact.

Sigvald’s line of reasoning evokes Sami notions of how ancestors would make contact and also demand that the contact be honored. I asked Sigvald if receiving the capacity to heal had anything to do with receiving a spirit helper. Sigvald answered, “To be connected is this spirit helper.” He explained that the connection is not in

a set or recognizable form. The helper is not recognized by a known image, but recognized through the prediction to the one receiving the capacity. The prediction experienced by the recipient is the actual transfer. In other words, the signal of being connected is in the form of the realized prediction. Nanna predicted that Sigvald would receive thoughts, and when he experienced these thoughts, he knew he was 'connected'. This connection is his spirit-helper. Sigvald said in January 2002, that he had been experiencing for several months what Nanna had predicted. She had said, "Don't be scared, thoughts will come, but they are not you." Sigvald said:

I have experienced how 'outside' is; spirit is outside. You are sure it is not from you, clear from the beginning; not from thinking, it comes from nowhere and it is shocking you. The description of how it is coming is as Nanna told, "Don't be scared, it is not you." It is a strong knowledge that there is something there, it is religious. In the Sami culture it is given to have that contact.

Sigvald experiences that 'what comes' is clearly not coming from him. 'What comes' involves the seeing or experiencing of images and thoughts. These visions come, and are received, in silence. There is trust that there is a force outside of the healer that is a special connection with God.

Earlier the *noaidi*'s perception of his spirit-helper appears to have entailed the image of an animal, bird or fish. Sigvald does not exclude this option for present day practice, but says that for him this (the reindeer bull, which he associated with earlier Sami shamanism) was not the predicted form in which the inheritance would reveal itself. Visual experiences are used by Sigvald to guide him in decision making. An example is as follows. Once one of Sigvald's horses was borrowed and returned with a very large saddle sore – a large open wound on its back. The horse was so seriously wounded that Sigvald considered having the horse put away. He had a vision of the wound getting smaller and smaller. He held the vision to see how it would end and in the vision the wound healed completely. He finally 'saw' the spot covered with hair. Sigvald explained that before he might also have seen such images, but would not have held them as he does now. They would have been fleeting images, which might contain information, however when not held onto, they were not accessed. He sees such a vision as the presence of the future in the present, just as the past is also present in the present.

This explanation evokes his discussion of the *ovdasaš* experience (see Chapter Three) in which he also said the presence of the future is in the here and now. In his explanation of the *ovdasaš* experience he commented that a 'not-*buorideaddji*' could have a vision of the future, but cannot hold onto it and access the information it

contains. He said, “It is like a child learning to walk, after a few steps it falls.” There is a need to hold the vision for the correct length of time. Without this holding, the vision does not reveal its answer. The problem of holding the vision is connected to Nanna’s injunction to have trust and “not to trust is to stop.”

In September 2004 Sigvald related that the injury itself behaves like a spirit. It may fix or connect itself to one place in the body but most often it moves in the body from place to place.

The frostbite or an old injury starts to behave like a spirit. It is living its own life. Sometimes there is a talk between the injury and the person and depending on what it is, it moves to another part of the body, or it could be fastened just there. The main experience is that they are moving. Like Anne’s case, we were so happy with ridding her hands of eczema then it was on the knee. Like Nanna said, “Chasing cancer like a ghost or spirit, but you can follow it.”

He compared the illness and the process of healing to a battle of soldiers.

Like when there has been a war and there has been a hard hit and one area is now taken over by enemy soldiers. The enemy soldiers: we eat wrong, combined with the lifestyle (no exercise) and also depending on our training of our own soldiers. And then one day it is too much. ‘They’ (the enemy soldiers) take over a piece of land. Your own soldiers have been fighting against the enemy, which can be all this wrong stuff we eat, what gets into our bodies. Then the idea is to take out these bad soldiers and things – support the body and its own cleaning soldiers.

The enemy soldiers represent illness as intrusion. The effects of wrong food must be worked out of the body. Our own soldiers are fighting to expel the foreign material, which is a cleaning job. Should the enemy soldiers win, then a part of the body is occupied. These enemy soldiers, the illness, behave like a ghost or spirit and need to be expelled. Cupping will help deal with the problem. Sigvald also explained Nanna’s method of ‘tying up’. In November 2005 he explained that the ‘tying up’ method is bringing together the different parts of the problem:

Cupping is good to catch these things, the effect is physical, but the release is more at the same time. ‘Bind up’: a feeling of a problem, when you start, all is in parts, when talking about a problem there comes more

exact knowing, it becomes visible what it is, on and on then a clear picture, knowing what you are working with.

Thus talking can lead to a vision. In this vision the different parts of the problem are brought together, 'tied up', or as expressed by Sigvald they are 'bundled.'

## Summary and Discussion

Nanna was very young when she was chosen by Gamvik to learn and to eventually inherit his healing gifts and she had a long apprentice period. Sigvald's apprentice period was from May 2000 to February 2002 and he was already in midlife when Nanna chose him. During her long practice as an active healer Nanna will probably have been confronted with dangerous issues more often than Sigvald, who has been practicing as a healer for a relatively short period. Nanna's teaching to Sigvald concerning rivalry and anger can be seen as an indication of her greater experience in this field.

During Nanna's early life, Sami values were taken for granted and throughout her life she maintained a Sami identity. Sigvald was confronted in his early years via the school system with assimilation policies and developed a dual Sami/Norwegian identity. Nanna was an active Laestadian throughout her life. Sigvald stopped attending Laestadian meetings at the age of fifteen. Nanna invested in expanding and honing her healing skills. Sigvald has a more philosophical bent and uses comparative models in his thinking. He emphasizes the connection with nature and his involvement in the fishing disputes has much to do with his strong conviction that a correct connection to nature is at the core of Sami culture.

Both Nanna and Sigvald were actively engaged in their social environment. They were familiar with the Sami knowledge concerning unseen forces. They both made conclusions along the lines of Sami knowledge. The notion that one is not alone is important for the tradition of healing. The thoughts that are like an "angel coming and revealing knowledge" were company for Nanna. Within the Sami culture, to say, "he/she is not alone", indicates that this person is understood to have a special connection to God. For Sigvald dreams play an important part in his development as a healer. The big fish in one dream evokes the spirit-helper in earlier stories in the form of a whale (*Historia Norwegiae* and "Kaaven and the Whale"). In the dream Sigvald is visited by a big fish, it contacts him, and after gaining knowledge, he decides to take care of it. Both Nanna and Sigvald used the concepts of bundling and releasing. They shared the notion of 'correction'. The actors behind the 'correction' remain unknown, only incidentally does it become clear who has instigated a 'correction' (in the case of Kaaven, a man from Lyngen 'corrected' Kaaven). Both

Nanna and Sigvald are healers. They share the same conviction that they should not talk too much about what they know and experience. They are respected for that and are frequently consulted as healers. It also means that much of their knowledge and experience is not shared. The results are what count.

Laestadius cautioned in his *Fragmenter i Lappska Mythologien* (1840-1845) against efforts to make Sami mythology “more precise and systematic than it possibly might have been in the head of the Nâjd himself” (English translation quoted from Pentikainen 2000, 55). Laestadius correctly warns us that we cannot fully document the knowledge system of a culture. Further caution is required to not confuse an individual healer’s knowledge with the broader cultural tradition. Innovation will play a role in the individual practice and notions. In the discourse a healer will respond to the issues and debates of a particular period. Sigvald and Nanna represent a specific tradition within the wider framework of Sami culture. Sigvald adopted Nanna’s teachings and adapted them to his own perceptions and experiences.

Nanna’s teaching focused on two positions, ‘hold’ and ‘release’. She taught Sigvald what he should ‘hold’ and what he should ‘release’. Sigvald should ‘hold’ onto the thought or image that comes ‘from outside’. Then he can get access to the information it provides. He may ‘hold’ onto what comes ‘from outside’, to something religious. He is ill advised to ‘hold’ onto anger, which would make him caught (‘held’) in other people’s thoughts. A healer may solve various problems: (1) the patient is ‘held’ by a spell, (2) pain has been ‘held’ in the body for a too long period, (3) profuse bleeding can be stopped. The healer may use various solutions: (1) return the problem to the sender, but this is not practical because this could have further repercussions. Better is simply to ‘release’ it. (2) By ‘taking care of what the patient says’ the healer ‘bundles’ what was formerly dispersed. (3) Cupping will take out the pain, i.e., ‘release’ the body of the pain and foster the flow of life. An injury, like a spirit, can be tracked (bundled) and released by cupping. (4) The healer can stop bleeding.

The schema of ‘hold and release’ evokes the ‘remitting and retaining of sin’, the binding and unbinding Keys to Heaven, which play a central role in Laestadianism. This in turn may be connected to the Sami representation of the one who can bind and release, the *juovssaheaddji*, whose activity entails that of gathering. According to Sigvald, “*Juovssaheaddji* is the one who is sending things back. It could be a *noaidi*, a *buorideaddji* or whoever was doing it.” The notions of ‘sending back’, ‘gathering’ and ‘bundling’ seem closely connected.

‘How and when’ the healer communicates are key concepts in Nanna’s discourse. In order to maintain the power to heal, Nanna and Sigvald may not speak openly about what they see. We are dealing with transcendent power. The healer cannot communicate and he becomes a non-social being. Silence is the appropriate behavior when walking in a ‘sacred’ place. In her teaching Nanna has given a great deal of



attention to the control of anger. We may conclude that what the thoughts do or do not is reflected by the state the healer is in. The missionary Olsen in 1710 wrote, “[Even] if the Noid does not think ill of a person with whom he has become angry the Noide-gadze immediately carries out his thoughts without his commanding them, and the Noid is unable to control or direct them” (Olsen as translated by Hultkrantz 1978, 56). Therefore the healer must have awareness. We can note that what comes ‘from outside’ and what comes ‘from inside’ must be distinguished. Distinctions and oppositions are the building blocks of the system so that what is helpful/harming are important distinctions to make. The healer must control himself and at the same time be open to influences ‘from outside’ that are religious. Trust makes the connection.

