

THE CEREMONY CARDS

*A Living Introduction
to the Traditional Teachings of the Far North
from Greenland*

Ningijog Jane English

with a welcome by Angaangaq Angakkorsuaq

Earth Heart • East Calais • Vermont • USA

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The Teachings of the Far North tell us that once we say something it no longer belongs to us alone, but to the world, where it can grow and come to life. Honoring the truth of this, and seeking to walk in a good way in relation to both the traditional teachings and the modern world of business, we ask that you understand that above statement of copyright applies only to the commercial use of the text in this booklet. In all other ways these words and ceremonies do indeed belong to all of us.

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A Welcome

Jane English, whose Spiritual name is Ningijooq - which means an Elder for Many People, has been walking with me for almost ten years. For many years Ningijooq has been wanting to develop *The Ceremony Cards* for IceWisdom, based upon the Teachings of the Far North.

How privileged I am to have Ningijooq on my side, walking with me and sharing her vast knowledge with wisdom. I am confident that *The Ceremony Cards* will bring depth to many peoples and a beginning to understanding and loving themselves. And most importantly to live their own beauty through the use of these *Ceremony Cards*.

Ningijooq - how much I love you. Qujanaq for always being there when I call upon you.

—*Angaangaq Angakkorsuaq*
the Man Who Looks Like His Uncle

Foreword

Near the end of the second round of the Aalaartivik (sweat lodge) I “saw” her in the total darkness—a Kalaallit (Greenlandic) woman with tied-back dark hair. She sat a bit to my left, between me and the pit full of hot rocks, her right side toward me.

I wondered, “Am I imagining her?” I glanced away, then looked back. She was still there. She looked at me and said, “Give me your voice.” It did not occur to me that it was strange that she spoke English. Only later did I wonder.

My first reaction was to reply, “No, I can’t give you my voice.” Instinctively, I did not want to give myself away like that. Then I continued, “But I can speak for you.”

The round ended shortly after that and I went out of the lodge. This happened at an Aalaartivik Ceremony that was held in July 2009, about 15 kilometers east of Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, on the tundra near the Big Ice.

It was the day after the Sacred Fire was relit in Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) for the first time in many, many years. Indigenous Elders from around the world were also in attendance. The Grandmothers were to hold council in the Aalaartivik on this second day of the event, with the intention of agreeing on what needs to be done with regard to the melting of the Big Ice and the effects of climate change—to find ways to melt the ice in our hearts, so that we can change and begin to use our vast knowledge wisely.

Having agreed on what needed to be done, the Grandmothers were then to tell this to the men, and the men would go into a different Aalaartivik Ceremony to hold council about how to implement what the Grandmothers had asked them to do.

How did I, age 67 but neither a mother nor a grandmother, come to be in the Grandmothers Aalaartivik? Shortly after I met the Kalaallit (Greenlandic) shaman, Angaangaq, in 2007, he asked me to be a Grandmother to the Circle of people in North America who were walking with him, learning the traditional teachings of the Far North.

Before this Aalaartivik in Greenland I had been Angaangaq's firekeeper for several Aalaartivik Ceremonies he conducted for the Circle during the preceding couple of years. I asked Angaangaq on the morning of the Grandmothers Aalaartivik if he wanted me to go and light the fire that would heat the rocks for the Aalaartivik Ceremonies. He said yes, so I spent the morning working with others making and tending the fire. I had no expectation of being inside the lodge, but as I saw others doing a good job of tending the fire and heard a call for more Grandmothers to come to be inside, I asked if it was appropriate for me to join the Grandmothers inside the lodge. The answer was yes.

I peeled off my clothes, wrapped myself in one of the sheets made available for the Grandmothers to cover themselves before going into the lodge, and joined the line of Grandmothers who were entering the lodge. Angaangaq asked me to sit in the northwest, with a Kalaallit woman between me and where he sat in the north, next to the door.

As far as we know, this was the first Aalaartivik Ceremony conducted in Greenland in the old way for at least 200 years. What a privilege to be a part of it—by the fire and then inside.

The first round was the coldest I have ever experienced in a sweat lodge, as Angaangaq was careful to not have it too hot for the Kalaallit Elders, some being women in their 80's who had never before been in an Aalaartivik. Also, this Kalaallit-style sweat lodge was dug about a meter into the ground, so we were not far above the permafrost as we sat on the stones that lined the floor. I wrapped the sheet around myself to keep from shivering.

