

Cama'i-Hello

Being A Woman

I live in a ciqlluut-sod house with my husband and our children. Two of my sisters and their families live with us. Each family has a room where we keep our belongings and sleep under bear skins at night. We share a large central room where we work, cook, and teach our children. There is also a maqiwik—a room where we splash hot rocks with water to make steam for washing.

I have many tasks. They include collecting food like clams and bird eggs, cleaning fish, tanning hides, stitching clothing, weaving baskets and socks, and making skin covers for our boats. I keep my knives and sewing tools in a kakiwik—a small decorated bag.

My family depends on me for hunting luck. I must act respectfully toward animals. I use every scrap of hide and feather in my sewing. Beautiful creations please the animal spirits. Waste brings bad luck.

Healers

Some women in my village are healers. They can diagnose illness, make medicines, treat the sick, and deliver babies. They are respected for their kindness and knowledge.



Marriage

When I was a teenager, I received chin tattoos showing that I was an adult and ready to start a family. Then, my parents and my husband's parents arranged our marriage. My family liked that he was a good hunter. He moved into our house and worked with my father. When we had our first baby, my husband built us our own ciqlluq-sod house.

ARNAQ

WOMAN



Puppet clothing by Susan Malutin from brain-tanned deer hide, dyed seal gut, sheared and plucked beaver, cotton thread, bone, 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.

