



# Greenland

Ancient Wisdom  
for Our Changing World

Wednesday, August 10, 2018  
Shambhala Center  
Burlington, Vermont

Among indigenous people

it is often the custom to introduce one's self  
by speaking of one's clan, family and ancestry.

So I will start by doing just that ...

We each have two kinds of ancestors:  
biological and spiritual, earth ancestors and sky ancestors

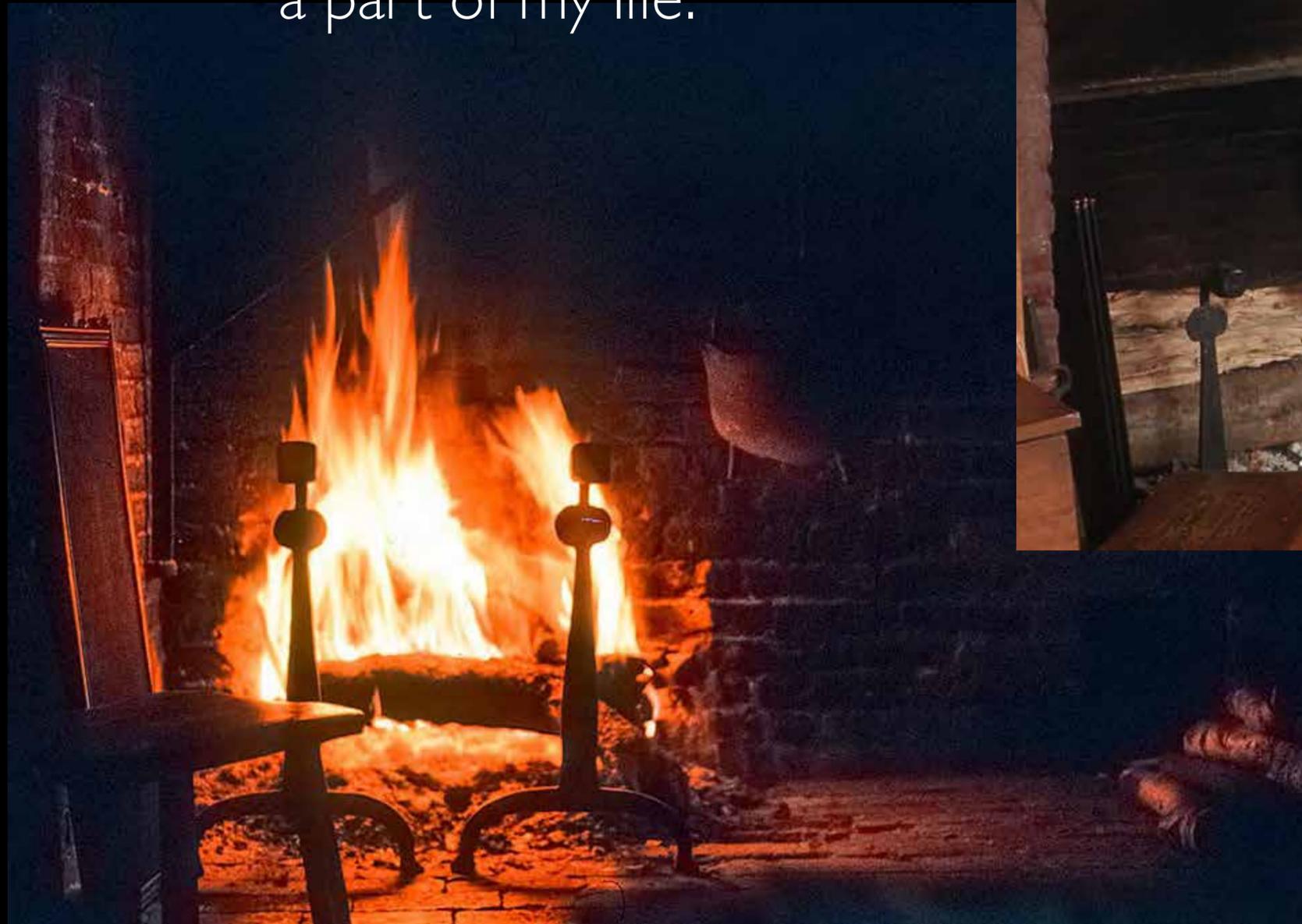
My biological ancestry is in New England, with most of my family lines arriving near Boston by 1670 about 10 generations ago, then spreading out to various New England villages and farms.

In 1942, my life began in this 1765 center-chimney colonial house in Topsfield, MA. The big elm was one of two “bride and groom trees” planted when the house was built.



This is the largest of the six  
fireplaces in the house --

Sitting by a fire has always been  
a part of my life.





Age five in 1947  
on a mountain in New Hampshire



later on,  
many Girl Scout  
adventures

After graduating from Mount Holyoke College in 1964, I did a PhD in experimental sub-atomic particle physics.

Low Momentum Antiproton-Proton Scattering

by

Jane Butterfield English

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

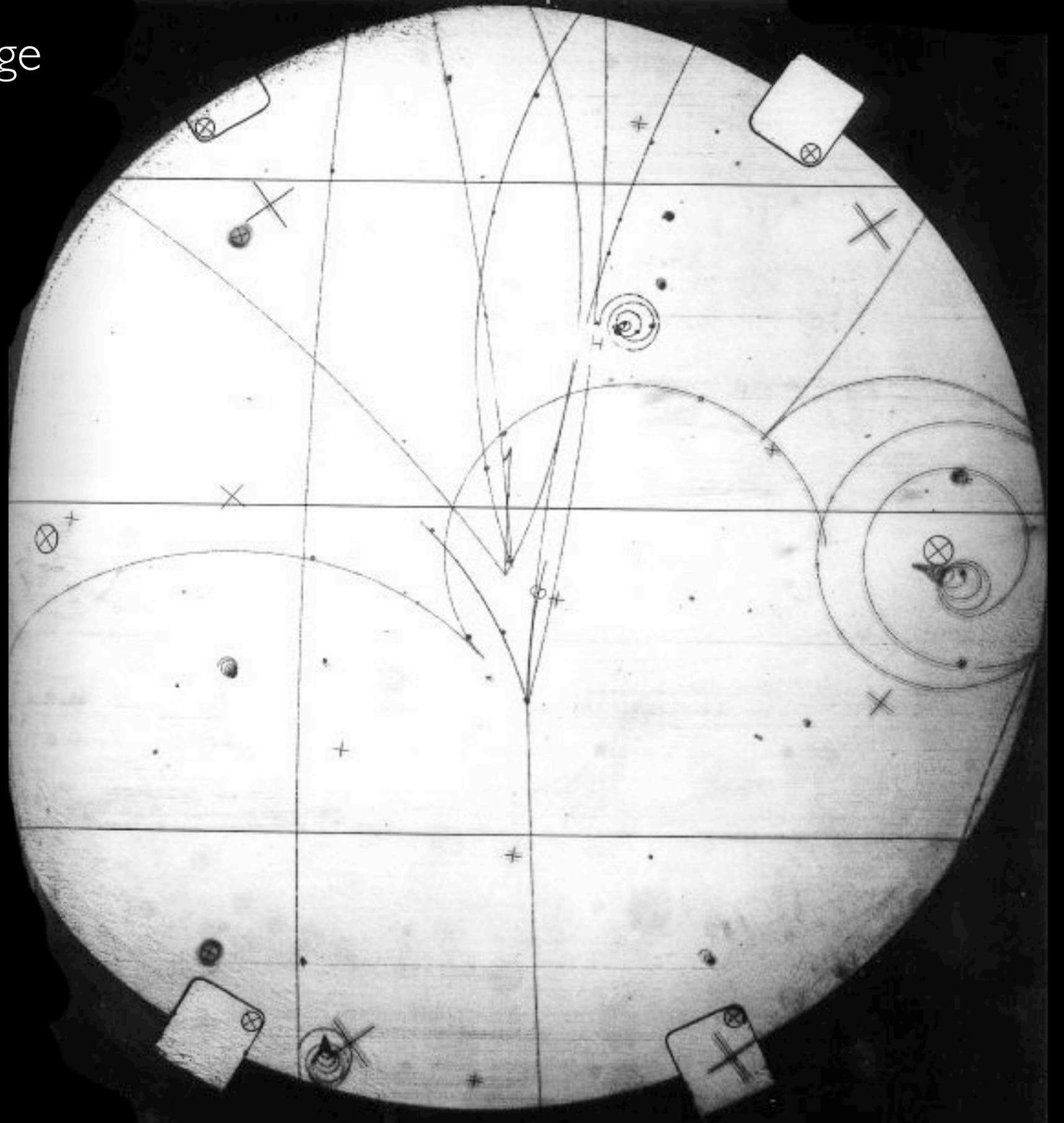
Doctor of Philosophy

(Physics)

at the

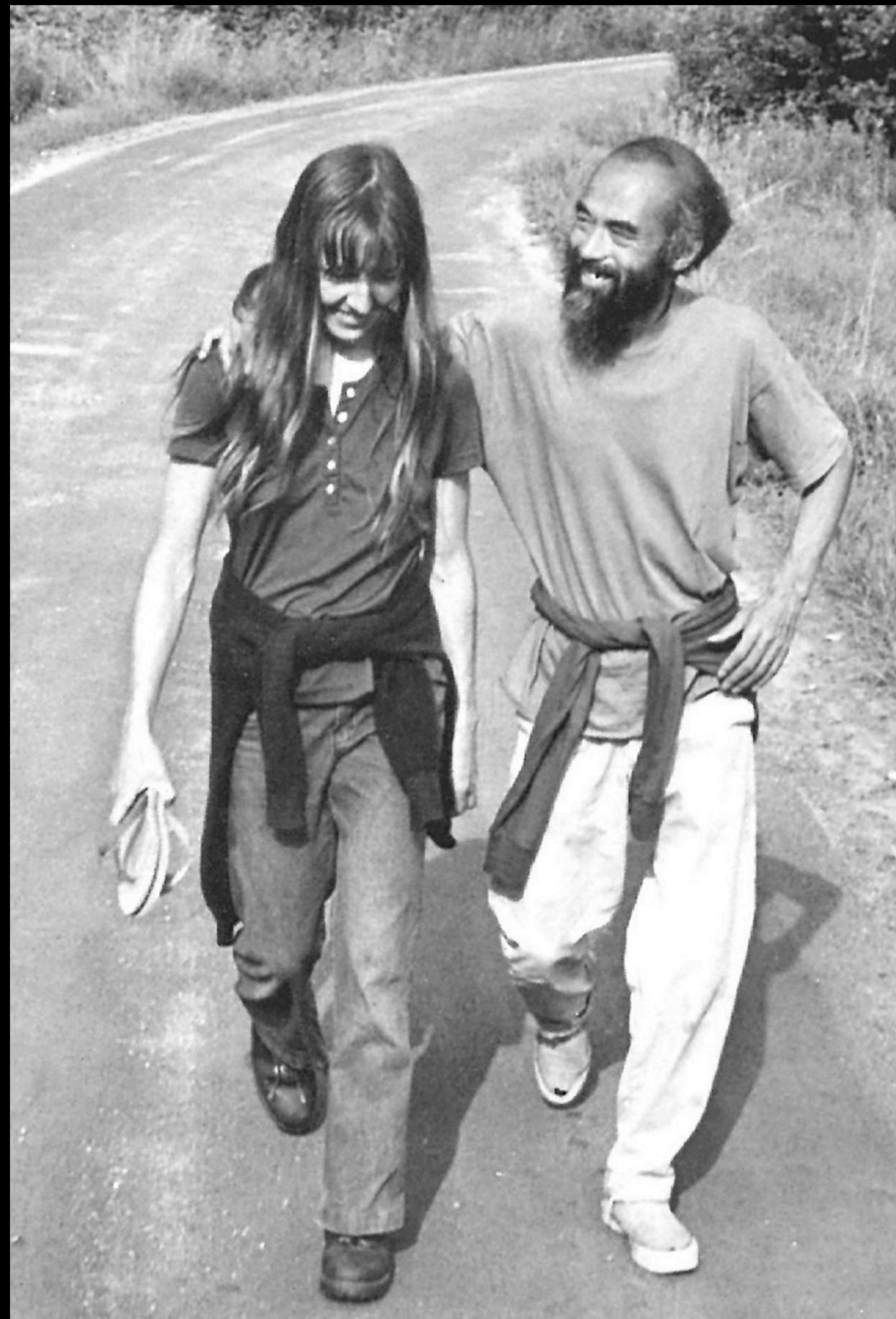
University of Wisconsin

1969



Then I lived four years with  
my husband Gia-fu Feng.