Then in the second round, with quite a few more hot rocks having been brought in, it actually began to feel warm, almost a bit hot. Prayers were made, in Kalaallisut (the West Greenlandic language), German, English and other languages, as each woman talked to the Great One in her own way. It was near the end of this round that I saw and talked with the woman from the spirit world.

As the door was opened at the end of the round, the daylight lit up the steam that filled the lodge, and the Grandmothers laughed with delight. This was all new to many of them, yet at the same time, I thought it seemed deeply ancient for them.

I do not know what the oldest Grandmother then told the men. I was busy getting dressed and warm in the cold air outside.

Since then I have sometimes wondered if the woman I saw and spoke with in that Aalaartivik was something I had imagined or made up, but it did not feel that way. She felt real.

What was happening within me when I was moved to reply, "I will speak for you," what was my motivation? I remember the joy I felt when I first walked with Angaangaq and began to experience the traditional teachings of the Far North. At that time I formed an idealized image of Greenland and its people. Then I visited Greenland and witnessed how much the traditional ways and the sense of life as a ceremony have been lost. Knowing how much even a small taste of the teachings of the Far North had meant to me, I wanted to share that with the modern Greenlanders and with the world. My willingness to speak for the woman I saw emerged from this.

And how might I “speak for” her? My creating the 2011 and 2012 *IceWisdom Calendars*, that had Angaangaq’s words paired with photos of Greenland, was the beginning of my speaking for her. They reminded the world of the traditional wisdom. I felt so much joy on the day in 2011 when I went with the oldest Grandmother to the old people’s home in Maniitsoq and gave her friends there copies of the 2011 *IceWisdom Calendar*. I was privileged to bring to these people, who had suffered so much during colonization, a small sign that the wisdom of their ancestors was again being listened to and respected.

Now as I, with the help of friends from the Circle and from Greenland, create *The Ceremony Cards* and bring them out into the world, I continue to speak for the ancestor I saw that day in the Aalaartivik. May I do this in a good way.

After I had been “walking with” Angaangaq for about two years, he informed me during an Aalaartivik ceremony that he would no longer be calling me Grandmother. Instead I was to be called Ningijooq. It was the first time I had heard that term. In Kalaallisut, Ningijooq means “wise older woman.”

The next morning at breakfast a young Kalaallit man, Angaangaq’s guest at the Circle, told us with a laugh, “A Ningijooq is the kind of old lady you’d better listen to!” I liked that. It made being a Ningijooq seem a bit less solemn. It is both a great honor and a great responsibility to have been given that name. When Angaangaq speaks to me as Ningijooq in the presence of other Kalaallit people, it seems that they look at me differently. May I have the wisdom and the courage to live up to this name.

I honor all the Ningijojqs who have guided us along the way—some directly in dreams, Aalaartivik ceremonies, and vision quests, and some through Angaangaq, including his grandmother and teacher Aanakasaa, his mother Aanaa Aanaqqii, and the oldest Grandmother—Atsaarsuaq, Aanakasaa’s niece who is now, in 2014, still walking the Earth and whom I’ve had the privilege to meet.

While working on the decks of cards and on this book I have been grateful for the support of several other members of the Circle—those who, like myself, have been walking with Angaangaq for five or more years, learning the teachings of the Far North. Angaangaq encouraged us, after “graduating” from the Circle, to create practices of our own based on these teachings, *as we have come to understand them*. What is contained in these cards and book is just that, our understanding of the teachings. It is by no means a complete rendering of those teachings, and of course our own perspectives are also contained in these cards and book. This is a small introduction to an ancient tradition that sustained people for thousands of years in very harsh conditions in a land that has never known war, Kalaallit Nunaat—Greenland.

We share these teachings in the spirit of what Atsaarsuaq told us at the close of the Sacred Fire Ceremony in Greenland in 2009, “This is not just for Greenland. It is for the world.”

—*Ningijojq Jane English*

Life is a Ceremony
. . . in itself worth celebrating with a Ceremony.

Why do we say, “Life is a Ceremony . . .?”

All of life is worth paying attention to, being present in, honoring as being sacred—all of it. How easy it is to forget this and judge some parts as good and some as bad.

And what do we mean by “. . . in itself worth celebrating with a Ceremony?”

These small ceremonies we perform within the Great Ceremony of Life are times to practice that paying attention, that being present, that honoring life as being sacred.

In a musical metaphor, using these cards is like practicing scales. The concert happens in the rest of our living.

Ceremony is an act you do that never stops growing. If it stops growing, it becomes a dead ritual. Ceremony comes from within, from who you really are. Ceremony is not a show to please others; it is a Ceremony from the heart.

