

# *It's a nightmare when 'those people' make all the laws*

by **Rudolph G. Hamilton**  
for the Tundra Times

SHAGELUK — Being the first one to travel from the village, the elders called for me to appear before them.

I felt honored and somewhat apprehensive to appear before them. All their knowledge, the wisdom of our people could change your destiny.

They were considered by all to be experts in every field of endeavor that they chose to do. They proved this time and time and again as we watched.

I stopped short just inside the door. There stood one of "those" people. Cloud colored skin and dirty water hair. He held something square in his hand.

Since I could say a few words in this person's language, the elders asked me to translate. The elders didn't know about the cost of this knowledge, the jeers and laughter as I tried to understand. All the while, I couldn't eat with those people, use their steam bath or stay in the same house.

The man smiled and looked at me expectantly. Struggling with the words I managed to get out. "What do you want?"

"I am a missionary and teacher," he said holding up the square object. "I've come to teach you about our ways to survive in the world," he said sweeping his arms wide.

"What did he say?" the elders asked. After I told them they became angry.

"No one could come and teach the children without proving themselves," they said.

When I told the man this he became angry.

"This is the law of the land!" he said, sweeping his arms wide with the square. "Someday we will be here in large numbers to teach you."

As he said this, he chest swelled. He continued, "Even if you understood, we own the teaching system. We'll change the requirements for teaching so that if you could teach your own kids you would need special instruction on how to do it."

His voice shook with rage as he pointed to the elders as if they were small children.

"I have this piece of paper that says I am a teacher and a preacher. You can't teach because you don't have that paper! You would never understand the paperwork to run the system, nor would we let your kids advance far enough to do that.

"We'd put them in special classes and get more money to help them, if we wanted. No one would check on us to see if we are doing a good job or not. Besides," he said, "what better place than this to live for your kids?"

Amid the ringing in my ear and dry mouth, the elders all demanding to know what this heathen had just said, I stared at the ground, not believing what I had heard. I looked at the elders, and knowing I couldn't lie to their faces, I just said, "He didn't say anything."

I woke in a cold sweat, heart pound-

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ing from the nightmare. As I turned the alarm clock off, I thought, it's time to put wood in the stove and wake the kids for school.

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