## 7 CONNECTIONS. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Continuity - Worldview

Sami healers today are part of a cultural tradition that connects them to the healers of the past. The gift of healing is passed on. The modern Sami healing tradition is historically connected to the pre-Christian healing traditions of the Sami. However, healing traditions have evolved, and modern healers are part of modern culture and society. Many scholars have discussed the *noaidit* of the past and their relation to modern Sami healers is an issue of controversy. This chapter deals with the questions of continuity and worldview that were raised in Chapter One. I will discuss central issues in the worldview of the healers (and their patients) today, and connect them to ideas about invisible forces and the healing powers of the *noaidi* in the past as depicted in literary sources.

Many of the earlier features have disappeared. From the elements mentioned by Schefferus drumming, the performance with its lifeless state and audience participation, and sacrifice no longer exist. These elements were visible and recognizable expressions of the religious practice and therefore could have been more thoroughly eradicated by the Christianizing effort. However, as Rydving has shown in his material for the Lule Sami, less visible and perhaps hidden practices may have had longer currency. Other features such as locations imbued with a spirit, helping spirits and naming practices still exist. Other features that can be connected to earlier practices are notions of inheritance, prediction, rendering immobile, enchantment and competition.

#### *Roles and functions of the former noaidi and of the present day healer*

Ethnographers and historians of religion have tried to construct an image of the pre-Christian *noaidi* on the bases of the literary sources. They often interpreted the *noaidi* as a shaman and explored various features of the *noaidi* as distinctive features of the shaman in a comparative perspective.

Schefferus wrote in *Lapponia* that the Sami were known for their ability to, among others, stop a ship, bewitch, enchant or cast spells, and make weather. He explained that the art was the surest way in which they could protect themselves from the designs of their neighbors. Another important quality was the capacity to deflect what is evil or hurtful. For this they had teachers in the art of magic. They also had inherited spirits that protected them. Some of the activities assigned to specialists in this art were also ascribed to non-specialists. This was the case with divination, *joiking*, drumming, and dealing in magic. The specialist in this art is distinguished

by his *degree* of expertise because they are all trained in this art. Someone considered an expert at the drum could be further distinguished by a special contact with a helping spirit. The spirit was considered to have initiated this relationship and might henceforth be summoned by the specialist.

Bäckman, Hultkrantz and Rydving made a distinction between elements that can be assigned to the role of shaman (such as spirit-helper, ecstasy, ritual healer) and other elements that they exclude from that role (diviner, sorcerer). I have discussed these distinctions in Chapter One. One topic is the distinction between witch/sorcerer and *noaidi*/shaman. Hultkrantz concluded, "Witchcraft is anti-social and cannot therefore, strictly speaking, be considered part of the shaman's undertaking *qua* shaman.... Whereas in later folkloristic records the existence of evil sorcerers among the Lapps is taken for granted our old sources inform us occasionally how the *noaidi* could become transformed into one. He turned, of course, into an evil opponent to his shaman competitor, if there was one" (Hultkrantz 1978, 56).

I question if the distinction between social and anti-social, which is a moral distinction, adequately reflects past Sami concepts. In a present day Sami view, the judgement concerning the two competitors would be postponed until the outcome revealed which side was 'just', the notion being that the good is stronger than the bad and will therefore ultimately win. The *noaidi* was the one who did *noaidut* (verb), which was (and still is by some Sami) understood as a supernatural or spiritual activity. *Noaidi* is the generic term, and the Sami employ terms that express more specific activities. However, a term that reflects 'shaman' as defined by Hultkrantz, that is, exclusively pro-social, is missing. A distinction that comes very close to 'shaman', and was employed around 1850 (and is still known but not often employed) by the Sami themselves, is 'the one who returns'; the *juovssaheaddji-noaidi* sends back or lifts the 'bad' that another *noaidi* has worked with. It is not the intent of doing harm or good that distinguishes the competitors, but whether their action is actually 'just' or not. What is correct/just is judged by the spirit, which will not carry out an unjust assignment. 'Sending back' and 'returning' are concepts contained in modern Sami discourse and may very well reflect old traditions.

Rydving concluded that without the context of the pre-Christian Sami religion, "the *noaidi* could not function.... and *noaidi* became, in postshamanistic terminologies, one term among many others for 'diviner', 'sorcerer', etc." (Rydving 1987, 203). I agree to a certain extent with Rydving that the use and understanding of the term *noaidi* has indeed changed and is now associated with sending harm. However, up until recently *noaidi* was used interchangeably with 'doctor,' for example, Gamvik was called both *noaidi* and doctor by my informants (see Chapter Four). I have shown that today other Sami terms are employed that express the use of forces to help a patient (*vaikkuheaddji*), so that the earlier understood functioning of

the *noaidi* continues but is most often no longer called *noaidi* activity. When the term *noaidi* is not employed, I have not found that only the diviner and sorcerer are left in Sami society, and, when the epithet *noaidi* is employed it does not only indicate a diviner or sorcerer. Additionally, even when an informant's view is that the *noaidi* is exclusively 'one who sends harm', he/she will continue to accept and use 'a kind of *noaidi*' when speaking about a charm.

In Schefferus' account the one consulted to determine the correct sacrifice would also fulfill the expectations of the group by other practices of divination. In addition, people summoned the one they considered the most expert at the drum, which indicates that religious functions were more widely spread and the role was determined by expedience. Within the self-understanding of the Sami, the role of diviner and shaman may have flowed relatively seamlessly, and the epithet *noaidi* applied to both. The present day notions and expectations show that the healer 'renders immobile' in the case of justice, forms predictions and a diagnosis, and can influence illnesses. When they are 'incorrect', they lose their power. Thus my use of the term healer does not exclude the involvement of other domains within healing.

The inclusion of other domains in healing can be demonstrated by an example, a story (see Chapter Five). Nanna had finished a cupping session with a patient. Upon preparing to depart, the patient's husband (who was also present) said that he did not find this treatment to be anything that required payment, and they departed without further adieu. Some time passed, Nanna was sitting in her home, and the wife entered in desperation. She exclaimed to Nanna, "You have to come; my husband is on the next mountain and can not move." Nanna answered that she would not come but that the wife could bring her husband a glass of water and say it was from Nanna. After some hesitation, the wife took the water to her husband. The next day the wife and husband visited Nanna and told her that he had indeed been able to walk after drinking the water and that he wanted to apologize for his rudeness of the previous day. When Nanna related this story she commented that when the man was rude he "seemed to think he had spirit powers". The story demonstrates the use of rendering immobile. It was employed to 'correct' the husband. The 'healing', in this case, included correcting the husband. The correction was accepted and provided the husband with a new definition of himself as a person who did not have spirit powers. The question of whether Nanna was fulfilling a social or an anti-social role by rendering the husband immobile is not relevant within Nanna's worldview. Nanna instigated a 'just' correction.

### *Elements from the Laestadian worldview*

Various scholars have connected Laestadianism to pre-Christian beliefs and practices (e.g. Hultkrantz). Religious syncretism played a role in the development of the movement. Today, certain ideas within healing do evoke Laestadian concepts and even older ideas

that may have been integrated into Laestadianism. Similar patterns of ideas are found in Laestadianism and healing in the Keys to Heaven, the notions of connection, and the role of the community. The Keys to Heaven are in the hands of the congregation of the reborn, which is the gift, a special connection to God that they can pass on. Bergensen, a lay-preacher in Billefjord (see Chapter Two), said in an interview that the Keys have always been among God's children and that God's children were the people living in the surrounding communities suggesting that the gift had always been among the Sami people.

The basic Laestadian worldview in Porsanger is that the Laestadian congregation has received the Keys to Heaven, which is 'forgiveness' or God's peace/absolution. The Keys allow for the retaining/binding and remitting/unbinding of sin. This gift is a special connection to God, passed on by the congregation. Sigvald said (in a vein similar to Bergensen) that it is a given within the Sami culture that one can have a special connection to God. Ole (see Chapter Four), also a lay-preacher in Billefjord understood that the Bible spoke of those who had a special connection to God and that these were healers. 'Forgiveness' requires repentance and knowledge. A life of sin then has become a burden and the sure knowledge of the ongoing consequences of a sinful life moves the sinner to repent and ask for forgiveness. The experience of giving and receiving forgiveness is known to give great joy, sometimes moving into *liikutuksia*, a state of mind that is often qualified as ecstasy in the literature, but for a Laestadian is a sign of grace. A sign of grace is the complete conviction that sins are forgiven. Salvation comes by trust in God's grace, which is forgiveness of sin freely given. A Laestadian will not refuse to give forgiveness but it must be first asked of him/her. The Laestadian lay-preacher is not self appointed, but chosen by the congregation's recognition that he has spoken God's word. The lay-preacher is led by the spirit, and does not write his sermon beforehand, but waits for the inspiration to lead him.

In the moment of *liikutuksia* the Laestadian is released from his burden of sin. Laestadius wrote that a Sami woman who had been 'long under the law' experienced forgiveness and at the same moment there was an earthquake. The wonderful happenings surrounding forgiveness are an *actus gratiae sensibilis*. Repentance and forgiveness are experienced through felt sensations of God's mercy.

Turi (1910) likens the state of frenzy that the *noaidi* is in when he is exorcising specters or a devil with that of *liikutuksia*. "He gets in a state of frenzy when he sees specters or devils upon folk, and he sees all such things and he is able to drive them out." In an interview of one of Nanna's patients it was related that Nanna was excited as she followed the illness (see Chapter Five). An element in both the Laestadian and healing experience is knowledge shaped and confirmed by the body concerning the release of the burden. The release is brought to pass by those who have a special connection to God. In Laestadianism the 'fruits of the belief' are the visible and experienced gains after conversion, which demonstrate that one is

converted. Sigvald, in expressing the work of healing, said that one ‘knows’ by the results: “You see how it is before and after.” For example, after being cupped a patient said, “It is a whole other body.” ‘Releasing’ can also be expressed by ‘cleared up.’ Sigvald used ‘cleared up’ for the moment in a Laestadian meeting when forgiveness is asked and received. Sigvald said, “It should all be ‘cleared up’ before departing, meaning that you were asking forgiveness of sin” (see Chapter Two). We can see that ‘clearing up’ is confession, forgiveness and God’s peace and forgiveness is to use the Keys to Heaven. Prior to asking forgiveness the person is penitent and is ‘bundling’ his/her thoughts. In reference to healing Sigvald used the expressions ‘bundling’ and ‘cleared up.’ Nanna used ‘tying up method’ for the method Sigvald called ‘bundling’, a method that collects the different and dispersed parts of the problem. Sigvald said that Gamvik ‘cleared up’ the *eahparaš* presence by telling the *eahparaš* that it is now ‘known’ and thereby gave ‘peace’ to the *eahparaš* and ‘peace’ for the community. Releasing can also be applied when someone has been immobilized.