The Ceremony Cards are words and images. The wisdom they point to can again be “made living” through we who use them.

An Invitation—

What will happen when you use *The Ceremony Cards*? You might begin by letting them introduce themselves to you through a simple card ceremony.

Hold the word cards face down, and, with the intention that they greet you, choose one card and place it face down.

Repeat this with the image cards.

Then turn them both over. Observe the cards, and pay attention to what is happening within you. Give notice to:

—how you react physically

—the emotions that are evoked in you

—the images that arise in your mind's eye

—your thoughts - the words that come to you

After honoring your own response, turn to the text in this book that goes with your word card and to the brief description of your image card. You might follow this by writing in your journal what you experienced in this introduction to the cards.

This process will be repeated many times as you work and play with these cards while doing other card ceremonies. Paying attention to what is happening within you keeps the ceremonies changing and alive. Learning how to pay attention to your initial responses to the cards is a process, one that is not necessarily easy at the start.

About The Ceremony Cards

Intention for creating The Ceremony Cards

- Introducing The Traditional Teachings of the Far North—Kalaallit Nunaat—Greenland, a land that has never known war. This wisdom is much needed in the world.
- Creating new ceremonies that facilitate coming home to ourselves so that we can be at peace with ourselves, our community, and the world.
- Providing a simple vehicle for the indigenous people of Greenland—the Kalaallit—to use in reconnecting with their traditional wisdom that has almost been lost.
- Giving people in IceWisdom Circles and people who have attended events with Angaangaq a way to touch again and make living what they experienced in the Circles.

Making the cards, book and pouch

The idea came to me in 2008 while in a bookshop with Angaangaq and other Circle members. Then it incubated for a few years. In 2012 I chose words for the word cards and went through all of them twice, picking one card each day and writing whatever came to me. Then I edited these writings. The photos were chosen from among the many images I had collected while creating the 2011 and 2012 *IceWisdom Calendars*.

While a big printing press printed the cards, I hand-collated them into decks, and rounded the corners. I spent many hours making the 645 pouches for this limited first edition of the cards, often wondering who it would be that would own each pouch.

Why card decks, not just a book?

A book is linear and is read in the order the author chooses. When the same teachings are in a deck of cards, what emerges in a card ceremony is what one is most receptive to right then. Using the cards, we are more engaged than when reading a book. It is interactive, and the teachings have a better chance of becoming living in our lives

There are 72 word cards based on aspects of the traditional teachings and 72 photographs of Greenland in the image card deck. The photographs allow this ancient land that has never known war to speak for itself, wordlessly. During a card ceremony, the image cards are placed on the word cards below the words.

Much depth and richness are introduced into the card ceremonies by allowing the combination of word and image to be different each time the cards are used, rather than having one image permanently fixed on each word card.

A starting point

All that is, is One—The Great One

Separateness is a delightful illusion, one that creates our world as we know it. Living as we do most of the time in this sense of being separate, it is good sometimes to dip back into the One as a reminder of who we really are . . . or are not! Using a card deck as a divination tool is a way to touch this oneness of the inner and the outer worlds. While the whole world can be a mirror, it is easier to see the mirroring in simple context of the cards.

About Card Ceremonies

The Ceremony Cards are a kind of intermediate help for those of us who have not spent our lives trusting our intuition—a kind of knowing where the boundaries of self and other melt, and where awareness goes beyond the ordinary five senses.

So often I find that the cards mirror to me something I already know but have not quite been able to acknowledge consciously.

The cards are like “training wheels,” useful as we learn to trust and stay balanced with our intuition, our inner knowing.

While the cards are an accurate mirror and they show us possibilities, they are not a substitute for our own decision-making. This is not so different from when we look in a physical mirror while deciding what to wear for the day. While the mirror gives a reflection, we still have to choose which outfit to wear.

In addition to being mirrors, these cards can be gates, openings to things we have never before experienced, and to the depths of our own being.

When we are really at home in ourselves and trust our inner wisdom we do not need the cards. However it seems to be part of being human to lose our way sometimes—often—most of the time! We need all the help we can get to live our lives in a balanced way. The cards are one kind of help.

As with any really good helper the cards if over-used will seem to back off and become less relevant. That may be a sign that it is time to take more responsibility, to not depend on the cards, and to trust what comes from within.

Tips on Doing Card Ceremonies

Before doing a card ceremony take some time to relax and focus your intention. Refine your question or intention until it is really clear. Though do not be surprised if during the ceremony you realize your question changes and deepens and that your initial question was just a point from which to begin.

