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> [laetrile] in a daily ration. All populations living close to a neolithic level appear to be characterized dietarily by a similarly high consumption of nitriloside-rich foods. Civilized, Westernized or Europeanized man, on the other hand, relies on a diet that probably provides an average of less than 2 mg of nitriloside a day.

The Hunzas, Krebs said, ate lots of apricots and especially prized the apricot kernel (a rich source of laetrile). He wrote:

> [U]pon investigating the diet of these people we found that the seed of the apricot was prized as a delicacy and that every part of the apricot was utilized. We found that the major source of fats used for cooking was the apricot seed, and that the apricot oil was so produced as inadvertently to admit a fair concentration of nitriloside or traces of cyanide into it.

However, firsthand observers contradicted this account. According to the physician John Clark, MD, writing in 1956 in *The Lost Kingdom of the Himalayas:*

> Hunzas eat the apricots fresh or dried, and crack the seeds open to obtain the almond-like nuts. ... The *sweet* apricot nuts are eaten plain. The *bitter* ones are ground with stone mortars ... and the oil is squeezed by hand from the resulting nut meal. *This oil is highly poisonous. It is used for fuel* in the little shallow saucer lamps, with a cotton twist for a wick." (emphasis added)

The bitterness of apricot kernels, and their resulting oil, is entirely dependent on its laetrile content. Thus, while it is probably true that Hunzas ingested more laetrile than Western people, they also took active steps to *minimize* their exposure to it. They basically used it for light and heat, not nutrition.

In reality, Hunzas had many of the same diseases as the rest of humankind, and (despite claims to the contrary) no particular health or longevity. As to cancer, Clark does not mention it and Krebs may be right in stating that it was unusual there. But that situation was typical for almost all indigenous people eating a whole-foods diet in their native habitat. That said, there is no factual basis for believing that it was the ingestion of GCs from apricot kernels and other sources that kept these indigenous people relatively cancer free. This could have been the result of other nutrients or any combination of things that constituted a profoundly different lifestyle than the Western lifestyle of today.

The Case of the Inuit

Another one of Krebs's favorite arguments concerned the Inuit:

> For a period of at least 80 years the Eskimaux [sic] have been observed with even greater scrutiny by medical men, missionaries, teachers, traders and others for the specific purpose of attempting to discover the possible incidence of cancer among them. Despite such observations, no case of cancer has yet been reported among these two native populations [the Hunza people and the Inuit] while they lived on their native diet; however, in the case of the Eskimaux a number of cancer victims have been found among those who left their aboriginal dietary habits for a Westernized diet.

I believe the latter statement to be accurate. But the ethnologist and explorer Vilhjamur Stefansson (1879–1962) set forth contrary views in several fascinating books, including *The Friendly Arctic* and especially *Cancer: Disease of Civilization?*

With the adoption of Western ways, the "diseases of civilization," including cancer, began to appear. In recent times (1998–2007), Inuit women had a 29% *higher* rate of cancer than the general Canadian population. (The male rate was 14% lower, mainly due to a lower rate of prostate cancer.) There is a particularly high rate of cancers of the nasopharynx, lung and bronchus, colorectal, stomach (males) and kidney and renal pelvis (females). By contrast, there were many reports, from skilled medical observers, that the Inuit had virtually no cancer until the 1930s.

However, far from confirming Krebs's theory, Stefansson reported that historically the Inuit diet was 90% meat and fish. They ate the meat of walrus, ringed seal, bearded seal, beluga whale, caribou, polar bear, muskoxen, birds (including their eggs), and fish. When they could, some of the Inuit also ate tubers, roots, and berries. But Stefansson reported that many of them would go *six to nine months* per year *on nothing but flesh*.

According to Krebs, despite their apparent lack of vegetative foods, the Inuit (a) actually ate an abundance of cloudberries (*Rubus spectabilis*) and (b) routinely ate the frozen contents of the rumen of caribou, which supposedly contained an abundance of laetrile.

Krebs wrote:

> [W]e found that one berry grew abundantly in the Arctic areas and that this berry is extraordinarily rich in nitriloside. This is the salmon-berry, cloud-berry, or buffalo-berry (*Rubus spectabilis*). It is eaten by birds, animals and men. It is also incorporated into pemmican, which is eaten during all seasons of the year.

In *The Friendly Arctic*, Stefansson also mentions the Inuit's ingestion of salmonberries. But his comments do not support Krebs's interpretation. According to Stefansson:

> It is well known *that some Eskimo groups eat either no vegetable food at all or practically none*. But in all parts where we have been, except in Coronation Gulf, they are fond of the berry known in Alaska as the "salmon berry," and elsewhere as the cloud berry (*Rubus chamaemorus Linn.*).[1] *We were astonished*, especially my Alaska Eskimo companions, when we found that some of the Coronation Gulf Eskimos lived among an abundance of these berries and *had never thought of tasting them*. (p. 63; emphasis added)

Stefansson continued:

> I should say that fully half the women [in Coronation Gulf] *positively refused even to taste the salmon berry* during the summer we spent with them. (p.64)

The anthropologists Harriet V. Kuhnlein and Nancy J. Turner, in *Traditional Plant Foods of Canadian Indigenous Peoples: Nutrition, Botany and Use* (1991), confirmed that cloudberries are "a staple of Indigenous Peoples of Northern Canada" *but only from July to September*. What about the other nine months of the year? During this time they eat no laetrile-containing foods.