### *Transmission*

According to the worldview of Sami healing there is a gift that can be passed on. Healers are led in their diagnosis, or in what they communicate to the patient, by this gift. The healer is consulted dependent on the assessment of the healer’s effectiveness. The community establishes the reputation of the healer. Just as the Laestadian lay-preacher is recognized by the congregation as speaking God’s word, and is also not self-proclaimed so the healer is recognized by the community and not self-proclaimed.

The expression ‘to be led by the spirit’ evokes the ‘helping spirit’. Early accounts use the term *noaidegáccit*. In *Lapponia*, Schefferus quotes an account by Lundius concerning the method of acquiring a helping spirit. The spirit, in the form of a dragon, bird, fish or pigmy, offered his assistance and taught the adept a certain song. When he later sung the same song, the spirit would come to his assistance. Isaac Olsen in the 1710’s wrote that the *gáccit* (followers/comrades) appear in the candidate’s visions and offer him knowledge and skills. “How to prolong life, how to be a good healer, how to predict coming events, how to transform himself into an animal, how to bring tangible benefits to himself and the members of the group” (quoted from Bäckman 1986, 264). Olsen reported that the spirits, *noaidegáccit*, after the death of the *noaidi* offered their services to a son or close kinsman, and the new profession was learned in secret from the spirits or with some old *noaidi* (see Hultkrantz 1978, 41). Thus there was an element of transfer from a *noaidi* to a successor, but the basic pattern is that the spirits offered their services to the candidate.

Transmission proceeded via the deceased. Qvigstad recorded three examples of how Sami received the gift from the deceased: First, Lars Olsen (died in 1918) received the capacity to heal from two Russian spirits who visited him one night

after he had seen a skull. Second, a Sami man received healing capacities from his two recently passed away children who came to him during the night. The third, a Coastal Sami woman, Inger Nilsdatter (1805-1827), buried a shin-bone she found in the forest. When she returned to the location in the forest, she met a large Norwegian who said that the bone was his and that he would help her. She received the capacity to question the dead (Qvigstad 1932, 225-226).

The notion that the transmission proceeds after the demise of the former healer has been observed in the case of Mikkel and Hjalmar. Mikkel was on the lookout for his successor. Mikkel's teacher had done the same; he searched out Mikkel saying he would 'not take this knowledge to his grave.' Mikkel said he received his capacities after the death of his teacher and that he 'calls up' his dead teacher for help. Hjalmar credits a man he met by accident as the one who passed his gift to him after passing away. The chance meeting was seen as an appointment by the elderly man, who said, "Oh, you came at last." When the old man passed away, Hjalmar had experiences he interpreted as indicating that he had inherited this man's gift. Sigvald related that a dead healer could appear via an object. "Remember the dream that Heidi had? The amulet belonged to Kaaven and when Heidi had the amulet, Kaaven visited her." In these cases we see a significant role being played by the dead. A person's relative incomplete knowledge is complemented by the dead one's 'other' knowledge. The transmission of the gift is only completed after the death of the teacher and the dead teacher may be a component in the connection to God.

Today, the transfer focuses on a special connection to God. Mikkel and Nanna expressed this in terms of 'not being alone'. Mikkel said, "I am not alone." This was also said of his teacher, "This man was not alone". I have understood 'not alone' to be speaking of God's presence. Mikkel said, "I cannot make anyone into a shaman, only the Almighty Spirit determines who will be a shaman." i.e., it is the spirit who chooses. In the cases of Nanna and Sigvald, the former healer chooses the recipient (this does not disallow that the spirit makes the decisive final choice). The recipient must agree to the transfer. The receiver of the gift may have had instruction prior to the actual inheritance. The experience of receiving the gift can be in the form that the giver predicted. Nanna predicted that Sigvald would experience 'thoughts', which he would immediately know were not his own thoughts. Sigvald confirmed that this is indeed what happened. Sigvald explained that the connection comes in the form that the teacher has predicted, and the experience of what is predicted is the actual connection. Should the teacher have predicted the experience of, for example, a reindeer bull, this would be the form of this connection. Nanna predicted that 'thoughts' would come.

Both Nanna and Mikkel wanted to 'pass' their knowledge to one of their children. Nanna and Mikkel were taught, and in turn taught their profession in secret. Mikkel

said he ‘called up’ his teacher by singing his *joik* and received thereby the teachers help in difficult cases (we note the similarity to the account by Lundius: the song is sung and the helper appears). The fisherman Ingmar, born in 1910, told anthropologist Britt Kramvig that he received instructions from a dead friend in a dream.

The notions and practices that are concerned with the transmission of healing are basically: (1) the previous healer chooses a successor guided by or finalized by ‘the spirit’, demonstrated in the cases of Mikkel, Nanna, Sigvald and Hjalmar. (2) The previous healer gives instruction, (Mikkel, Nanna and Sigvald). (3) The gift is transmitted at the passing away of the former healer (Mikkel, Hjalmar). (4) The gift is a special connection to God/Almighty Spirit (Mikkel, Nanna, Hjalmar and Sigvald). Nanna received her gift from Gamvik. Prior to, during, or following a diagnosis she might receive physical experiences, thoughts and visions, which guided her in the diagnosis. Nanna passed her gift to Sigvald and instructed him to have control over his state of mind and to distinguish between thoughts that come from inside (his own thoughts) and thoughts that arrive from outside (the connection, the gift). In Nanna’s teaching to Sigvald she emphasized trust. When he would not trust, the connection would stop (the necessity for conviction and trust evoke the Laestadian edict of complete trust in God’s grace for receiving forgiveness). When Nanna passed away, there was speculation as to who received her gift. Shortly thereafter a woman from Karasjok said to Sigvald, “I am so glad it is being taken care of.”

### *Trance and vision*

In Graan’s account from the 1670’s, he tells that when the diviner awakes, “he is so powerless and sweating as if he had labored greatly, then he starts telling” (English translation quoted from Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978, 102). In the 17th century the minister Tornaeus asserted, “all demoniac visions and revelations [are] so thoroughly learned that they...see strange things even without their drum and can tell what goes on in remote places” (Ibid., 48). A lifeless state might be a part of the performance, but there was quite some variation within the performance. Moreover, the lifeless state could be missing from the performance, as well as the drum. In some instances there was no performance at all, only ‘shamanic’ vision. Some witnesses interpreted the lifeless state as a separation of body and soul. Schefferus quotes Samuel Rheen, “he falls on the ground, as if he were asleep”; Peucerus, “he falls down and sounds away on a sudden, no otherwise than if the Soul had left the Body”; and Peter Claudius, “their Spirits and Soul leave them.” Schefferus was critical of their interpretations arguing that the soul did not really leave the body but that “her active Faculties only stifled, which makes him lie in a Trance, and appear as if he were asleep” (Scheffer 1704, 143-144). Laestadius concluded that the separation of body and soul was actually located, or happening, in the brain of the *Trollkarl*. He saw the explanation for what happened during trance and the practice of



prophecy as subjects for psychology and physiology. Laestadius considered it his task only to demonstrate the historical truth that the *Trollkarl* “really did fall asleep and swam, and that in this condition he was subject to fantasies, visions and dreams” (English translation quoted from Pentikäinen 2000, 60). The academic discourse from Schefferus until the present day has valorized trance. It was never convincingly demonstrated that the notion of trance was for the Sami themselves seen as the determining factor for the *noaidi*’s activities. As Hamayon (1993) has pointed out, in shamanistic societies the shaman’s ritual behavior is a mode of direct contact with his spirits. She states that shamanistic societies do not make use of native terms corresponding to ‘trance’; the notion of ‘trance’ appears to be irrelevant for them (Hamayon 1993, 7). Visions and connection with the spirits seem to have been crucial issues in the pre-Christian period. We may surmise that it is the vision, and not the lifeless state that mattered. Bäckman concludes that to shamanize was “to come into contact with the world of gods and spirits through certain preparations” (Bäckman 1978, 69). This formulation is closer to the self-understanding of the Sami today, rather than notions such as ‘trance’ or ‘ecstasy.’

Researchers have posited continuity by the presence of ecstasy in pre-Christian practice and the *liikutuksia* in Laestadianism. However various arguments have been presented that question the validity of the relationship: (1) In Laestadianism it is the congregation that enters into *liikutuksia* whereas earlier it was a particular individual, the drummer/performer who fell down lifeless. (2) Different religions exhibit different states of consciousness. Therefore the comparison of ecstatic states is problematic. The *liikutuksia* is probably best viewed as a state in which the connection with God is experienced, and corresponds more to similar states in other pietistic movements. From my ethnographic data I note that in modern healing practice, the ‘trance’ is not marked. There is no falling down lifeless, and patients do not view a trance-state as a distinguishing characteristic of the healer. However, people do have expectations: the healer is considered to have direct contact with the healer’s helping spirit, understood as a special connection with God. A recurrent feature can be found in the persistent reference to visions during the lifeless state of the pre-Christian *noaidi*. The lifeless state can be sleeping and the accompanying vision is a dream. The lifeless state can be less pronounced, as was often noted by missionary sources. In modern practice dreams and visions are used.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century the *noaidegáccit* were the spirit helpers of the *noaidi*. Did Nanna have spirit helpers? Sigvald compared the present day understanding of ‘special connection to God’, with the earlier idea of spirit helper. Sigvald said, “Knowledge and visions come from somewhere and it is a question of language how you refer to them.” In Nanna’s own description of her activity she emphasized ‘thoughts’. The patient’s thoughts or the thoughts of their partner may be working against them. In Nanna’s advice to Sigvald she told him to (1) pay attention to what the patient

tells him, (2) contain his thoughts and then they can work for him, and (3) expect thoughts to come that will guide him. In recent times, *gáccit* are conceived of as thoughts that are behind the working of either prosperous or unfortunate events.