We spent the spring, summer  
and fall of 1971 living in Calais,  
Vermont with about 15 friends.



After that we lived in the mountains in Colorado for three years.



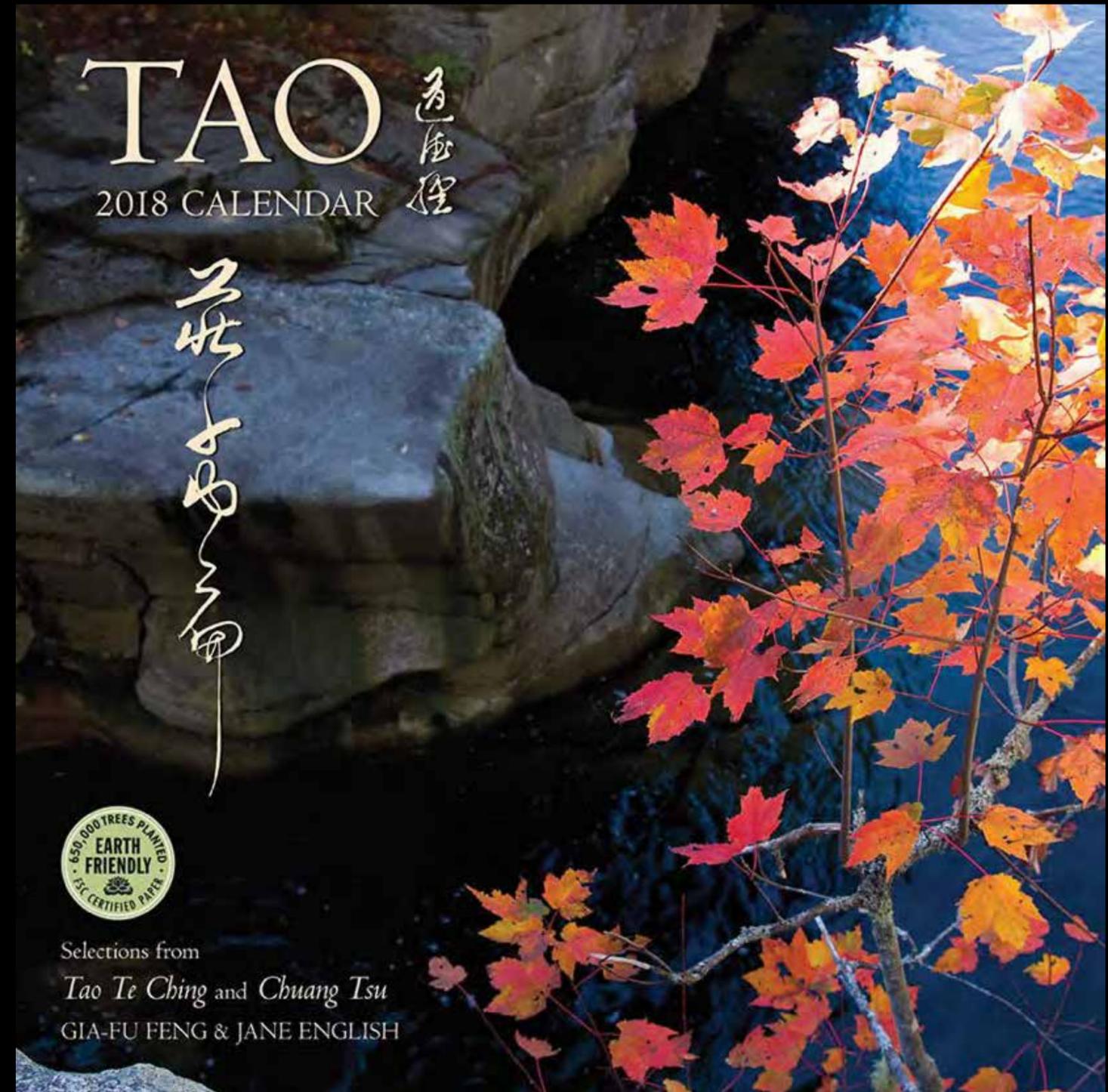
25th-Anniversary Edition

LAO TSU  TAO  
TE  
CHING

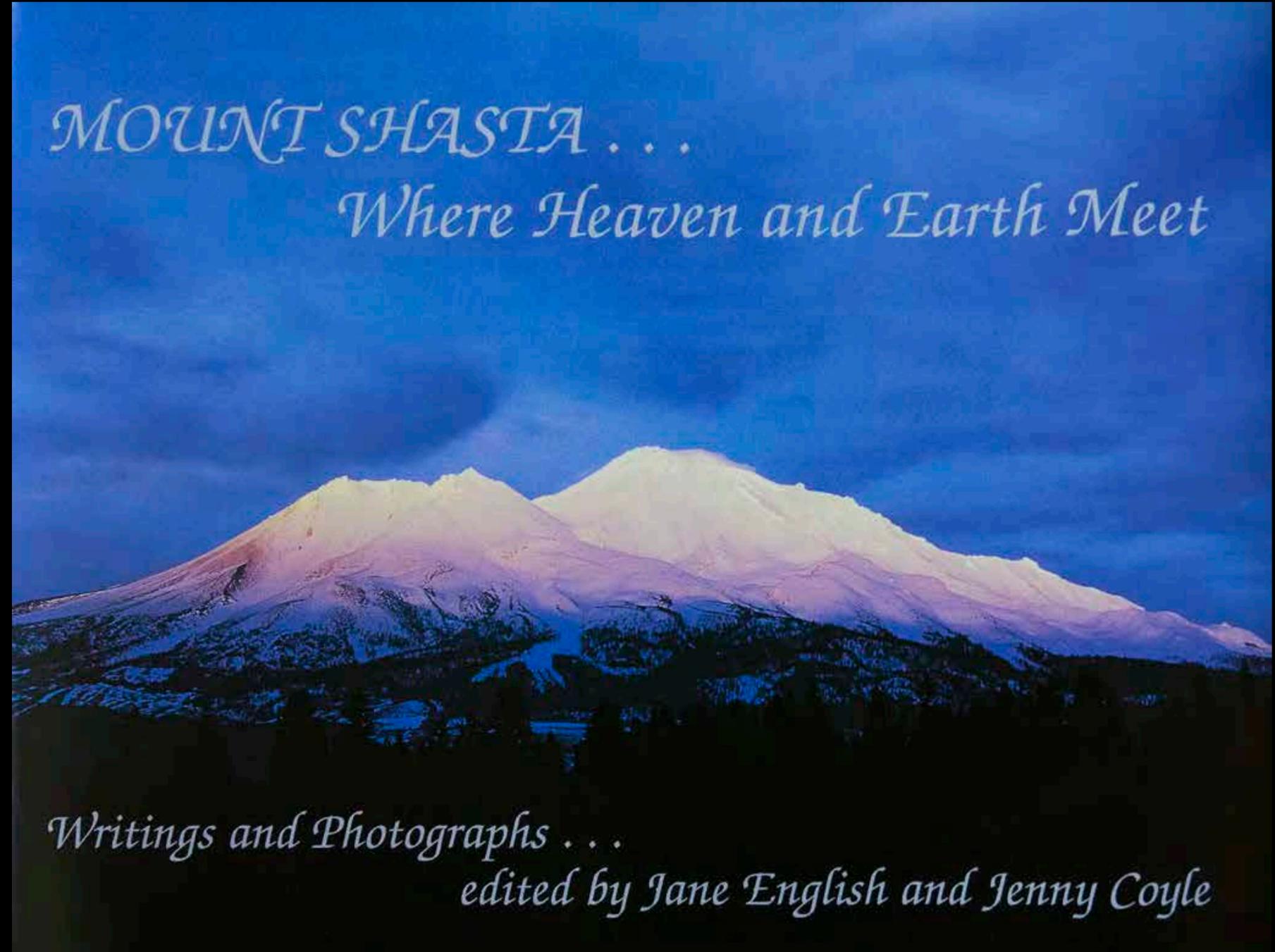
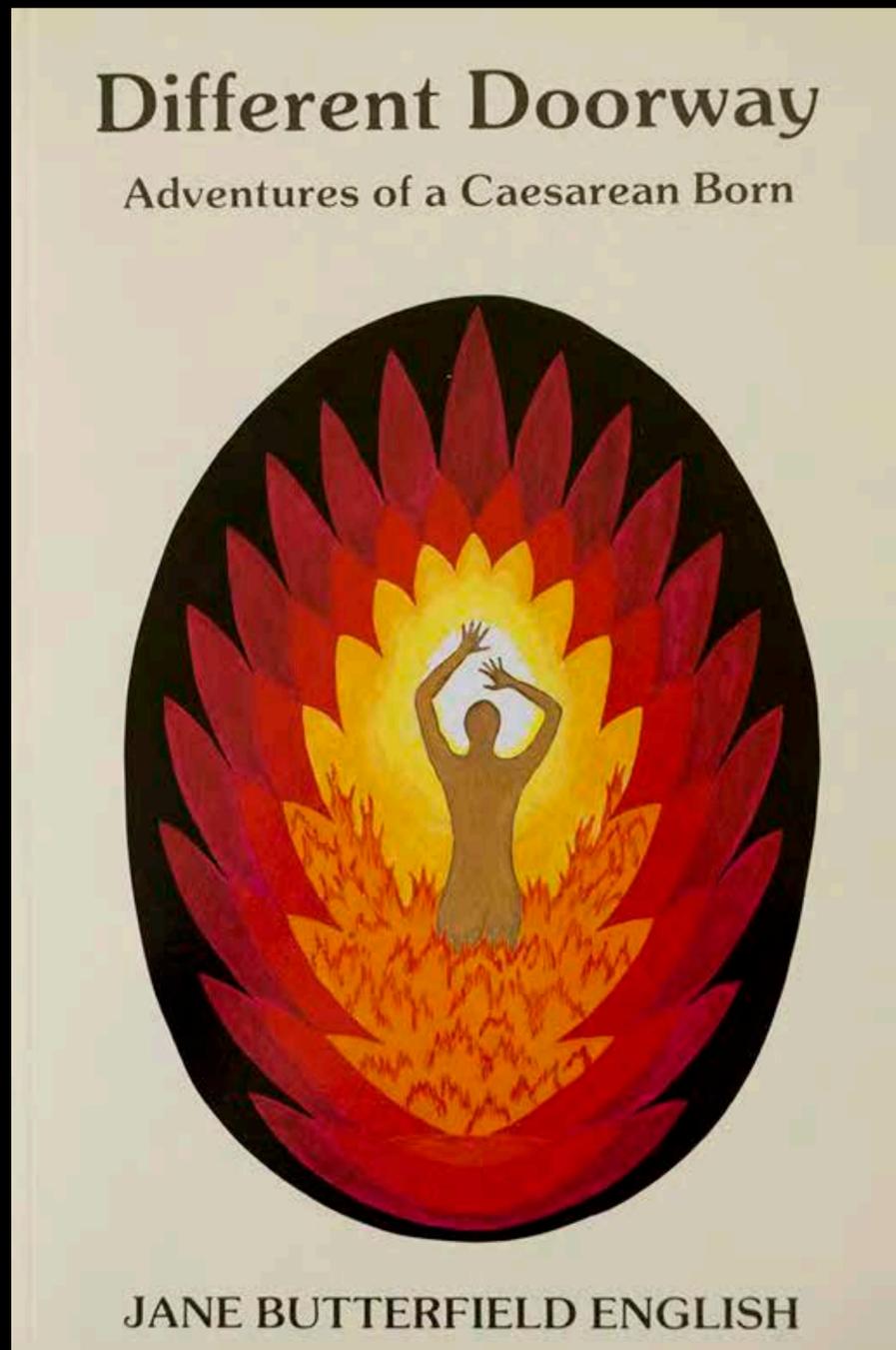
TRANSLATED BY GIA-FU FENG AND JANE ENGLISH  
with New Commentary by Chungliang Al Huang, Jane English,  
Gia-fu Feng, Rowena Pattee Kryder, and Toinette Lippe

