

# Cama'i-Hello

## Let's Dance

It's festival time, and I am dressed in my special parka for dancing. I love the beat of a skin drum and sharing the songs and movements I've learned from my Elders. Tonight I will perform in the qasgiq—community house. This is a building owned by a rich family. It has one big room, and in winter, our whole village gathers here to celebrate the year's harvest. This evening, the qasgiq has many special decorations. There are paddles, harpoons, sea otter pelts, and kayaks hanging from the ceiling. They remind us of hunting and the harvesting activities of the past year. With songs, movements, and storytelling, we will honor our ancestors, share history, and thank animal spirits.

In Alutiiq, my language, the word for drum and music are the same cauyaq. The drum is our main instrument, although we also perform with rattles and whistles. Like other ceremonial objects, drums are decorated. Some have painted pictures of spirit helpers or a carved handle.

## Tattoos

When I became old enough for marriage, I received tattoos on my chin and cheeks. They remind people that I am an adult. Sometimes I wear red and black face paint for dancing.



## Atkuk—Clothes

I am wearing my special parka. It has tufts of white fur that float when I dance and it resembles falling snow. Each color in my parka has a meaning. Tan'ertuq/tamlertuq—black is for darkness and death. Kawirtuq—red is for blood, life, and ancestors. Qatertuq—white is for the creator, light, vision, and people.



# AGNGUARTA

## THE DANCER



Puppet clothing by Susan Malutin from felt, tufts of ermine fur, and glass beads.

# ALAS'KAAQ

ALASKA



## CAMA'I

Cama'i is our greeting. It's a friendly, welcoming word that means hello. Say cama'i when you meet a friend or enter a room full of people.



## QIK'RTAQ KODIAK

Our people came to Kodiak from Aluuwiq—the Alaska Peninsula to the northwest. Here, there was a chief named Atlivatu whose daughter vanished. Another chief named lakunak helped him search for her. They looked in many places for a long time. From the southern coast of the Alaska Peninsula, they sighted land across the water and called it Qik'rtaq—Island. This is where Kodiak gets its name. Atlivatu and lakunak were curious about Qik'rtaq and investigated. They found many good things and persuaded their families to settle here.