*Gáccit* were mentioned by one of my interviewees, Solveig (see Chapter Three). She considered her encounter with *gáccit* as being her unregistered ideas behind a project that was not succeeding. After seeing a shadow she thought that there was a message contained in this. The message was that she had been too single-minded in the pursuit of her own ideas excluding the ideas of other participants in the project. After she included their ideas, the project succeeded. Solveig is not a healer. The *gáccit* are considered by her to be helpers, and they are not necessarily the helpers of a *noaidi*. There is probably some continuity here with the past when *gáccit* may not have been exclusive to the *noaidi* either. The modern practitioner knows how to distinguish information that is considered to be issuing from ‘inside’ him/her self and is considered to be one’s own thoughts, from information entering the field of vision from an ‘outside’ source and is the connection to God. This is the gift that is inherited.

#### *Location and time*

In the pre-Christian worldview the helping spirit could be connected to a location. Schefferus gave an account of how a helping spirit might be gained: whilst out in the woods, the Spirit appeared and offered his assistance; after being taught a certain song the candidate should return to this location the next day and repeat the song (Scheffer 1704, 122). The helping-spirit was encountered at his location, and contact was established by singing the spirit’s song. Olsen, a missionary during the 1710’s in Finnmark, related that the powerful *noaidit* are former pupils of the sub-terrestrial people (Bäckman 1986, 261). The pre-Christian name for servants of the god connected to a cult-site was *hálddit*. Bäckman stated that with time the *hálddit* concept assumed features of the underworld, invisible people (Bäckman 1975, 149).

In Chapter Three, I related my interviewees’ stories that speak of encounter experiences. A *gufihtar*, an anthropomorphic being living underground, may make itself known merely by causing accidents at his/her location. They also have the potential to retain a person. If respected, they may give helpful advice. One story relates that a *gufihtar* appeared at a critical moment in the barn and gave the farmer the advice not to slaughter the cows. *Ganežat* are also underground beings with a human form. Respect is required. Reindeer herders ‘ask’ permission of the underground people before setting up their tent. The group, *fárru*, travels along paths, and it is important not to obstruct them by building a house or other obstacle on the path. An *eahparaš* is said to be a not-baptized child abandoned in nature to die. It haunts the locality of its death. *Eahparažžat* do not live underground. Laestadius wrote on an underground world that the Sami called *sáivo*. In this *sáivo* world lived

people, gods, fish, birds and reindeer. The *sáivo* people were said to live similarly to the Sami, but they are happier and richer. The *noaidi* used the *sáivo*-bird because, just as the *sáivo* people were richer and better, the bird was stronger (Laestadius 2003 §. 71 and 76). Sigvald related that the magpie on his farm must not be disturbed when it builds its nest, otherwise bad luck would come. Thus the magpie at Sigvald's farm may evoke the *sáivo*-bird, but is never identified as such.

In *Lapponia*, Schefferus quoted Olaus Petri, "They give you an Account of whatever is proposed to them (though at some hundred Leagues distance)...And to take away all Objection, to what the Drummer relates ... he shows them certain Tokens, such as are proposed by the person, who asked him the question" (Scheffer 1704, 145). Researchers of shamanism have coined the phrase 'being in two places at one time'. Paine who noted the features of the 'wizard' told by the villagers in Finnmark during the 1950s, related, "most extraordinary of all, he (like the Sami shamans of an earlier century) can be in two places at the same time" (Paine 1994, 356). Bäckman has shown that the Scandinavian view of Sami practices emphasized the motif of a visit being proven by the production of an object. However, she notes, that in Sami folk tradition such a motif is seldom, if ever, mentioned. She adds that there is no mention of the *noaidi*'s 'alter ego' appearing in distant places, another motif often mentioned by Scandinavian sources. Within Sami folk tradition "are a great many tales of the *noajdie* and his ability to perform fantastic acts, such as knowing about conditions in other places, but it is never said that his "alter ego" could turn up in distant places far away from his body in a trance. It is also seldom or never said that he had to prove his "visit" with an object of some kind" (Bäckman 1982, 124). The *noaidi*'s special capabilities were understood as due to help from supernatural powers (Ibid.) Viewed from this perspective, there is evidence of some continuity, but then the distinctive feature is not 'being in two places at one time' but one of prescience.

A recent story about Kaaven related that, prior to being away from home for an extended period, he told his wife that when she sat on the chest he would be with her. During his absence, the house was burglarized. His wife sitting on the chest was confident that Kaaven was with her and related all these events. When he returned, he indeed already knew the details of the burglary. My interviewees do not express their understanding of such phenomena in terms of 'being in two places at one time.' They use other expressions for such an experience, most notably *ovdasaš*. The experience is not limited to the *noaidi* or healer. The experience of *ovdasaš* is a case where the temporal perspective changes. A person experienced as arriving may be only heard, or only seen while not really being there. The time of the experience, whether it is prior, during or after the actual arrival, indicates that it is auspicious or inauspicious. Should someone express prescience the Sami say that he knew this by an *ovdasaš* experience.

The encounter experiences related in Chapter Three follow specific patterns and the ‘beings’ encountered have overlapping characteristics. The basic idiom is a clash at a specific location between these beings, with prior precedence to the location, and modern people. The beings that are encountered are not part of social time. ‘What’ is encountered is only partially recognizable. There is always the danger of being caught in the place or timelessness of the beings one meets in the encounter. Because of their very timelessness these beings may inform you about the future.

#### *Connection – correction*

The *Historia Norwegiae* (twelfth century) relates a shamanic séance. During a healing performance for a sick woman, a helping spirit of a *noaidi* took on the form of a whale, and met the helping spirit of another *noaidi* in the form of sharp poles concealed in the sea. The poles penetrated the whale’s stomach and the *noaidi* died. Centuries later we note a similar formulation concerning the success or failure of an enterprise. Lars Jacobsen Hætta (1834-1897) wrote that if the ‘returning-*noaidi*’ was able to deflect the evil of another *noaidi*, or could heal it, he must always be stronger than the first *noaidi*. Without being stronger, he would not be able to return the evil, which would then be directed at him.

In recent times, the story of “Kaaven and the Whale” in many respects evokes the account of the *Historia Norwegiae*. The whale was the form taken by the *biját* originally placed by Kaaven, and returned by a man from Lyngen called a *noaidi*. Kaaven was misusing his powers by insisting that a poor man’s daughter work for him. The father visited the Lyngen *noaidi* who sent a ‘correction’ in the form of a whale that threatened Kaaven’s life. This correction involved sending back the enchantment Kaaven had employed against the father. Kaaven accepted the correction and promised to change. He promised to never again misuse his powers. According to Nanna, he survived by accepting the correction. Sigvald stated that what was seen could have appeared as a boat or a whale to the man rowing, but that Kaaven “certainly knew what it was.”

In the opinion of Nanna and Sigvald, such ‘corrections’ are still taking place. Sigvald said, “If you are working with the bad things, you know these. They can be met, like with Kaaven, he met something bigger.” And elaborated, “One can never know from where it comes; the one who instigates a correction may not be known for this by others.” Nanna commented, “It is not to tell what you can, one is not showing.” She indicated that one does not advertise what one can do. Neither by telling nor by showing does one reveal the activity to others. The exception - the *noaidi* from Lyngen wrote a letter stating that he had sent the correction – is not in contradiction to the basic injunction not to be demonstrative of having powers. According to Nanna if one should be open, then one must be very sure of being correct, and we are led to assume that the Lyngen *noaidi* was sure he was correct in this case. Basically to make a claim is

a challenge, an opening for another to correct one. Kaaven was corrected and Nanna said that he was baptized by the other *noaidi*. When telling the story of Kaaven and the Whale, Nanna and Sigvald used the terms ‘converted’ (“Kaaven converted”, i.e., “the bad returned brought correction to the better to Kaaven”), and ‘baptized’ (“the Lyngen man ‘baptized’ Kaaven”). Sigvald said, “Kaaven saw he had no choice for who he was going to be, if he would continue to live.” This was Kaaven’s powerful, ‘conversion’ experience, which prompted him to apologize to the offended man and to tell Nanna’s parents of the experience. Sigvald thought that the story of the whale in the *Historia Norwegiae* was a ‘failed correction’. Sigvald made the following conclusions after hearing the account from the *Historia Norwegiae*:

The whale was originally sent as a correction, but a correction that failed. The *noaidi* with the whale as helper appears not to have checked whether the illness of the woman was possibly ‘just’. Therefore he entered into the problem without knowing the strength of the other *noaidi*.

For Sigvald it would have been important to know if the woman who became suddenly unwell was ‘corrected’ by the *noaidi* who put the poles at the bottom of the sea. Entering into the problem before checking had been unwise, considering the outcome of the intervention. The *noaidi* who did that was overcome by the other *noaidi*. These ideas explain why Mikkel was cautious and would not involve himself in the Billeford Boat problem as related in Chapter Three. Instead he said he would first visit the boat to see for himself what he could, or rather, would do. Sigvald clarified Mikkel’s approach, stating it was because if what was ‘attached’ to the boat should prove to be ‘just’, it would be unwise for Mikkel to interfere. In the case of it being ‘just’, the problem could transfer itself to Mikkel.

The healer with the greater power can ‘define’ the lesser, which is a process that my Sami informants called ‘correction’. When one is less connected, someone more connected can define (correct and connect) one. Nanna knew of an incident where one healer had attempted to correct another but was, contrary to expectations, corrected herself. The attempt backfired. The other healer defined the healer by saying, “If you are going to speak like a child, you will be only a child”. According to Nanna this corrected healer was afterwards no longer able to heal and was childish in her behavior. Nanna explicitly warned Sigvald not to make challenges as it was dangerous and without real advantage. Her advice to Sigvald was rather to ‘lift’ or ‘release’ the problem, and to maintain a no blame attitude; basically, to not mix in something that is dubious.