Together we  
created a  
best-selling  
edition of the  
*Tao Te Ching*,

from which  
I have been  
making  
calendars  
for 29 years.



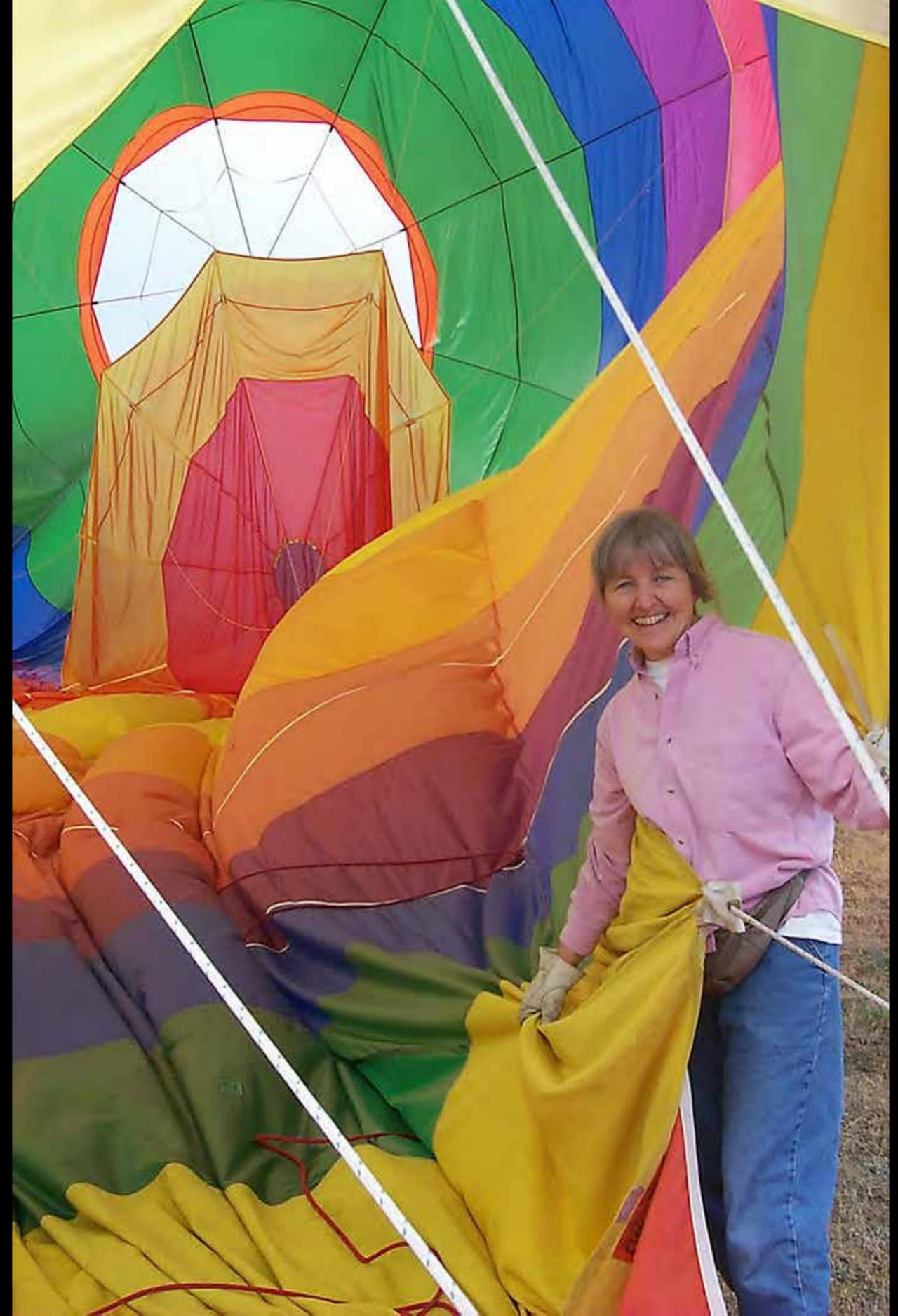
Years of living in California followed. Inner explorations, photographing nature, and outer adventures led me to create several books



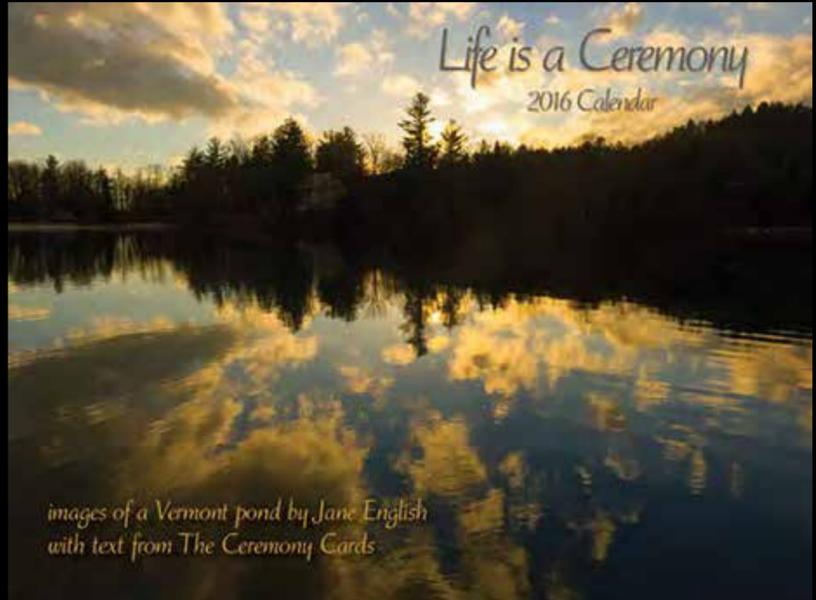
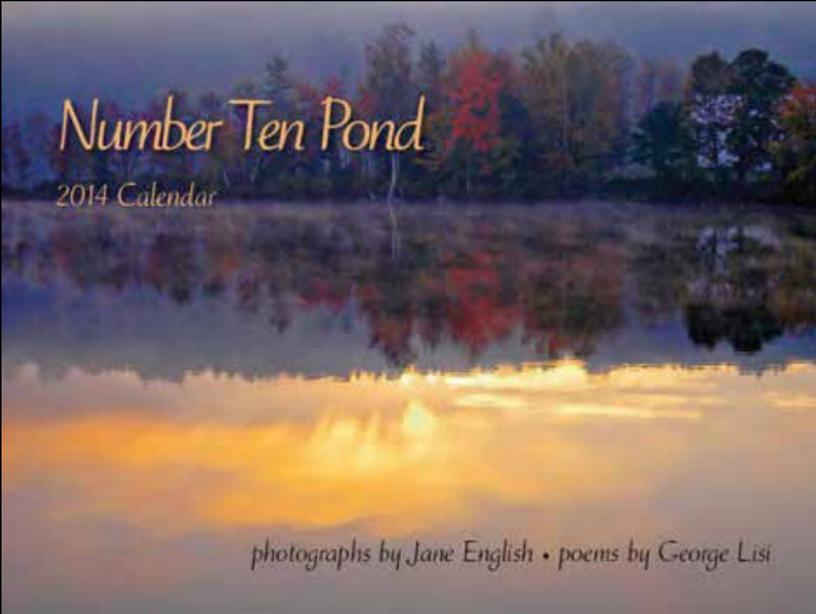
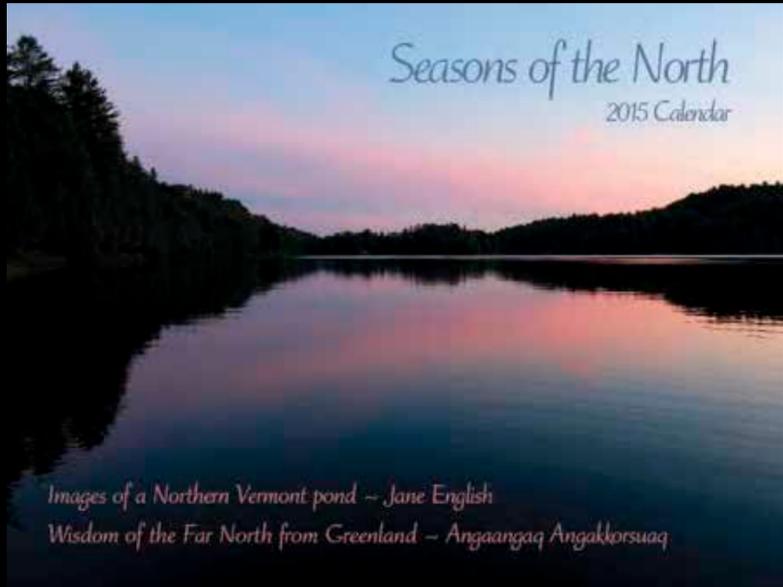
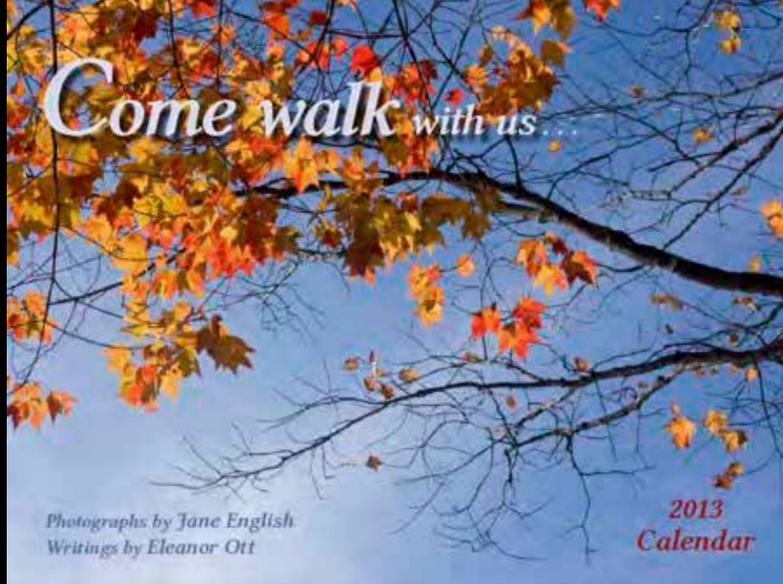
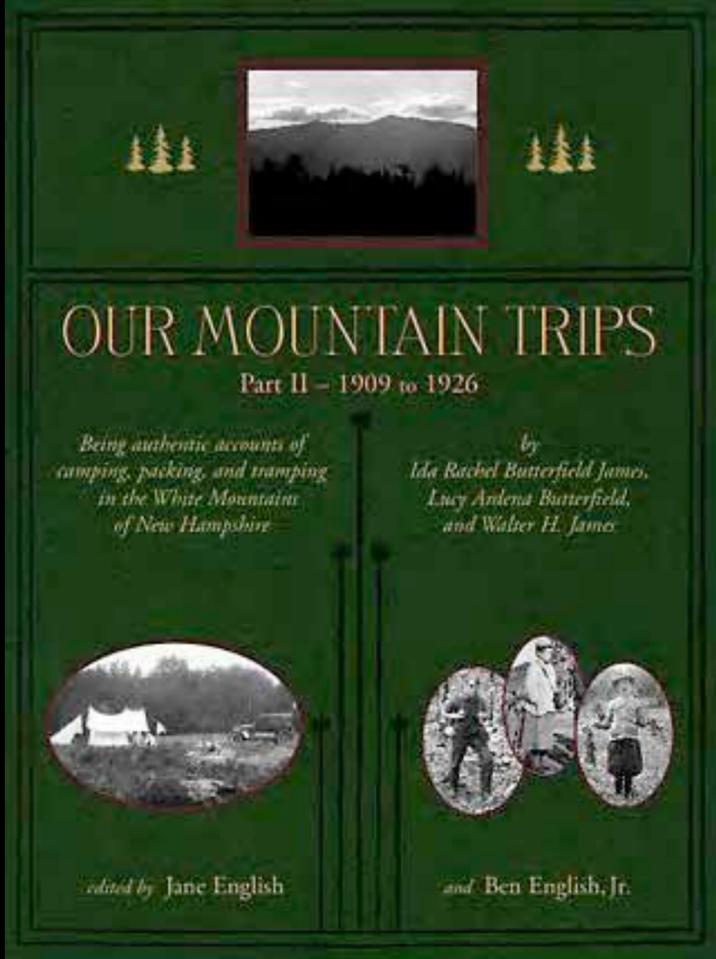
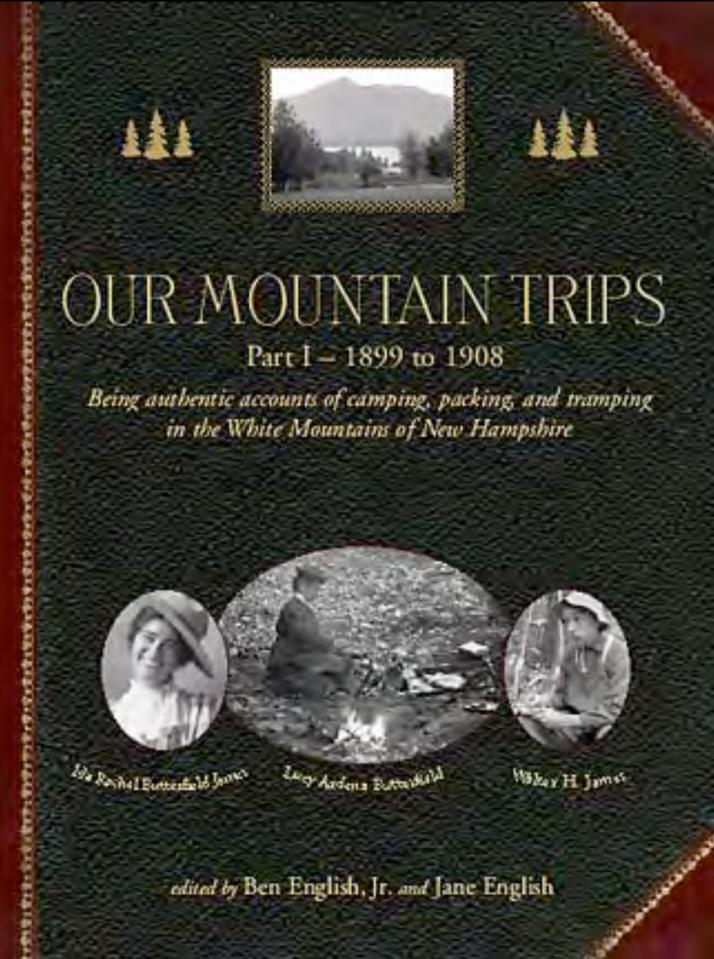
...and it brought me  
friendships with  
native people