For each pair of word and image cards you choose, spend some time contemplating the image and word separately, and then look at the relationship between the word and the image.

Allow plenty of time to just “be” with each card before you read about it or discuss it.

As you close your card ceremony and pick up the cards, do as you might with any helper—give thanks to whatever you sense to be the source of the wisdom that has been brought to you.

Create Your Own Card Ceremonies

We encourage you to create your own ceremonies with *The Ceremony Cards*. Let your intuition and your dreams be your guides in this. Work with the form of a ceremony and refine it. Remember that for a ceremony to be a living ceremony, not a dead ritual, it needs space to change and grow.

When you have created a card ceremony that serves you and others well, please share it with us at: info@theceremonycards.com

About The Image Cards

The image cards allow the land of Kalaallit Nunaat to speak directly to you, wordlessly. Intentionally, there are no descriptions in words of the “meaning” of these images. Go beyond words and let whatever they evoke in you be their meaning.

These are not “picture postcard” views nor do they cover all aspects of Greenland. Most were made near Kangerlussuaq, a small town inland from Greenland’s west coast, at the eastern end of a long fjord, near the edge of the Big Ice. A few were made near Maniitsoq on the west coast, and near Ittoqortoormiit on the east coast.

The Photographers

Adam Lyberth (photos 1-37) is a relative of Angaangaq’s and lives in Kangerlussuaq, home to the airport that is most travelers’ first stop in Greenland. Adam makes many of his photographs while working as a tourist guide. He takes people to the Big Ice and to see the caribou and musk ox, as well as the northern lights. In many ways his guided tours are conducted like ceremonies.

Jane English (38-63) has for over forty years illustrated numerous books and calendars. Her photographs on the cards were made between 2009 and 2012 during four trips to Greenland—two in summer and two in winter.

Members of Angaangaq’s Heart Spirits Circle, *Maya Dolder* (64), *Monika Bronner-Hirschler* (65-69), and *Esther Burbach* (70) made theirs while in Greenland in 2009 for the Sacred Fire Ceremony and in 2011 for the Shamanic Spiritual Walk.

The polar bear photos (71-72) were made near Ittoqortoormiit by *Steve Berthelsen*, another of Angaangaq’s relatives.

About the Word Cards

On the following pages is text to go with the 72 word cards, in alphabetical order in English, each name followed by the Kalaallisut (Greenlandic) equivalent.*

Bits of wisdom are interspersed with descriptions of what some of us experienced while using the cards, and also with what was evoked by the combination of that word card with various image cards.

We include our personal experiences here in the hope that they will serve as examples and will help you recognize and pay attention to what happens for you when you use the cards.

In *italic* text are occasional examples of what was evoked in us by some combinations of word and image cards. We include these to inspire you to notice your own responses to various word and image combinations.

What the cards evoke in you is more important than what is written here. We encourage you to make notes on your own understandings as they emerge while you use these cards. Use this written text only to supplement your own responses.

The little arrow → at the bottom of a right-hand page indicates that the text for that word card continues on the next page.

* Much appreciation to Angaangaq for making the translations from English to Kalaallisut.

The following two brief essays discuss the relation of divination to modern science, and of indigenous spirituality to organized religion.

“But this is not scientific! Or is it?”

Long before I became a Ningijōq, I did a Ph.D. in experimental sub-atomic particle physics in 1970. I really believed in science.

It is commonly thought that science is incompatible with divination, that science is logical while divination is intuitive. For a long time, I was of this opinion and, being committed to a scientific worldview, would have nothing to do with divination. I saw it as mere fortune-telling, as something used by the unscrupulous to manipulate and control those who were too lazy to take responsibility for their lives.

However, after I became as interested in exploring the inner worlds of consciousness as I had been in exploring the outer world scientifically, I met and studied with people who were using various systems of divination as mirrors of consciousness and as tools for growth and transformation.

After using a set of cards daily for several years in my meditation and self-reflection practice, I felt both personal and scientific need to reconcile my divination experience with my scientific worldview. The intuitive part of me asked the scientific part of me to apply one of the methods of science—statistics—to the records of what cards I had chosen.

Statistical analysis of cards chosen daily for three years (1978-1981), one card for “body,” one for “mind” and one for “spirit,” shows 99.97% probability of their being non-random.

Analysis of cards chosen by two other divination practitioners shows even greater non-randomness. Control experiments done with numbered index cards and with a computer random number generator are consistent with being random.