Competition plays an important part in the present as well as in the past. The ‘returning-*noaidi*’ is exposed to danger and must assess if his action indeed ‘corrects’

an injustice. The correctness of his own action is not decided by his intentions but by the results.

Life enhancing connections need to be made by the healer. Sigvald told that when healing he asks and will talk to that part which is causing the problem. He will try to know it and connect it where it should be connected. He said, "The troublesome part stays where it is because it does not know any other connection. It stays with what it is familiar." In 'connecting' the healer employs part and whole relationships (see Jos Platenkamp (1996) on part-whole relationships). Restoring the connection to God brings peace. Incompletely connected parts can haunt and cause illness. They need to be connected. A healer, with a special connection to God, knows how to bundle and to release. There is a similar logic of connections within Laestadianism in which sin is retained/bundled or remitted/released by those who have the special connection to God. The leading principle for Sami healers, their 'inside' knowledge, is that a 'correct connection' is required. Relationships between people, animals and nature are seen as important determining factors for the on-going experience of life. It is within this worldview that the activities of healing are understood.

### *Baptism and naming*

The exceptional beings are usually not named. A lack of social identity is shown by a story of the *gufihhtarat*'s origin; they are Eve's hidden children that she had not washed before God came. *Eahpáražžat* - dead 'not-baptized' children - are similar to Eve's 'not washed' children, in that the relationship to God is incomplete (the *eahpáražžat* can not come to God upon death; the *gufihhtarat* were not brought to God) and their identity not established within the social group. They lack a name to connect them. The right name is a part of the social relationships that builds a complete person in a social environment. The name is established by baptism and the connection is formed to ancestors and to God. The connection to ancestors and to God is a necessity to complete a person, so he/she is recognizable, consistently present and an active part of the community. If these connections are not made, the child that has passed away will be incomplete and cause trouble.

Rydving has shown that among the Lule Sami, even after having been Christianized, Sami rituals for naming continued for a long time. Unknown to the clergy, the Christian Scandinavian name was washed off after people had come home from the Christian baptism. To find the correct name, the mother prayed to the birth goddess. Should a departed family member appear to her in a dream, this was considered to indicate that that relative's name was the correct name. Other options to determine the right name included divination techniques by the father or the *noaidi* (Rydving 1993, 115-6).

The name gives 'connection'; a personal name provides the connection to forebearers and to God; names also connect the land, because the names given to

locations are descriptive of the location. A wrong name of a mountain, stream, marsh, mountain pass, etc. would be misleading, because it does not accurately enough describe the location. A name is considered accurate by its continued successful use. The community's use of naming is integrated into the everyday life. Sigvald explained that he would be called Nanna's Sigvald. Such a designation could change when the child or adult would be later better defined by another connection. Mikkel's teacher had his own *joik*. Singing this *joik* called up his teacher. The *joik* identifies, as does a name, forming a connection that can be used. Employing the name or what identifies - in this case the signature *joik* - brings Mikkel into contact with his dead teacher. Nanna in her instructions to Sigvald said, "You ask spirits you know." She was indicating that without knowing to what the spirit is connected you do not know how it will work. Giving an accurate diagnosis can therefore, in and of itself, be the cure (renaming, redefining, and reconnecting).

#### *Practices*

Schefferus wrote, "they know to bewitch People, so that they take away the use of their limbs and reason" (Scheffer 1704, 120). Laestadius noted that the *noaidi* could cause a thief to be held at the scene of the crime. This was also attested to by Lars Jacobsen Hætta (1834-1897) in the Sami concept of the *juovssaheaddji-noaidi*: the 'returning' *noaidi* deflected or returned the evil to the one who sent it and caused a thief to return what was stolen, the thief being unable to control his movements.

A distinctive feature of the healer still is the capacity to render immobile. It is expected that the temporary immobilization be facilitated for a 'just' or correct cause. For example, in response to an insult (Kaaven stopped a ship's engines after the captain refused a meal), an unjust accusation (Gamvik was accused of charging too much money), or rude behavior (Nanna was belittled and Nillas Ailu asked a traveler to wait for him and was refused). Kaaven was renowned for rendering a thief immobile and thereby forcing his return. During his lifetime many stories circulated in which he had forced a thief to return. He attended markets and would be consulted in cases of theft. Nanna was confronted rudely by a patient's husband, who later became immobile to be released by the water Nanna said he should drink. The community judges the relative strength of the healer by this capacity. Sigvald made an assessment of strength. He commented on the time Gamvik immobilized a patient that had made an unjust accusation, saying, "Gamvik was Kaaven's size".

In *Fragmenter i Lappska Mythologien* Laestadius considered the many accounts that speak of the Sami prophetic practices. A healer still is expected to have more than normal vision. A patient said to Sigvald, "You, who can see through walls." A healer is able to locate a lost object. A healer can 'see' what is causing a problem. People expect the healer to have the capacity to predict. This quality was ascribed



to Kaaven, Gamvik, Nanna and Hjalmar. After his daughter had instigated a *bijat*, Kaaven said, that in the future his daughter would only have what she could eat each day, a prediction that was understood to have come true. A tradition about Gamvik relates that some draught reindeer were missing and Gamvik was consulted. He told people to wait and the reindeer indeed returned to the flock. Gamvik was thought to have been instrumental in their return. Predicting and influencing are not seen as dissimilar. Predicting and diagnosing are close, if not the same. Once Nanna stated that there was a problem with a patient's heart however the patient kept saying that there was no problem, so Nanna exclaimed, "It will be a wonder if there is no heart attack within three weeks" (see Chapter Five). In this case she was not influencing the problem but diagnosing the problem and adding extra weight by a prediction. Hjalmar related in an interview that he 'saw' the course that the blood poisoning would take. To see and predict the course was presented as having in some way influenced the cure. An accurate prediction is the correct diagnosis as well as the correct definition.

My informants discussed various healers active within the last hundred years: Kaaven, Gamvik, Johan Mahtte, Nillas Ailu, Gette Hans, Benne Ante, Untsgård, Mikkell Gaup, Nanna Persen, Hjalmar Persen and Sigvald Persen. In the practice of these healers that spans a hundred years similarities can be noted. The healers are often dealing with pain and eczema. They have the capacity to render immobile and predict. Often prior to consulting the healer, the patient consulted a medical professional without appreciable results. The diagnosis of the pain by the medical profession had been variously: rheumatism, fibromyalgia or a stranded muscle. Skin ailments were a common complaint that led a patient to consult a healer. Patients reported good results from their treatment, which included the application of a salve, cleaning with newspaper, bird cherry bark, and also cupping. Only Nanna and Sigvald employed the method of cupping, and pain and eczema are the most common complaints for which Nanna and Sigvald applied this method.

Sigvald and Hjalmar received requests for help concerning a lost person and a dysfunctional machine. A woman telephoned Hjalmar because she was concerned about her husband who could not be located during a storm. Hjalmar told her that her husband would soon return, which indeed happened. Sigvald was telephoned when a tractor would not start, and was later informed that it had helped because the tractor then started. Unusual unrest can also instigate a request for help. A reindeer herder telephoned Sigvald because his herd was constantly moving. Sigvald suggested that they 'bundle' their thoughts, and the next day the herd was quiet. The patient can be concerned and ask if the problems he/she is experiencing are possibly due to a *bijat*. The healer 'knows' if this is the case or not. Should there be a *bijat*, the healer may lift (release) it. The times that Sigvald has been asked, he saw that it was



not a *bijat* and the patient felt reassured by this information. Nanna and Sigvald speak in terms of 'bundling' and 'releasing'. The healer will apply either 'bundle' or 'release' according to the dictates of the situation, i.e., their reading of the situation. Another term they often used is 'returning', which we have already seen in the Sami term *juovssaheaddji* (the one who sends back). Returning has a multitude of uses: the ghost can be returned, the thief is forced to return, the 'bad' can be returned to the instigator. In speaking in terms of 'bundling', 'releasing' and 'returning', Sami healers reveal their worldview.

### *Different traditions/families*

During a seminar on Sami medicine the anthropologist Inger Altern discussed the appellation "Sami Folk Medicine."<sup>62</sup> Altern argued that the appellation "Sami Folk Medicine" is a construct. She thought there are more 'multifaceted elements' than the appellation can adequately reflect. She referred to differences within families, villages, between generations and between men and women. Moreover, new techniques have been developed and old ones discarded. She considered the Sami worldview as the basis for the so-called Sami Folk Medicine. It has a material as well as a spiritual side, which are not separated. The worldview is connected to a life-style where people, animals and nature exist in mutual dependency (Altern 2000, 3).

To what extent may one speak of a shared Sami worldview? To what extent is it represented in an individual healer? The individual healers, Ingmar, Nanna, Mikkel, Sigvald and Hjalmar, are to a certain extent representative of their local area as well as their family tradition. The elements found in their particular practices cannot be generalized. The larger geographical area represented by these healers contains cultural divisions between inland reindeer herders (Mikkel) and Coastal Sami (Ingmar, Nanna, Sigvald and Hjalmar), as well as cultural differences between the Alta Fjord (Mikkel and Ingmar) and the Porsanger Fjord (Nanna, Sigvald and Hjalmar). Mikkel, the only reindeer herder, presents the greatest contrast to the healers from the coast. Mikkel is outspoken in his use of the epithet shaman and *noaidi*; the others are silent or disavow the term. Mikkel has a place of introspection and ritual, a sacred stone. Sacred stones were used in the pre-Christian religion and the other healers do not associate themselves with pre-Christian practices. Mikkel *joiks* his (dead) teacher to receive his help in difficult cases, while at his stone. The others do not *joik* for their teacher's help. Some Sami associate *joiking* as well as drumming with the pre-Christian religion. The other healers view their healing practices as acceptable within the context of Christianity.