From 1997 to 2002, while living near Mt Shasta, California, I enjoyed being a hot-air balloon pilot



After moving to Vermont in 2002, I worked on New England books and calendars —

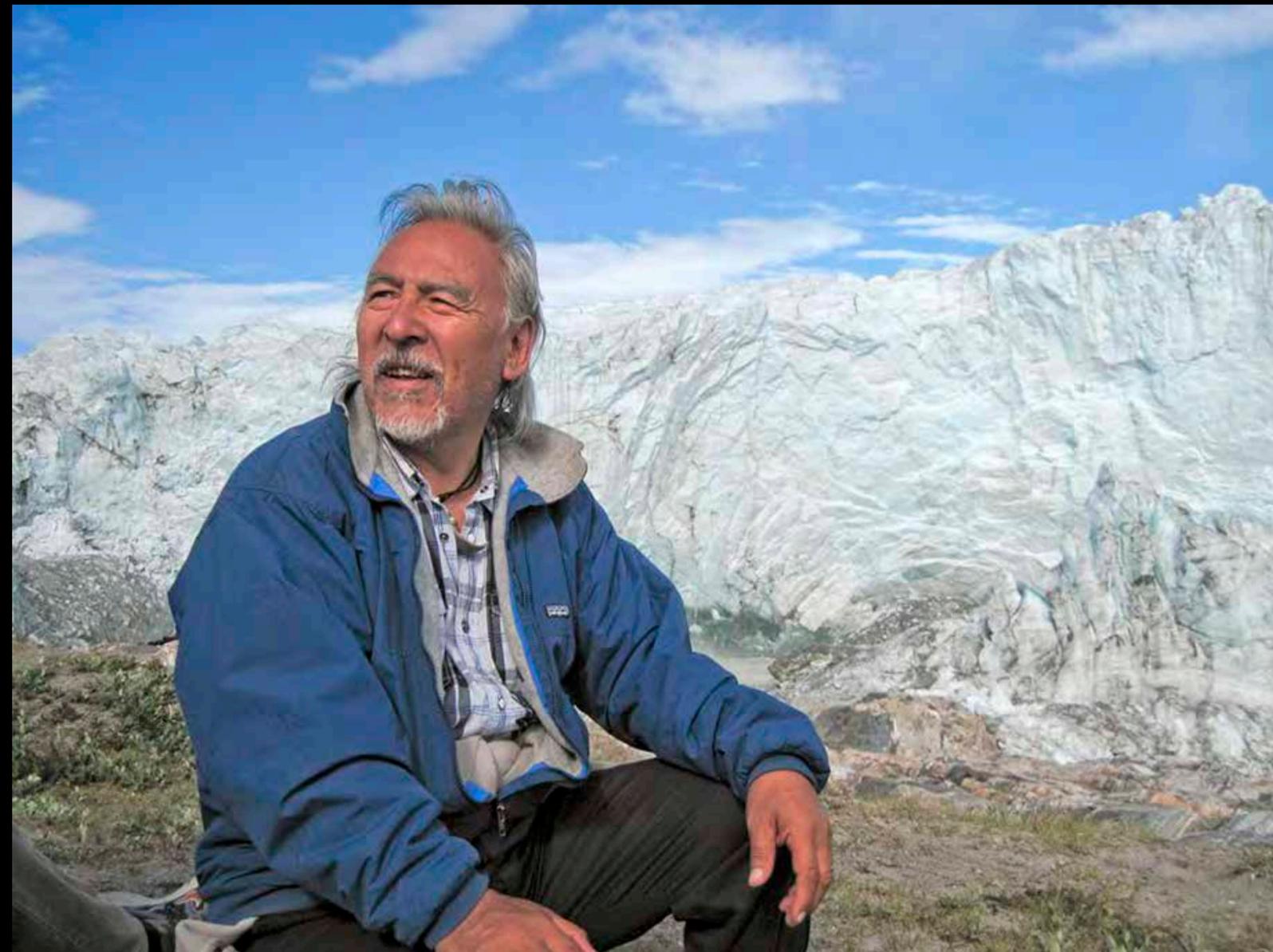


On one amazing day in November 2007 I was introduced to both --

EarthWalk Vermont

and

Angaangaq, from Greenland



Both have been a big part of my life since then.

Returning from Angaangaq's circle events in the US, Canada, Europe and Greenland,  
I delighted in coming home to circles at EarthWalk