The deciding factor in producing the non-random results is that cards related to deep wisdom be chosen after a period of meditation, and that the cards be chosen with the intention that they be a mirror. Contrary to what conventional science assumes, the data shows some kind of connection between the cards and the person's state of consciousness.

Australian physicist Brian McCusker replicated the experiment a number of times with several people and showed similar results, which were published in a mainstream physics journal in 1988.

At my suggestion, he also analyzed his data separately for the body, the mind, and the spirit cards. As I had hypothesized, the results were increasingly non-random as one goes from the subject/object world of the physical body, through the intermediate world of mind, to the oneness in the world of spirit.

This simple experiment can be replicated by anyone willing to make the effort. And it does really take an effort to stay with this practice with intention for a year or longer.

Through challenging my "inner scientist" to be totally scientific, to apply the methods (ceremonies?!) of science to the use of divination tools I made peace within myself. My inner scientist could no longer dismiss divination as nonsense.

The full paper is at: www.theceremonycards.com/science.pdf

— *Ningijoj Jane English*

Tuttu and The Reverend

While in Greenland we became aware of the influence of the Lutheran church on the communities there, with the traditional spiritual ways almost totally supplanted by those of the church.

In the summer of 2011 many of us who were in Greenland for Vision Quest and for the Shamanic Spiritual Walk were invited to a Confirmation Ceremony at the church in Kangerlussuaq and a Kaffemik (reception) that followed. A few days later the local priest attended our ceremonies out near the Big Ice and conducted a Christian worship service within our ceremonies.

Angaangaq tells us his Grandmother Aanakasaa said, “My way is not the only way.” In this spirit we invited Rev. Wayne Whitelock to share his thoughts about the interaction of Christian and Kalaallit spirituality. He is a retired pastor, police chaplain, and professor of theology who participated in our 2011 activities in Greenland. Angaangaq calls Wayne “Tuttu” because, like the caribou, he has the ability to walk in so many different worlds without sinking. What follows are Wayne’s words.

In my late teens I decided to become a minister. Before I was twenty-one, I had earned my B.S. in Psychology and begun studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. I was a Christian—spiritually, philosophically, and culturally.

Over the last fifty years I have served parishes, taught at the graduate level, and served the U.S. Armed Forces and local, state and federal law enforcement agencies as a Protestant Chaplain. I have served in diverse theological communities ranging

from Anglican and Lutheran, to Methodist, Church of Christ, Congregational, and Baptist.

Early in my ministry I participated in the American Expedition to Hebron in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This led to an interest in Comparative Religion, and the study of the diversity of the religious experiences.

Over the past ten years, my study of people's desire to relate to that which is holy or transcendent in their lives has led me to pursue an understanding of indigenous, native, and tribal forms of cosmology and ceremony as an expression of spiritual experiences that have developed parallel to, but are not derived from, the Christian experience. I have visited, lived with, shared ceremonies, and talked with members of ancient indigenous traditions in the North and South American Continents, and the Eskimo traditions of Canada and Greenland.

I find these traditions to be filled with spiritual energy, powerful faith, and healing emotion. I learned that ceremony preserves and communicates the essence of indigenous spiritual experiences in unwritten form in much the same way as traditional Christian theological writings have tried to preserve the religious experiences of the Christian faith. And, much to my delight, I have found that the spiritual essence of faith that relates to the transcendence of the holy and to interaction with God and each other is remarkably similar throughout all these traditions.

Bringing these separate traditions together strengthens them all through mutual validation and the awareness that we all share a common heritage of soul and spirit derived from our Creator.

Because this pilgrimage into indigenous ceremony has proved to be so spiritually fruitful from a theological understanding, I have come to celebrate the use of ceremony as a valid and powerful tool.

Christians have long understood the use of meditation, song, dance, chant, prayer, and many other forms of ceremony as part of the formal practice of one's faith. However, many have lost, or perhaps never discovered, the value of other ceremonial practices available in daily life.

This story of my sixty-plus year pilgrimage gives context for my thoughts about *The Ceremony Cards*. Here the essence of words and images that are common in the ceremonies of the Kalaallit have been given substance in an easy to use, powerfully enabling tool through which a spiritually sensitive and thoughtful person can explore their place in life, their awareness of the power of the Holy and their relationship with others and the whole of creation.

With this tool, we have a wonderful example of how the energies and wisdom of multiple cultures and faiths can be integrated into one powerful and informative spiritual practice that opens one to the richness of inner resources and to transcendence in the presence of Spirit.

—Rev. Dr. Wayne R. Whitelock - “Tuttu”