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62 The seminar was held at the University of Tromsø on 26-27 November 1998. The report was published in 2000, *Samisk folkmedisin i dagens Norge* (Sami Folk Medicine Today in Norway). The seminar addressed, (1) the use of tradition based medicine, and (2) how shall we understand the role of folk medicine today?

Mikkel, Nanna and Sigvald had an extensive period of instruction prior to their teacher's death. Hjalmar had very limited contact with the one from whom he inherited. In Hjalmar's case there appears to be no period of instruction other than what took place at their one meeting. Of the other healers mentioned, Benne Ante and Untsgård are grandchildren of Kaaven and it is said that a son of Mikkel has taken over from Mikkel. Sigvald took over from his mother. Nanna wanted to keep 'it' in the family having first considered her youngest daughter and her granddaughter as possible candidates.

Does inheritance proceed via a family line? Sigvald does not think so. He finds his case to be the exception to the rule that the one chosen to inherit is not a family member. Nanna's father asked Gamvik why he did not teach his own children. He answered that it would be to no purpose, they were not strong enough. Nanna also thought that stability and strength were required for the one she would choose to be the recipient of her gift.

Gamvik, Nanna and Sigvald form a direct line of inheritance. Sigvald explained that the gift is a connection like a telephone line, and that only one person receives the line. Therefore, when a person passes on the line, he or she "can not do it any more". Sigvald, finding that healing gave Nanna a reason to live, did not want Nanna to pass the line to him too soon. Nanna passed away in apparent good health at the fine age of 93 years. Three days before she died, she said to Sigvald, "It should be enough now." Sigvald dreamed (also three days before she died) that Nanna blew over his eyes, and then he could see clearly. Sigvald was told by Nanna 'what' he would experience when he received the gift. The experience would be the receiving of thoughts that he would immediately recognize were not his own. He said this happened and that it was shocking in its clarity. He considered this experience to be the form of his inheritance, and that another inheritance could have another experience that would indicate that the line had passed over to the next receiver.

Nanna was taught cupping by her parents. During her youth it was a common procedure applied by many of the villagers for a variety of problems. By the time she was an adult, no one else was cupping in her environment. Nanna was regularly consulted and continued to cup, but never mentioned her inheritance from Gamvik to her family, researchers or patients in any detail. When Sigvald agreed to take over, then she told Sigvald that her inheritance came from Gamvik in more detail. Sigvald was reticent to take over Nanna's practice. He was aware that cupping was viewed by some as primitive. However, over the last few years he has found that people are grateful that he has taken over and he is consulted on a regular basis. Hjalmar, Sigvald's brother, received his inheritance from elsewhere. Hjalmar made a study of plants with a medical doctor in Denmark and sometimes prescribes applications of

salves made from plants for skin ailments. He fulfils the expectations for a healer by making predictions and diagnosis. He does not diagnose in the way Nanna did. She followed the pulse up the patients arm, and then by the time she was above the elbow, she had 'entered' the patient's body and then knew the location of the problem by experiencing pain in her own body. She alternately received a vision that guided her in her diagnosis. Hjalmar works over the telephone and begins by asking the patient's birth date. Perhaps he has visions that guide him. Nanna and Sigvald may initially be telephoned but then they suggest that the patients visit them. They consider that the physical presence of the patient is important for treatment even when cupping is not applied. In forming a diagnosis Sigvald does not follow the pulse up the arm but in his own way 'enters' the body of the patient via his own bodily experiences, but similar to Nanna, he will focus and hold a picture/vision and follow the change of the image. During the cupping procedure, like Nanna he observes the extracted blood and receives valuable information from its behavior.

The practices do differ but they have their origin in a shared worldview. Present in the shared worldview are the concept of inheritance, the role of visions, and the methods for releasing the problems that involve (re)-establishing life furthering relationships.

#### *Dynamics of articulation*

In present day Finnmark, consulting a healer may be perceived within the context of Christianity, within the context of Sami traditions, or as a combination of both. The younger generation may view their consultation of a healer as an application of 'alternative medicine' that may be based on knowledge from a foreign culture. For some, consulting a healer is a familiar practice, and for others, they may consult a healer for the first time having only just heard of this option. Even though it would appear from the variety of approaches that the healer is not securely positioned in his community, people continue to have expectations and their patterns of expectation are similar and comparable to earlier periods.

How are these expectations articulated? Stories with repeated patterns continue to be told about healers, such as patterns of rendering immobile and prediction. The healer is expected to know what is hidden for a normal person and to be able to influence the course of events. Sigvald told me that he had spoken with a young man on the telephone and without intending to do so he had accurately described how each person was sitting or standing in the room with the young man. He later heard from this young man how those in the room were impressed by Sigvald's capacity to see them. A young woman said to Sigvald, "You, who can see through walls." During a treatment a patient gave Sigvald credit for extra capacities which, when Sigvald did not acknowledge them, she said, "I don't change my opinion about it."

The stories contain many suppositions that can be understood if one is familiar with the traditions. Despite a few years in the field I had difficulties following the thread of the Billefjord Boat Story in Chapter Six. I needed to hear from Sigvald innumerable details to understand what for the Sami listener was apparently quite evident. The sequence of events in a story is understood to demonstrate certain truths. They speak of success or failure and what was done to bring about these events and what recourse was employed. I have already shown how the correct attitude of respect is demonstrated in stories of encounters with underground beings. The device of telling the story of Kaaven and the whale was used repeatedly by Nanna and Sigvald to explain important principles to me: there is no practice with impunity; Kaaven met correction.

Hjalmar explained an important restriction for the healer, 'one does not claim to have extra capacities' by telling a story. A man claimed that he could stop bleeding. To demonstrate this ability he cut a lamb and then proceeded to stop the bleeding. However, he failed to stop the bleeding, and the lamb died. Hjalmar explained that to undertake a demonstration of his ability had caused this man to lose the ability. Story telling is without danger, but to claim certain knowledge is dangerous.

An attempt to define another could expose one to correction. Therefore, there are subtle ways to ask questions and to receive desired information. After Nanna's passing, word was going around that Sigvald had inherited from Nanna, but I could not catch what was being said. I finally asked Sigvald to give me an example of what they would be discussing. He said they might ask each other, "Who got the cups?" Another example concerning the speculation was whether Hjalmar had received it, and one heard simply, "No, Hjalmar from elsewhere." A patient of Nanna came to Sigvald shortly after Nanna passed away and asked, "Have you ever cupped a woman?" Sigvald answered, "Yes." Then she asked, "And the other things that Nanna did, are you going to do those too?" Sigvald replied, "I have promised to do so." Nanna said, "It can be given." Nanna was once directly asked on the telephone, "Are you a clear woman?" She would not answer in the affirmative but said, "You can come here and see how clear I am."

Nanna instructed Sigvald to listen carefully to his patients and to keep the patient in mind. Speaking should reinforce this attention and reflect what the patient is expressing. Nanna taught that some 'thoughts' work against a patient and, after careful listening, Sigvald should speak to the patient about his/her problem and make alternative suggestions. Nanna emphasized trust in the connection to God, "The biggest problem is when you don't believe enough, then we are stopping ourselves."

Nanna's emphasis on trust evokes the Laestadian belief in God's Grace; conviction is required to receive forgiveness. Additionally, Sigvald was instructed by Nanna to control his anger, otherwise there is a loss of energy. Participating in anger is

draining. Sigvald understands that people come to him ready to work together with him and that this stimulates their recovery. It is a positive movement that returns and is helpful. He said, “You get a response and that keeps the energy; if a negative way is started, you get it back and this is taking instead of giving.” Participating in bad thoughts has consequences; bad thoughts when they are started will come back to the one who started them and will make this person weaker. On the other hand, when you start the good thoughts, you become stronger. A loss of strength results from indulging in revenge. Retaliation makes the healer vulnerable. Additionally, losing strength will result from telling what you see. Nanna instructed Sigvald to keep what he sees to himself and not even discuss it with his close family. Sigvald was encouraged to bundle his thoughts rather than to speak them out and disperse them. Strength is gained by not sharing, by keeping silent. Sharing is a Sami value, but in the case of the healer strength is gained by doing just that which is not a normal value. The healer cannot communicate about his powers and in this respect he is a non-social being.

Gamvik instructed Nanna to help all those who ask, and not to preference the rich over the poor. Mikkel said, “People come because they have problems that the doctors can not help them with. I cannot say “No” because what I have is a gift from the Almighty Spirit. Therefore I can not refuse to help anyone who comes and asks for help.”

When speaking about healing, Nanna was reluctant to be explicit, whereas Sigvald is synthesizing and developing models of interpretation. Mikkel has been quite articulate and perhaps felt that there is now a social necessity to speak in the media and academia. Sigvald noted the avenue of the media as one that legitimizes and normalizes the practice. He said that perhaps academic publications would provide valuable information for future generations of Sami, because, depending on the times, other means of communication can work favorably. Those changes he has already noted include that Sami healing has moved out from under the heavy overlay of suspicion and fear for the *noaidi*, and additionally out of the assumed non-relevance that went hand in hand with Norwegianization. Sigvald thinks that media coverage (newspaper, radio and television) reflects these changes, even though he notes many inaccuracies in the presentation.

## Conclusion

My data show that there is a significant relationship between the healing notions in the past and present day, which can be seen in ideas, values and connections. From my data I cannot say how extensively held these notions are or how widespread the practices. I do

not expect all Sami to agree with my presentation of Sami worldviews or daily concerns. The so-called 'Modern West' contains a multitude of discourses, as does the modern Sami culture. Today Sami society cannot be defined as being traditional in contrast to modern. Sami culture does define itself to a certain extent as being 'not Norwegian' and one finds a specific lifestyle in local communities. Local life is further defined by reindeer herding with its seasonal migration or by living permanently along the coast. Social tensions are most often connected to divisions between villages, between reindeer herders and coastal Sami, and in addition between Norwegian and Sami. So far my research on Sami healers occupies a unique place in ethnography of the present day Sami. The relative paucity of research on Sami healing may be due to the ethnographers' greater interest today in the relevant minority issues. Additionally, Sami intellectuals do not seem particularly interested in spiritual matters, but rather give their attention to issues of political importance. The recent Finnmark Act and the formation of the Sami Parliament in 1989, attest to the exertion in this field. There are also Sami who do not participate in pro-Sami movements and reject advancing specifically Sami interests.