Lakes and rivers on the melting Big Ice — flight from Copenhagen to Greenland

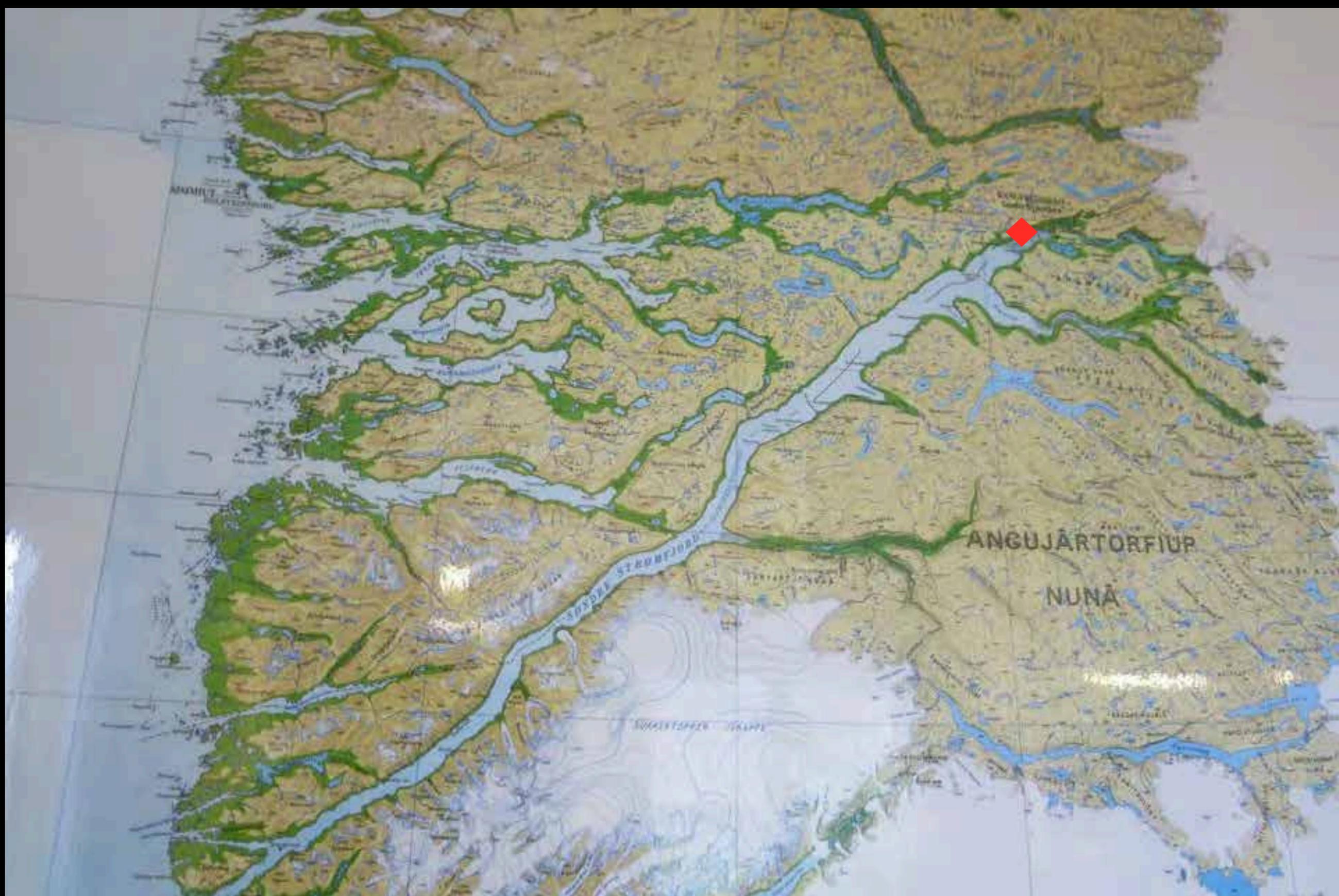
Three of my four trips to  
Greenland,  
in 2009, 2010, and 2011

took me to  
Kangerlussuaq,  
on the west coast  
of Greenland

*Many of the photos  
that follow are by other  
photographers,  
including  
Adam Lyberth and  
Sven Nieder*







Kangerlussuaq is at the northeast end of a 100 mile long fjord



Copenhagen 4 hrs.  
15 min.

Los Angeles 6 hrs.  
45 min.

Moscow 5 hrs.  
20 min.  
8 hrs.  
40 min.

New York

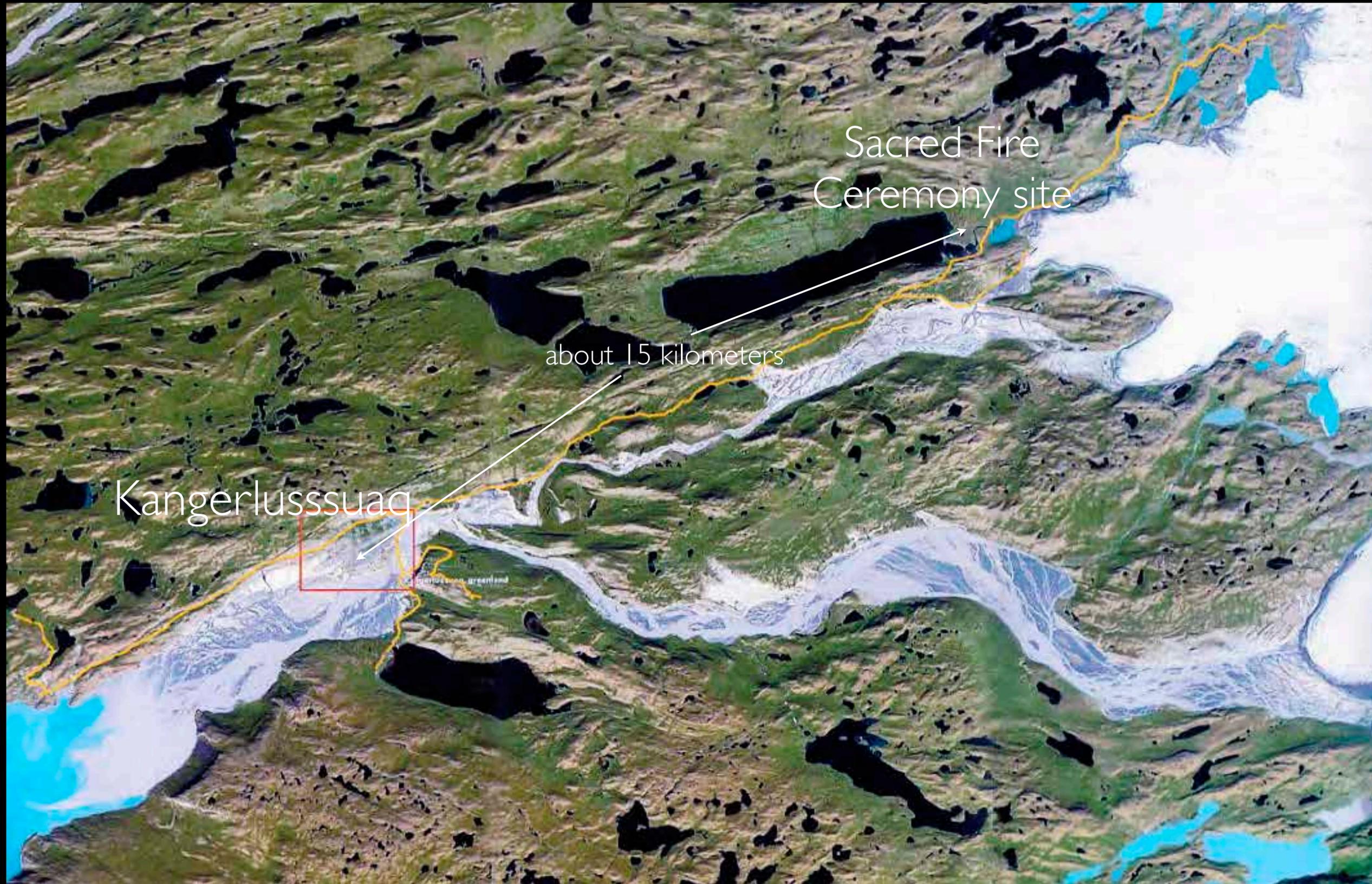


Looking east toward Kangerlussuaq, a former US airbase.  
The white area behind the mountains is not clouds -- it is the Big Ice

Many years ago the elders asked Angaangaq to bring to life a prophecy:

*The Ancient One's say that One Day, when the World needs it most, the Sacred Fire will come home to the people on the Top of the World.*

After Angaangaq worked for many years, the Sacred Fire Ceremony was finally held in July 2009





We had a hard time believing Angaangaq when he told us we would build a village and welcome the Kalaallit (Greenlandic) elders back to their own land.

But starting with a pile of luggage on the tundra...



... that is  
what we did.





Elders from around the world arrived at our camp.



Maori (New Zealand)



Nepal



Amazonia (Brazil)



Bolivia



Japan





North America



Siberia



Europe



Zimbabwe - Africa



Ashes from about 250 ceremonial fires in 45 countries had been given to us to form the base of the Sacred Fire





The women placed the ashes in the bag that was a symbol of all races coming together



The Greenlandic  
grandmothers  
put on their beautiful  
traditional ceremonial regalia

The old ceremonial fire of seal oil from the ocean was brought in for the last time by the oldest grandfather



and given to the  
oldest grandmother  
to light the new ceremonial fire  
of wood from the earth









In old times the frame was made of whale ribs. We used saplings and firewood from Denmark.

On the next day was the alaartivik, the sweat lodge ceremony. The lodge frame was covered with blankets and tarps.





After the sweat lodge fire was lit at dawn, the cameras were turned off.

The Grandmothers held council in the Alaartivik with the intention of agreeing on what needed to be done about the melting ice and climate change.



Then they told this to the men, who went into their Alaartivik to hold council on how to carry out what the Grandmothers had asked them to do.

The next day,  
we walked over  
the side of  
Grandmother  
Mountain  
and down to  
the glacier





Angaangaq got a chunk of ancient ice from the base of the glacier



and used it as the  
base of a fire

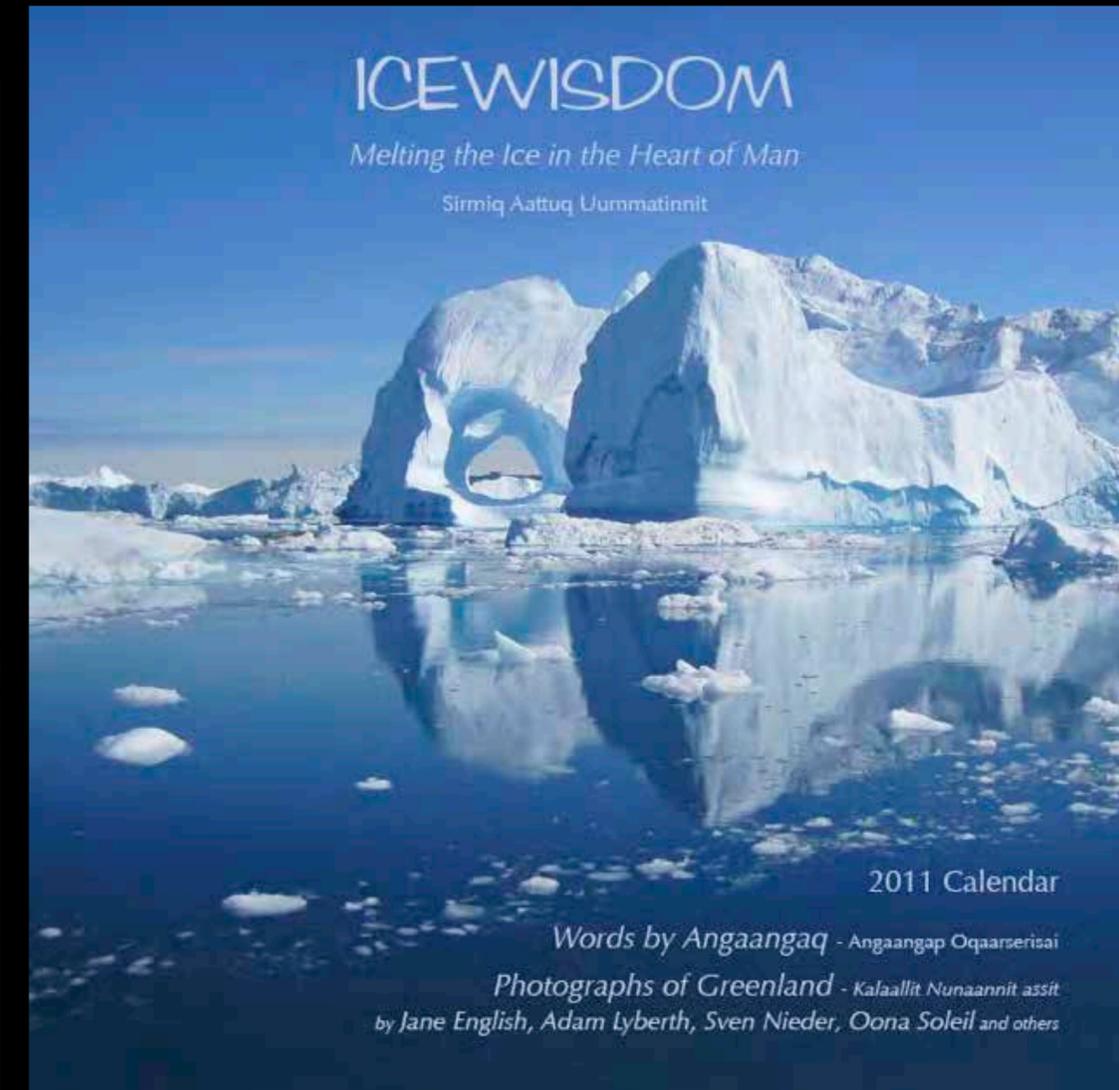
Fire and Ice —  
opposites meeting

"This ceremony is not just for Greenland. It is for the world." -- *Atsaarsuaq Hansine*



In March 2010 I returned to Greenland and stayed 3 weeks in Kangerlussuaq at the home of Adam Lyberth, one of my photographer friends.

