

## The winter sun

The winter solstice - in Greenlandic *ullukinneq* - takes place on 21 December. The day is celebrated here in the capital of Greenland with a torchlight procession and community singing.

The winter solstice is the day during the year when the sun has its lowest height around noon. In the days around the winter solstice, the sun is low in the sky and just over the horizon few hours, before it disappears behind the horizon again.

In the northernmost settlements in Greenland the sun does not rise above the horizon in the winter. But however the people in these settlements do not live in pitch darkness. During the day they live in twilight and at night they in cloudless days experience the magnificent polar sky with twinkling stars and the northern lights blazing.

In December and January the sun draws long shadows in Nuuk, and the colours of the sun are usually dominated by the orange tones.

Although there are dark and cold, there is a job to be done. The windows of the town are illuminated at twilight. Behind the windows people are working in offices and shops. The children are brought and retrieved to the school in the first and last pale sunlight of the day.

According to the traditional practice we in December install a shining Christmas star, *ulloriaasaq*, in the windows. This tradition is so normal and prevalent in this country, that in the new building special electrical connectors are installed for the star above the windows.

Out at sea the work also continues. Although there can be very cold, and although the fiord is filled with large and small ice floes, the fishermen and the hunters continue their work. They bring fresh cod, redfish and seals back to the *Kalaaliaraq* Market - the market place where we buy the Greenlandic products.



*The winter sun at the fiord,  
December 2012*