Sami healing is embedded in values and spiritual concepts of Sami culture. However, Sami seldom use this spiritual dimension as a marker of Sami identity. Sigvald is an exception in this respect and thinks that a Sami identity is not only built on the Sami language or on traditional Sami occupations, but on shared Sami values and spiritual concepts.

Today Sigvald is consulted as a healer on a regular basis, as was Nanna before him. Each healer, from Kaaven to Sigvald, brings in his or her unique qualities and transforms the practice to a certain extent. There never were identical healers. Many apparent similarities are due to the process of story telling, in which basic characteristics and expectations are repeated. Healing and related activities constitute a dynamic tradition in which the expectations of the local population play a determining role. Structural features of the tradition shed light on questions of continuity. The marginal position of the healer in the society may be structural and by no means an indication that healers are about to disappear from the arena. The need to pass on the knowledge is a structural feature observed in all of the cases and this ensures continuity. It would be a mistake to identify Sami culture with the past and to assume that in the future it will be just like Norwegian culture. Sami culture (as does any culture) is reshaping itself all the time and the healing traditions testify to its dynamics and creativity.

## GLOSSARY

### List of Sami terms

#### *Sami*

bahá  
bassi; passé  
bijat  
boranoaidi  
buorideaddji  
buorre  
čatnat  
čuorvvot  
diehtti  
eahpáraš  
einnosteadjji  
fárrosaš  
fárru  
gázzi  
ganeš  
ganihat (Lule dialect: katnihat or  
kitnihat; kani = witch)  
gásttašit  
geaidit  
geaidi  
goahti  
goanstaolmmái  
gopmi  
gufihtar  
guoržžu  
guvllár  
háldi  
lbmil  
juoigat  
juovssaheaddji  
juovssahit  
lávvu

#### *English*

bad  
sacred  
spell, incantation, curse  
eating/destroying noaidi  
improver/healer  
good  
to bind  
callers  
one who knows  
dead child being  
diviner  
travel companion  
traveling group  
household, assembly of people  
gnome  
witch's products  
  
to baptize  
to make magically invisible  
illusionist  
tent, turf hut  
one who does magic  
ghost  
subterranean being  
bad luck  
healer, quack salver  
holy being  
God  
to joik (Sami singing style)  
one who returns  
to return (something)  
tent

lihkadus (Sami)	
liikutuksia (Finnish)	emotional movement
loddi	bird
lohkat	read
máddu	original, root
máhccat	to come back
máhcahuvvon (passive form of verb, máhcahit: bring back)	has been returned
manŋásaš	delayed arrival companion
noaidegáccit	noaidi's helping spirits
noaidi	one who does noaidut, wizard, shaman, magician, sorcerer
noaidut	to deal, work with the supernatural
ovdasáš	early arrival companion
ráimmahallat	to be frightened (out of one's wits)
rávga	water troll
risttašcapmi	Christian baptism
sáddet ruovttoluotta	to send back
sáivu	sacred place
siellu	soul
siida	group of people that live and work together in an area
váikkuheaddji	one who influences
verdde	friend you take into your home, as will happen between a reindeer herder and a sedentary Sami.
vuoigŋa	spirit

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With the assistance of Sigvald Persen.



## List of Norwegian terms

### *Norwegian*

gand  
gamme  
lesere  
roparna (Swedish)  
spåmann  
trollkarl  
trolldom  
trollkyndig

### *English*

(Sami) magic, magician's tool, witch's stick  
dwelling (turf hut)  
readers  
the callers  
diviner  
magician  
magic  
versed in magic

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## SAMENVATTING

Mijn onderzoek is een *case study* over Sami-genezers in Porsanger, Finnmark, Noorwegen. Ik onderzoek de praktijken en visies van genezers bij de Kust-Sami in de context van een proces van religieuze en culturele verandering.

Het Kopenhaags Zending College, ingesteld door Koning Frederik IV, besloot in 1716 tot de kerstening van de Sami. Vóór de kerstening vertoonde de Sami-religie kenmerken van sjamanisme en een berencultus. Er werd gebruik gemaakt van offerplaatsen. De trommel werd om raad gevraagd om te beslissen wat de beste offerandes waren. De trommel werd ook gebruikt voor andere vormen van divinatie. Zo werd de trommel ook geraadpleegd door de familieoudste, of de sjamaan bij bijzondere gelegenheden, zoals bij ziekte.

Al in het begin van de 18<sup>de</sup> eeuw vond immigratie plaats naar noordelijk Noorwegen van voornamelijk Noren en Finnen (Kven). Deze immigratie zette zich in versterkte mate door in de 19<sup>de</sup> eeuw. Vanaf het midden van de 19<sup>de</sup> eeuw tot het midden van de 20<sup>ste</sup> eeuw was de politiek van de Noorse regering gericht op assimilatie van de Kust-Sami. Vanaf het midden van de 20<sup>ste</sup> eeuw vormen de Sami een minderheid in Finnmark (het gebied met de grootste concentratie van Sami). Heden ten dage leven over het gehele gebied in Noorwegen, Zweden, Finland en Rusland ongeveer 70.000 Sami. Alle facetten van het moderne bestaan hebben hun intrede onder de Sami gedaan en van hun vóór de Tweede Wereldoorlog bekende levenswijzen als vissen, jagen, keuterboeren en handenarbeid is weinig meer over.

Omstreeks het begin van de 20<sup>ste</sup> eeuw wendden vele Sami van het Porsangergebied zich tot het Laestadianisme, een opwekkingsbeweging binnen de Lutherse leer, genoemd naar de stichter Lars Levi Laestadius (1800-1861). Het Laestadianisme heeft een functie vervuld in het behouden van de Sami-cultuur en heeft bijgedragen tot de instandhouding van de sociale structuur van de Sami. Het Laestadianisme was van belang voor mijn twee voornaamste bronnen, de genezers Nanna en haar zoon Sigvald. Behalve door het Laestadianisme wordt hun levensbeschouwing en die van hun patiënten ook gekenmerkt door ervaringen met geesten, oneraardse wezens, het noodlot, en het uitdrijven of opleggen van betoveringen. Deze ervaringen, direct of in samenhang, zijn structurele elementen in concepten van genezing. De relatie tussen de Sami-sjamaan van oudsher, de *noaidi*, en de moderne genezer is omstreden. De godsdiensthistorici Bäckmann, Hultkranz en Rydving veronderstellen dat het sjamanisme moest wijken voor de kerstening van de Sami. Voor Nergård, een sociale wetenschapper, zijn sjamanen nog steeds aanwezig bij de Sami. Mijn Sami bronnen

verschillen van mening over de *noaidi*. Sommigen zijn van oordeel dat de *noaidi* nu niet meer voorkomt of dat hij/zij slechts schade aanricht. Anderen beschrijven de *noaidi* als een arts die geneest. Heden ten dage wordt de term *noaidi* door mijn informanten niet voor een genezer gebruikt. Maar de verwachtingen van de Sami van de capaciteiten van een *noaidi* en die van een genezer vertonen grote overeenkomsten. Opmerkelijk hierbij zijn de denkbeelden over overdracht, voorspelling, het 'bevriezen', de betovering, en de naijver. Johannes Schefferus (1621-1679) beschrijft in zijn monografie over de Sami, *Lapponia* (1673), soortgelijke verschijnselen. Andere, eerder vermelde karakteristieken, zoals het trommelen, het in een levenloze toestand raken, het participeren van toeschouwers in een *séance*, en het brengen van offers, komen niet meer voor.

Hultkrantz definieert de rol van de sjamaan in termen van hulpgeest, extase, en rituele genezer. Hij sluit hekserij uit als antisociaal en onverenigbaar met sjamanisme (Hultkrantz 1978, 56). De *noaidi* was degene (en is volgens sommige Sami nog steeds degene), die *noaidut* (werkwoord) pleegt, een bovennatuurlijke spirituele activiteit. Het woord *noaidi* is een overkoepelende term en de Sami gebruiken andere termen voor meer specifieke activiteiten. Een equivalent voor het woord sjamaan zoals gedefinieerd door Hultkrantz als exclusief goedgezend, ontbreekt onder de Sami. Rond 1850 gebruikten de Sami nog een specifieke term, de *juovsaheaddji-noaidi*, degene die terugstuurt. Deze uitdrukking is bij de Sami van nu wel bekend, maar wordt nog zelden gebezigd. De *juovsaheaddji-noaidi* stuurt terug of heft het 'slechte' op waarmee een andere *noaidi* heeft gewerkt. Wat juist is, wordt beoordeeld door de geest en deze voert een onjuiste opdracht niet uit. 'Terugsturen' en 'terugkomen' zijn centrale begrippen in de huidige discussie van de Sami en deze begrippen zijn waarschijnlijk een afspiegeling van oude tradities. Hedendaagse verwachtingen van de Sami over de genezer zijn, dat hij/zij voorspellingen kan doen, diagnoses kan stellen, invloed heeft op ziektes, en iemand onbewegelijk kan maken. Indien de genezer aan de verkeerde kant staat, verliest hij zijn kracht.