The purpose of the trip was to market in Greenland the Icewisdom 2011 calendar and to make winter photos for the 2012 calendar



And to connect EarthWalk Vermont children with children in Kangerlussuaq



Living in a modern home was quite a change from tenting on the tundra for a month the previous summer.



And it was cold and dark most of the time.





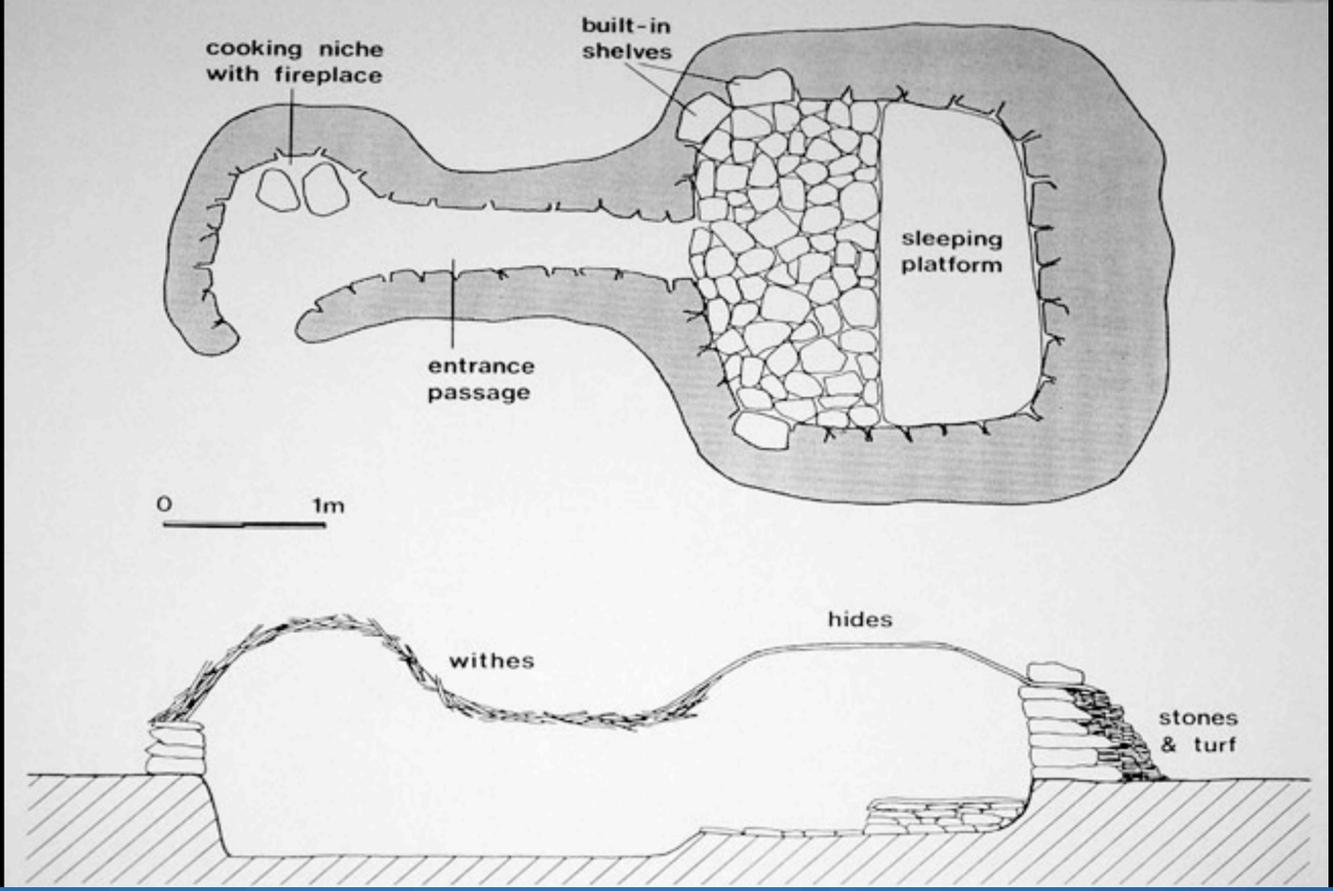
Life indoors is much like that in any European or North American home.





Except that the dinner roast might be from a musk ox hunted by your host.

The modern houses are very different from the stone, turf and ice homes of the ancestors.





At the Kangerlussuaq school I did a program about the ceremony that had happened in their "back yard" the previous summer.

A few of the children had come to our camp and were proud and excited to have been a part of the ceremony.



Using a talking stick with the  
4th and 5th graders



and making fire by friction,  
was like being at EarthWalk Vermont,  
even though we shared very little language.

I felt strange living an ordinary modern life in this land where in 2009 we had been in ceremony.

Angaangaq reminded me that these people had lost their ceremonies and that I was part of bringing back the ceremonies



Adam works as a tour guide, taking people to the Big Ice and to see the muskox and caribou. I went along with several of his tours in this big “off-road bus.”









More of Adam's photos from his tours --

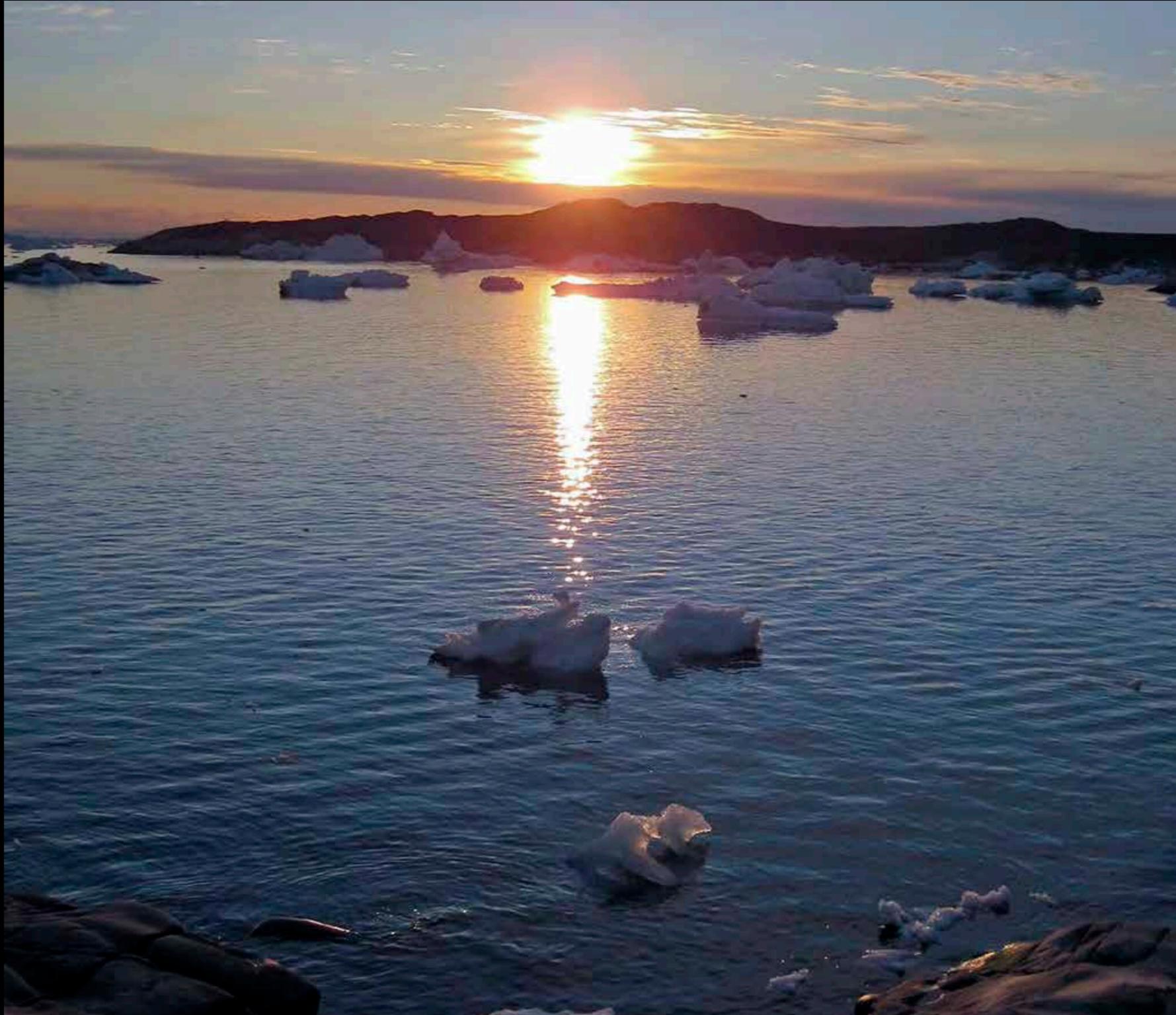








In July 2011, some of us returned to Kangerlussuaq via Iceland and Ilulissat where the big glacier makes icebergs.



This was my first experience of the midnight sun, which really gave me a felt sense of Earth as a big round ball, with sunlight was coming to us over the top of the world.





Then we returned to the camp near the Big Ice for a four-day vision quest.



After that, a group of elders and hunters came by boat from Maniitsoq, and again we welcomed them back to their own land.



In an interesting mix of spiritual traditions, we were invited to the Lutheran confirmation ceremony of Adam's daughter, held in the former chapel of the cold war US air base.



Then the bishop of Greenland decided to send an emissary, one of the Kalaallit Lutheran priests in Kangerlussuaq, to our ceremony at the camp.

She led a half-hour Lutheran worship service in the middle of our joyful ceremony -- what a contrast!





“The biggest church  
on Earth is nature.  
When you go out in nature,  
you come home.  
You come home to yourself.”  
-- *Angaangaq*



The hunters had permission to take one musk ox and two caribou -- so we ate well.



The oldest grandmother was given the best parts of the animal and danced joyfully with them -- a beautiful glimpse of the old ways.



The young hunters entertained us with games of strength and skill.





and the elders danced and sang for us, wearing clothes like those their own parents might have worn in the 1940's and 1950's



The day after our ceremony Angaangaq led a Shamanic Spiritual Walk -- 17 miles around the big lake -- in silence with no talking, touching or eye contact.

I drove an ancient clunky motorboat to the far end of the lake, carrying a doctor and a radio for the safety of the walkers.



Some of us stayed on to clean up  
and break camp



Then I flew to Maniitsoq  
to be with our visitors in  
their own homes.







I visited with Atsaarsuaq Hansine in her beautiful little home.



Then we gave IceWisdom calendars to her friends in the old people's home.

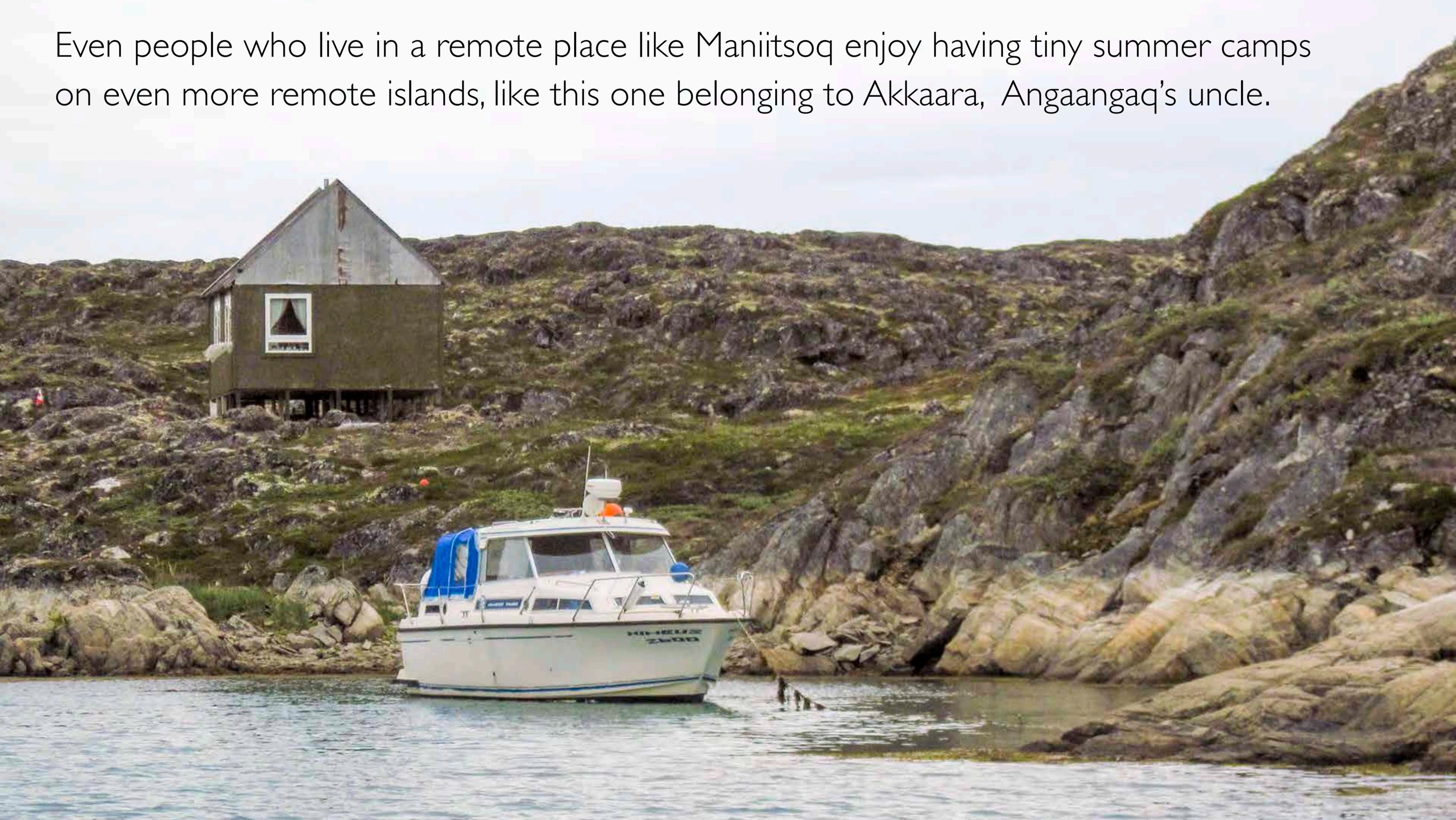


It was a privilege to bring to people, who had suffered so much during colonization, a small sign that the wisdom of their ancestors was again being listened to and respected.

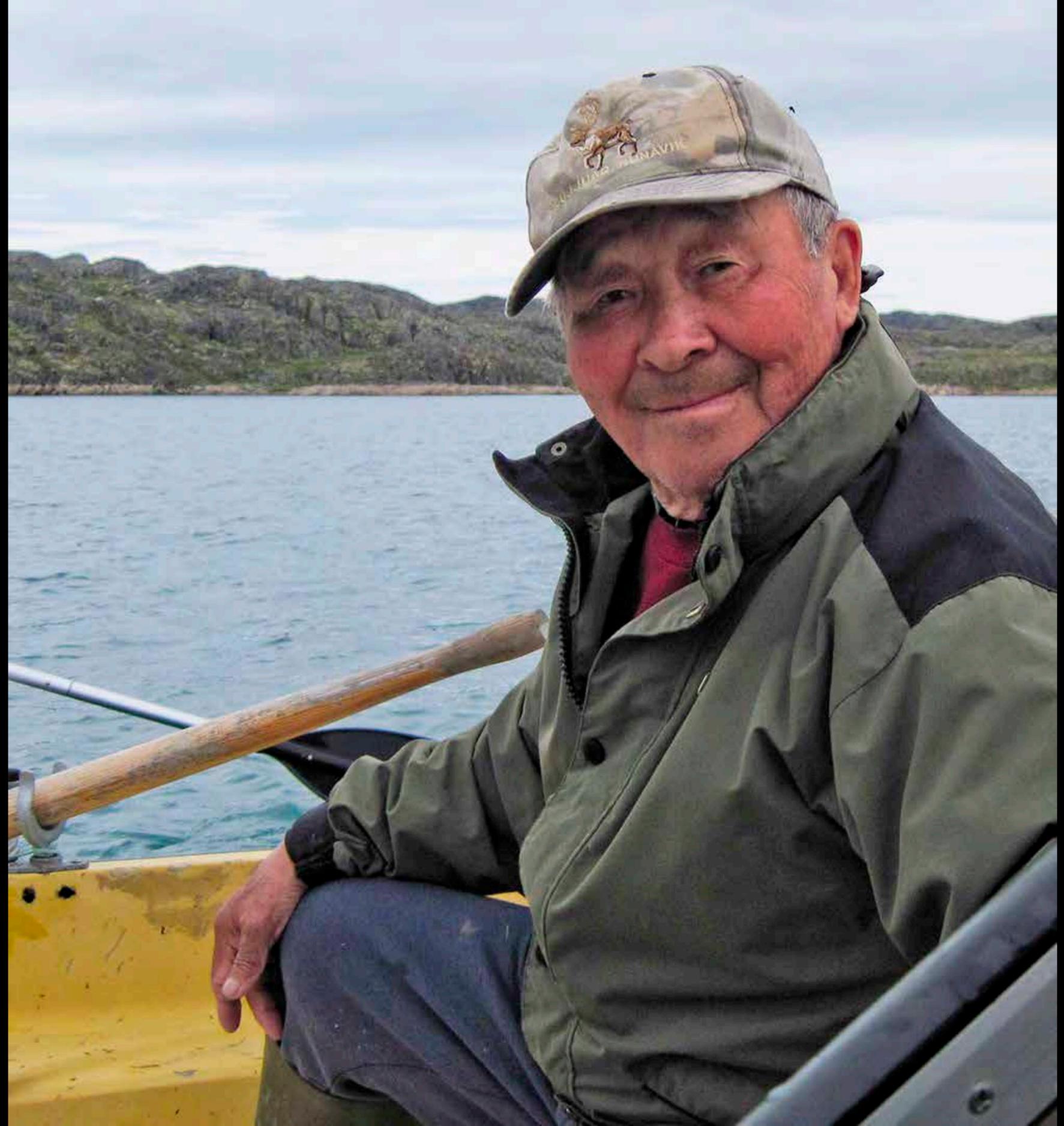
Twice while I was in Maniitsoq, I was treated to wonderful boat rides among the many small rocky islands



Even people who live in a remote place like Maniitsoq enjoy having tiny summer camps on even more remote islands, like this one belonging to Akkaara, Angaangaq's uncle.



Akkaara and his wife were out fishing when we arrived





Inside that cabin --  
with Ole, my boat driver,  
and Akaara, Angaangaq's uncle



The view from the cabin window

In January 2012, I made a 4th trip to Greenland, this time to Ittoqqortoormiit in East Greenland,



... via a plane from Iceland then a helicopter ride.



Ittoqqortoormiit is very remote, over 500 miles from any other civilization.





18 of us, mostly German and Swiss, joined Angaangaq for another shamanic spiritual “walk,” this time by dogsled.

12 sleds,

12 mushers,

144 dogs,

18 participants

4 days and 3 nights, camping with some shelter in primitive cabins

It never got above 0F, and mostly was -15F to -20F





It has been hard to put into words what the trip was like, so the next few photos are without much commentary.















At the end of the last day we travelled off into the darkness, in deep snow with tired dogs, before finally getting back to Ittoqqortoormiit and hot showers and a huge feast.

That is a brief overview of what I have experienced while in Greenland

Now we will shift a bit and talk some about  
how the “seen” and the “unseen” weave together  
to integrate body, mind and spirit.

In order to fly anywhere a bird needs to use both wings equally.  
If one wing is a lot stronger than the other, it flies in circles.



Our actions in the physical world — the seen world — are our right wing.  
The unseen world — our heart, our dreams and our intuition — are our left wing.

In our modern world, we focus on the right wing with science and rationality —  
the world of separate “things”

It is so pervasive we don't even think of it.

The left wing is under-developed in most of us,  
or if it is developed, it is disconnected from, or denied by, the right wing.

We who never were educated in the ways of the unseen world can use tools such as *The Ceremony Cards* to overcome that lack, and begin to integrate both wings, so that we no longer fly in circles.

*(In a few minutes we will use these cards)*



In our world that often appears to be flying in circles, every person who can fly with both wings is of immense value.

Now for some stories about how I began to find balance and use both my wings . . .

Back in 1978, long before I knew Angaangaq or many of my other indigenous friends, I had a Basque friend, Angeles Arrien, who taught some of the inner traditions of her people.

This is a carving of the Basque lauburu, the four heads -- physical, emotional, mental and spiritual -- that need to be in balance.

I saw it over a door in a village in the Pyrenees where Angeles spent her summers when she was young.



Before Angeles Arrien introduced me to using Tarot as a self reflection practice, I had no use for divination and as a scientist thought it was random nonsense.

Then after using Tarot daily for several years something odd began to happen. The cards I chose began to have the same images as dreams I had written in my journal a few minutes before.



*Dream:* Water with green slime in it is poured over me.

*Tarot Card:* Seven of Cups—Cups overflowing with green slimy water.

*Dream:* With paper and charcoal, I make a rubbing of a stone that has a bumblebee and an elegant lady carved in it.

*Tarot Card:* The Empress—An elegant lady with bumblebees embroidered on her shirt.