Een aantal begrippen binnen de discussie over genezing verwijzen naar Laestadiaanse concepten. Het helen in de levensbeschouwing van de Sami is een 'geschenk' dat een speciale band met God veronderstelt en kan worden doorgegeven. Genezers worden geleid door dit 'geschenk' in hun diagnose en in wat zij communiceren aan de patiënt. Vergelijkbare patronen in de genezing vindt men terug in het Laestadianisme, met name in de 'sleutels van het hemelrijk', ideeën van verbondenheid en de rol van de gemeenschap. De 'sleutels van het hemelrijk' zijn in de schoot van de congregatie van de herborenen als een geschenk dat kan worden doorgegeven. De 'sleutels van het hemelrijk' binden en ontbinden: de bindende sleutel bindt een zondaar in gewetensnood; de ontbindende sleutel staat voor de directe, persoonlijk toegezegde absolutie. De Heilige Geest bepaalt zelf wanneer de boetestrijd is voltooid, genadetekens maken

dat duidelijk voor de zondaar. De ervaring van vergiffenis kan veel vreugde verschaffen, soms leidend tot *liikutuksia*, een gemoedstoestand die in de literatuur vaak wordt beschreven als extase, maar voor een Laestadian een teken is van genade. Berouw en vergeving worden ervaren als een uiting van Gods barmhartigheid. In een speciale begroetingsceremonie wensen Laestadianen elkaar 'Gods vrede' toe. Sigvald gebruikte de term "opgeklaard (cleared up)" voor het moment tijdens een Laestadiaanse bijeenkomst waarop vergeving wordt gegeven of verkregen. Hij gebruikt die term ook om aan te geven dat een genezer een bepaalde spooklocatie tot rust heeft gebracht. Als er geen rust is, betekent dit dat er iets is (een ondergronds wezen of spook) dat moet worden gerespecteerd of verwijderd. Voorafgaand aan 'clearing up' of het 'oplossen' van een probleem vraagt Sigvald de patiënt zijn gedachten te 'bundelen'. Centrale begrippen voor Sigvald en Nanna zijn bundelen, oplossen, en terugsturen, (zoals ook in de Sami-uitdrukking *juovssaheadji-noaidi*, hij die terugstuurt). Terugsturen wordt op veel manieren gebruikt: het spook of het 'slechte' wordt teruggestuurd, of een dief wordt geïmmobiliseerd en daardoor geforceerd om terug te komen. In het gebruik van de begrippen 'bundelen', 'oplossen', 'terug sturen', articuleren de genezers hun levensbeschouwing. Nog een ander belangrijk begrip is 'correctie'. 'Correctie' kan betekenen: het terugsturen van het 'slechte', en ook dat de definitie van de patiënt/persoon/genezer gecorrigeerd wordt (wordt dit niet geaccepteerd door een *noaidi*, dan kan dat tot de dood leiden). Sigvald en Nanna gebruiken soms de christelijke term 'doop' voor de methode van de 'correctie'. De naam van de persoon/patiënt maakt een 'verbinding' met de voorvaders en met God. Een juiste diagnose kan daardoor de genezing zelf zijn (bijv. anders benoemen, anders definiëren, een ander verband geven).

Over verscheidene genezers die gedurende de laatste honderd jaar actief waren ben ik door mijn bronnen geïnformeerd. In het bijzonder Johan Kaaven (1837-1918) en Gamvik (1873-1942). Over enkele recente genezers werd eveneens gesproken. Er blijken veel overeenkomsten te zijn tussen genezers vroeger en nu. Genezers richten zich vooral op pijnbestrijding en eczeem. Ook hebben ze het vermogen vooruit te zien en immobiliteit te veroorzaken.

Nanna ontving haar gave/'geschenk' van Gamvik, die haar op jonge leeftijd uitkoos: hij zag in haar kwaliteiten die hij belangrijk achtte om genezer te kunnen zijn. Gedurende Nanna's jeugd was 'cupping', een speciale methode van bloedlaten, een gebruikelijke manier om verlichting te brengen voor kwalen bij de kleine gemeenschappen langs de kust van de fjord. Zij leerde deze methode van haar ouders. Zij combineerde haar gave met 'cupping' en ze wilde deze combinatie ook doorgeven. Pas toen zij meer dan negentig jaar oud was, vond ze haar opvolger in haar zoon Sigvald, haar tweede zoon. Nanna leerde hem de 'cupping' methode. De gave dat zij had gekregen van Gamvik en doorgaf aan haar zoon, kan worden beschreven als het

krijgen van gedachten, visioenen en lichamelijke gewaarwordingen, die optreden bij de behandeling van een patiënt om uiteindelijk een goede diagnose te kunnen stellen. Nanna zei tot Sigvald: “Er komen gedachten, maar wees niet bang, het zijn niet de jouwe.” Sigvald interpreteerde deze uitspraak als een voorspelling, in die zin dat wanneer hij soortgelijke ervaringen zou ondergaan, de gave op hem zou zijn overgegaan. Hij zei dat dit heeft plaatsgevonden in een glasheldere ervaring.

Sami-genezing is verankerd in waarden en spirituele begrippen die inherent zijn aan de cultuur van de Sami. Mijn gegevens laten zien dat er een veelbetekenende relatie bestaat tussen denkbeelden over genezing van oudsher en de praktijk van vandaag. Mijn gegevens geven geen uitsluitsel over de mate waarin denkbeelden over genezing verbreid zijn, noch in hoeverre ze in de praktijk toepassing vinden. Sigvald wordt geregeld geraadpleegd als genezer net zoals Nanna vóór hem. Elke genezer heeft zijn/haar eigen inbreng, die voor een deel zijn/haar praktijk verandert. Iedere genezer is verschillend. Schijnbare overeenkomsten zijn het gevolg van de verhalen die de ronde doen, waarin basisgegevens en verwachtingen steeds opnieuw worden bevestigd. Genezing en aanverwante activiteiten vormen een dynamische traditie waarin de verwachtingen van de locale bevolking een grote rol spelen. Structurele karakteristieken van de genezingstraditie geven inzicht in vragen over vooruitgang. De marginale plek die de genezer inneemt in zijn gemeenschap kan structureel zijn en is geen indicatie dat genezers op het punt staan te verdwijnen. De behoefte kennis door te geven is structureel aanwezig in het hele complex van genezing en garandeert bestendigheid. Het zou onjuist zijn de Sami-cultuur te vereenzelvigen met het verleden en aan te nemen dat zij in de toekomst volledig zal wijken voor de Noorse cultuur. De Sami-cultuur (als elke cultuur) reproduceert zich continu en de tradities van het genezen getuigen van haar dynamiek en creativiteit.



## APPENDIX: A DAY OF CUPPING

The day, Saturday, 24 February 2007: A few days prior, Nils Anders Guttorm, telephoned Sigvald and told that he had been suffering from a headache, pain in his neck and shoulders. Sigvald had regularly treated Nils Anders for these complaints, which Sigvald considered stemmed from Nils Anders work as an electrician. Nils Anders arrived at Sigvald's home in the morning and they immediately proceeded to the cupping session that follows.

### The cupping session



*Diagnosis:  
Sigvald feeling "where there is a blockage."*



*Sigvald is "trying to find the pain", and then decides where to place the cups and how many cups to use.*



*The cup is first moistened to facilitate adhesion and is placed by creating suction. The skin becomes red through the suction and marks the location.*



*The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cup are in place. Sigvald will make incisions only within the marked circle.*



*The 4<sup>th</sup> and final cup is being placed.*



*The 1<sup>st</sup> cup was removed, small incisions made, and the cup placed by creating suction. The 2<sup>nd</sup> location is being cut. Sigvald makes many small surface incisions, with a quick hammering motion.*



*The 4<sup>th</sup> location is being cut.*



*All cups are in place and drawing blood.*



*The top two cups are in place and have been drawing blood for about five minutes.*



*The 1<sup>st</sup> cup is removed.*





*Sigvald wipes away the blood and will rinse off the blood contained in the cup in a bowl of water.*



*Sigvald cuts the 1<sup>st</sup> location for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, because the flow of blood was considered to be inadequate.*



*Placing the 1<sup>st</sup> cup for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time. Sigvald uses a pump he ordered from the internet.*



*Removing the 2<sup>nd</sup> cup. This location will be cut a 2<sup>nd</sup> time to increase the blood flow (as was done for the 1<sup>st</sup> location).*



*Placing the 2<sup>nd</sup> cup for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time.*



*All 4 cups in view and releasing the 3<sup>rd</sup> cup. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> location received no extra incisions because Sigvald assessed that the flow of blood had been adequate.*



*Sigvald observes the blood.*



*Sigvald rinsing the cup in the bowl of water.*



*The blood in the bowl is observed for its behavior and consistency.*



*In view: paper towels, bowl, razor mounted on a plastic handle, pump, Sigvald and patient's back.*



*The top two cups drawing blood after approximately five minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of drawing blood.*



*Removing 2<sup>nd</sup> cup. It is rinsed in the bowl of water and replaced for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time.*



*The cups have been placed for the 4<sup>th</sup> time and are now drawing a more clear fluid by comparison to the earlier dark red blood. According to Sigvald it is the removal of this fluid that rids the patient of his pain.*



*Removing the 2<sup>nd</sup> cup. The clear fluid is visible on the skin surface.*



*Sigvald's assortment of cups.*



*All cups have been removed for the last time.*



*Sigvald places his hands to close the cuts and give completion to the session.*



*Sigvald's hands on Nils Anders' neck, giving completion.*



*Nils Anders thanks Sigvald.*



*After the cupping session; drinking coffee together in the kitchen.*



*New patient*

*In the afternoon a new patient arrives, Bjørn, together with her neighbors who had advised her to consult Sigvald. Bjørn has extensive eczema. Coffee is first served for everyone, and after some time Sigvald and Bjørn retreat to a warmed area where Sigvald cups her hands. Afterwards, Sigvald suggested that she assess the results and decide whether to continue monthly cupping.*



*The goat horn cups in Sigvald's possession. Bjørn mentioned that her grandmother from Rolfsøya had cupped with horn cups, and Sigvald showed her those he had.*

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Barbara Helen Miller was born on 8 June 1949, in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, USA. She studied at the University of Hartford (Hartford, Connecticut, USA) from 1967 to 1970 and then transferred to California Institute of the Arts (Valencia, California, USA) from 1970 to 1972, where she received the Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree. She was employed with the Radio Philharmonic Orchestra of the Netherlands in the function of second solo-cellist from 1978 to 1991. From the Norwich University, Vermont College (Montpelier, Vermont, USA) she received the Master of Arts in Psychology of Religion in 1994. Matriculated at the C.G.Jung Institute Zürich (Küsnacht, Switzerland) from 1994-1998, she received the Diploma in Analytical Psychology in 1998 and since that time has been in private practice. She holds membership in the professional organizations NAAP and IAAP