# YIKES — math — equations — numbers!!!!

but stay with me, and listen to the story I am going to tell ...

$$X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{78} \frac{(f_i - e)^2}{e} = \frac{(f_1 - e)^2}{e} + \frac{(f_2 - e)^2}{e} + \frac{(f_3 - e)^2}{e} + \dots + \frac{(f_{78} - e)^2}{e}$$

Tarot cards by person			
	N	X <sup>2</sup>	P
A	1982	127.3	99.97%
B	2015	1161.0	99.999...% (100x10 <sup>-10</sup> )
C	2395	132.4	99.99%

Index Cards			
	N	X <sup>2</sup>	P
	1982	85.83	53%

Tarot cards by person			
	N	X <sup>2</sup>	P
D	1095	141.3	1.4x10 <sup>-5</sup>
E	1095	282	10 <sup>-24</sup>

	N	X <sup>2</sup>	P
E - 3 yr. run	3288	1177	3x10 <sup>-109</sup>

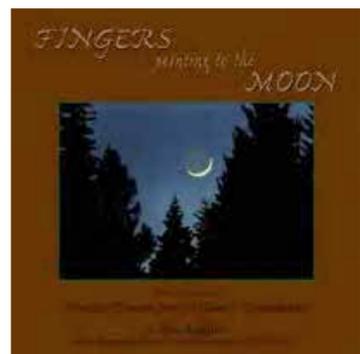
Apple computer	N	X <sup>2</sup>	P
1	1410	82.5	50%
2	1680	88.5	65%
3	1821	59.2	*
4	1983	70.84	*
5	1983	66.04	*
6	1983	102.31	94.8% (see note p.60)
7	1983	58.64	*
8	1983	71.63	*
9	1410	66.9	*
10	1680	69.7	*
11	1821	79.8	*
12	2052	85.9	53%
13	2394	85.8	53%

\* = less than 50%

	N	X <sup>2</sup>	P
Body cards	1096	419.9	5x10 <sup>-34</sup>
Mind cards	1096	438.8	4x10 <sup>-36</sup>
Spirit cards	1096	531.9	6x10 <sup>-46</sup>

A detailed version of this story is in the book *Fingers Pointing to the Moon* and on my website

[www.theceremonycards.com/pdf/science.pdf](http://www.theceremonycards.com/pdf/science.pdf)



*Now why, you might ask, did I go to all this trouble of working with statistics?*

I grew up in a world that values the “seen” far more than the “unseen.” So I felt a need to use this tool of the seen world to integrate what I was beginning to experience in the unseen world.

Angeles Arrien appreciated my work but, with a smile, said she needed no proof of the unseen.

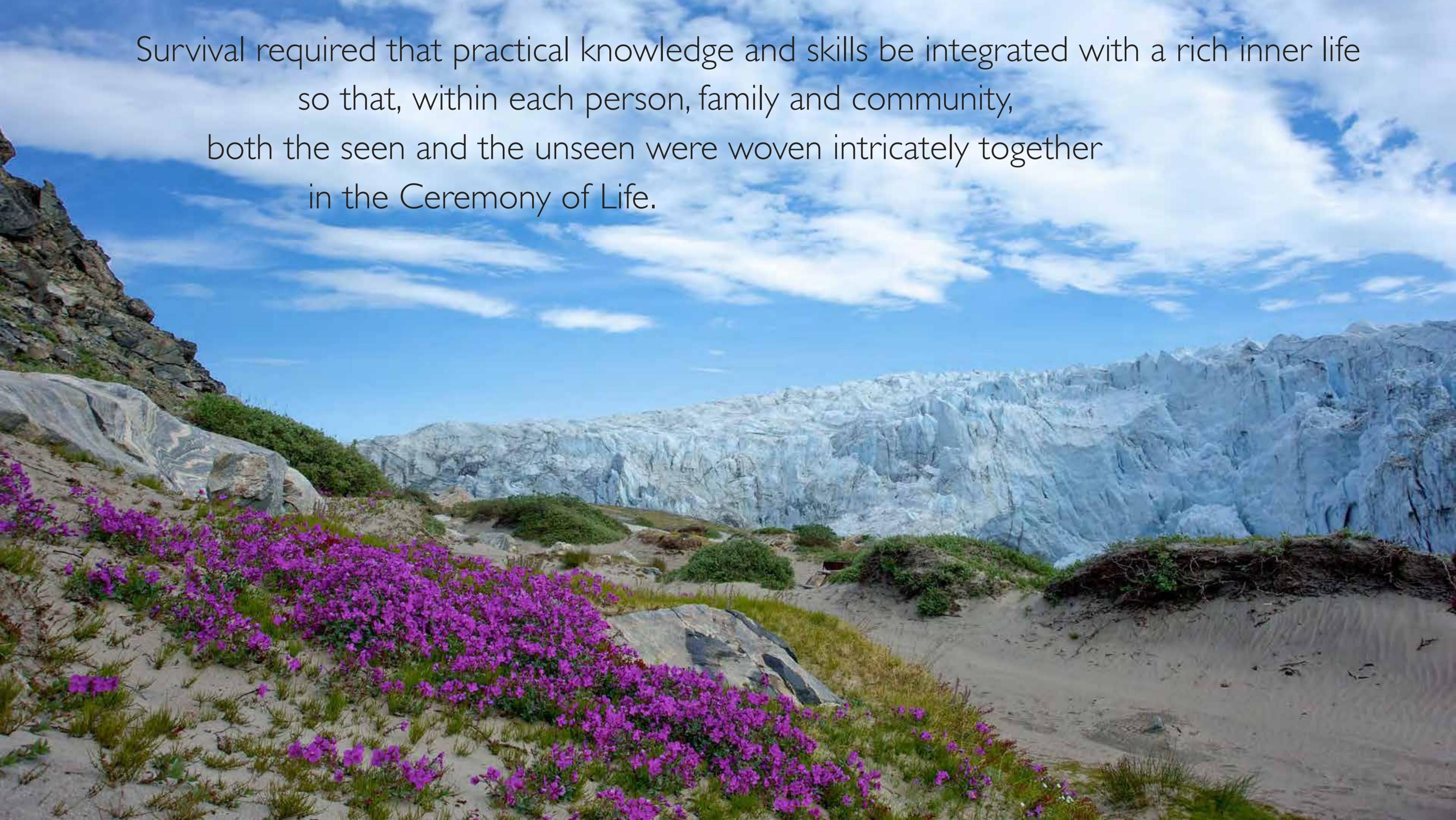
She grew up in the traditional Basque culture that, like the traditional Kalaallit of Greenland, taught the children to become skilled at living in both the seen and the unseen worlds.



For millennia, the *Kalaallit* (Greenlandic) people not only survived but thrived in a land of cold winter darkness and summer midnight sun, a place where the natural world was both spectacularly beautiful and unforgivingly harsh.



Survival required that practical knowledge and skills be integrated with a rich inner life so that, within each person, family and community, both the seen and the unseen were woven intricately together in the Ceremony of Life.



Angaangaq tells me that among his people there was no word for art and no word for religion.

This is not because the aspects of human experience that we call art and religion were not important.

Quite the opposite.

They are so important that they permeate all of life and thus do not need to be named as something other than the rest of life.

*“Life is a Ceremony . . .  
. . . worth celebrating with a ceremony.”*



*I have shown some of what I experienced in  
Greenland in the visible world,*

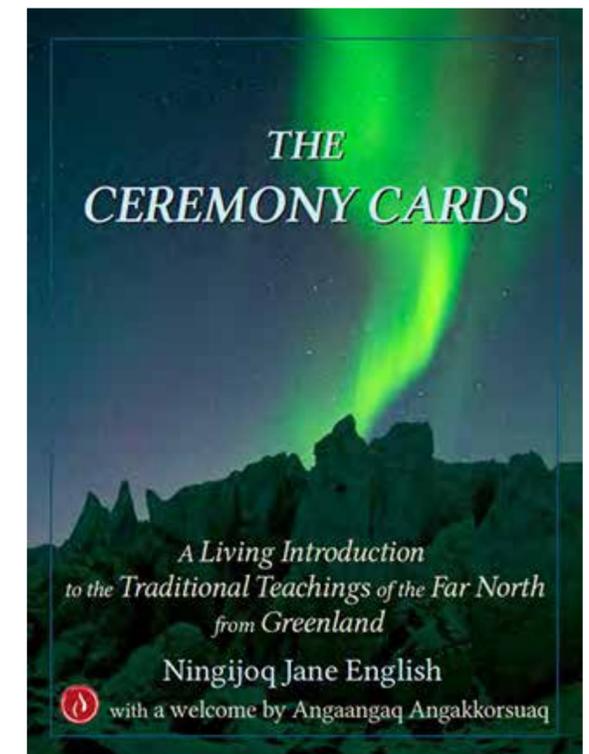
*Then some of my own journey of weaving  
together the visible and the invisible.*

*Now I will speak of my Greenland journey  
in the unseen world . . .  
. . . in dreamtime, vision and ceremony.*

I will start by telling you what I experienced in the Alaartivik (sweat lodge) during the 2009 Sacred Fire Ceremony in Greenland.



A detailed version of this is in my introduction to this book that is part of *The Ceremony Cards* set.



The theme of connection with women elders, ancestors and grandmothers continued in many dreams and ceremonies:



*September 22, 2010*

This photo is from a ceremony I did on the stone doorstep at the site of home of my great-great-great grandmother, Thankful Hills, in Hancock, NH.

In that ceremony I brought together my Greenlandic spiritual ancestors and my New England biological ancestors -- symbolized by the black and white rock from Grandmother Mountain in Greenland and the bit of brick from the chimney at Thankful's home.

*February 18, 2013 -- dream*

In the center of a small village in Greenland I watch native people dancing. One woman turns to look at me. Seeing that I have light skin and blue eyes, she turns away.

Then she looks down and sees that I am standing on an old hooked rug that my grandmother made.

She looks back up at me and puts a flower sticker on my face and tells me I have lots of other stickers on my face that I hadn't noticed people putting there.

We both laugh.



Dreams and visions are honored in indigenous cultures, yet it took me many years to fully accept the importance, *and the reality,* of experiences of the unseen world.

When we subscribe to a materialist worldview and do not integrate it with the reality of the unseen, we seriously impoverish ourselves and our world.

In the unseen world there is a great sense of connection, of oneness.

Lack of connection is the root of addiction. When we get past the illusion of separateness many so-called problems dissolve on their own.

The dance is to play with separateness -- because it creates this wonderful world we live in -- but to remember the oneness and so not be imprisoned by separateness.

Two times, when with indigenous people who had questions about my use of a water drum or about my conducting lodge ceremonies, I shared with them dreams about the drum or the lodge, and they dropped their concerns and supported what I am doing.



This support is important not just for my using the drum or conducting the lodge but because it showed me how fully they honor the reality and importance of dreams, of the unseen, the source for our experience of connection, and of wholeness.



We have so much conditioning, and pressure, to consider dreams and visions to be “dreamy” and “imaginary” or to be afraid of such things.

People, especially women, have been punished as witches for their journeys into the invisible. Two of my ancestors, 8th-great-grandmothers, died while imprisoned as witches during the Salem witchcraft madness of the 1690's.

Another pitfall is glorification of being a “visionary,” the ego wanting to be “special” because of visions and dreams.

I am not at all special, I just am who I am and have experienced what I have.

For the rest of our time together this evening I invite you to explore with me this relationship between the seen and the unseen, through the images and wisdom from Greenland in *The Ceremony Cards*.

I repeat what Angaangaq's grandmother so often said, “My way is not the only way.”

