

“The Apprentice” as told by Lewis Debassige, M’Chigeeng First Nation, from a story told to him by the late Dan Pine of Garden River

Ayaansooked: Lewis Debassige

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Haa, mii na gwe?

Enh.

Nahaaw. Nahaa sa ntam nga-dbaad’daan,¹ gaa-zhi-, gaa-zhi-noondmaan genii maanda aansookewin. Nahaa ngoding ngii-, ngii-zhaami gtigaan-ziibing. OCF oodi naa, ngii-, ngii-wiindamaagoomi, “gdaa-oo-naa gdoo-oo-mzinaazawaa wa Dan Pine.” Mii sa oodi gii-zhaayaang gaa-dgoshnaang oodi, ooh aapji go gchi-nendam wa akiwenziinh naa. Wii go naa wii-nbwaach’aayaang. Ntam shii go ngii-maajiinaazhkaagonaa oodi naa wii-deb’binaa’aang giw nmebnag. Nihaa go naa maanda eshki-niibing maage nmebnag pii bmiyaa’aad. Mii’sh oodi giw gaa-deb’binaa’aang, ngii-naanaanaanig ngii-gwaabiignaanaanig ko mii dash go ngii-bskaabwinaanaanig ngii-bkazhaayiimi.² Mii’sh gii-nboobiikaanaad niw gaa-shkwaa-, gaa-shkwaa-wiisniyaang nmebnag ngii-mwaanaanig nboob. Mii iw, mii go naa, gii-dbaajmataagwaang, mii’sh maanda wi, aansookaan gaa naa, gaa-miingoowaang. Gii-dbaajmaan geyii niwi, kiwenziinyin, mnik gchi-piitzi go naa wa naa bezhig gaa naa, mii niwin debaajmaad. Gdaabkoong [mii nig], mii’sh oodi niwi, jiigyahiing oodi nihag jiigbiig mii oodi daad aw³ kiwenziinh. Aapji giuwenh kina gegoo gii-gkendaan maanda nihaa, e-zaagkiimgag, waa-naabdag, waa go naa waa-mnaabjitood wedi wii-

¹ Some also spell this as dbaataan.

² Sounds like above but rendered in dictionaries as ngii-bkazhaawemi.

³ Sometimes Anishinaabemowin speakers from Sagamok pronounce this pronoun as “aw” instead of “wa”, as they would on Manitoulin. Lewis Debassige’s mother Josette was from Sagamok First Nation.

nnaandweyaad wiya kina go maanda mshkiki. Maanda mshkiki niibiishens maage waaskone, pii e-daapnigaadeg, e-zgaknigaadeg, miinwaa eni-naabjitoong miinwaa ojiibkanens. Kina go maamwi-, kiwenzii debaaj-, debaajmaad, debaajmaad gii-gkendaan wi. Mnik gchi-piitzi'sh naa maaba. Mii go naa washme bmi-yaa go naa. Aabdeg iw⁴ washme nshwaasmidna daa-gii-ndsa-bboongizban. Eshkam'sh ni-znagzi niw maanda baamaa baabkibjiged. Mii'sh giienh gii-kwedwed wiya go naa wa bezhig shki-, shkiniigish ji-zhaa-, ji-bi-zhinaazhkaagaazpan nahii wiin'sh kinoomawaan yahii gye kina gegoo gekendang, e-zhi-gkendang. Mii sa maanpii. Ngoding kizhebaawang, aapji go kizhebaawan, mii aw nishkaad, bezhig oodi shkinwe niwi zhaazhi daataashk'gase. Mii naa wi, zhaazhi ko gojiing ko gii-nji-jiibaakwewag. Daataashk'gase mii zhaazhi maaba, nbiish gzhaagmizang, niibiishaaboo wii-zhitood. Aapji go jepminaagzi go gkendaagzi go maaba weweni wii-nokiid, weweni wii-gshkitoon wii-nokiid, gaa-shkwaa-boodwed, gaa-shkwaa-, niibiishaaboo gaa-shkwaa-, go naa, gaa-shkwaa-g, gaa-shkwaa-giizhiit-, gaa-shkwaa-giizhtood, mii giienh, mii'sh eni-gwad. "Gii-bi-zhi- naa-, ngii-bi-zhinaashkaagoo. Noos ngii-bi-zhi-naashkaag wii-bi-naadmoon'naa ji-kinoomawzhyin'sh wi geyii ezhi-na-, ezhi-gkendman maanda wii-nnaandaweyin. N-nitaa-nokii," kida aw giienh shkinwe. "Kina go gegoo zhaazhi n-gashtoon, n-nitaa-mnise, nbiish ge, nbiish gga-naadmoon wii-naadyin oodi ziibiinsing miinwaa, miinwaa maamik wesiinsag gewii, genii ngashkaak wii-nihaa ge, wii-nsagwaa giwi miinwaa wii-ji-naa-, wii-ji-mnazwaapan. Kina go maanda zhaazhi n-gashtoon," kida giienh. "Mii eta

⁴ Sometimes Anishinaabemowin speakers from Sagamok pronounce this pronoun as "iw" instead of "wi", and it goes back and forth depending on the preceding word or the subsequent word. Lewis Debassige's mother Josette was from Sagamok First Nation.

go ji-kinoomawzhyin wi nihaa waa-ni-bkibdoowaanh miinwaa waa-zhi-na'aa-, waa-nakaazying, kina go gye. Aapji go naa naa, gchi-nendam maaba kiwenziinh, "mii sa maaba noonj shkiniigish naa, ge-nishipan waa-naadmawzhid," nendam giyyenh. Mii'sh go jibwaa-naawkweg mii wi, bezhig miinwaa gii-bi-dgoshin. Gaawii go, nookwegoojin, gaawii go gchi-jepzisii. Zhaage-, zhaagwenma zhinaagzi, mii go gewii ekdod, "N-mishoomis ngii-bi-zhi-naashkaag wii-naadmoon'naa maanpii wii-gkendmaan genii kina gegoo mshkiki ezhi-gkendman. N-waabmaa'sh maaba nihaa, ntam gaa-dgoshing aapji go naa maaba naa jepzi. Washme maaba daa-nishi naadmaaged," kida giyyenh. Aanwendiza go maaba eko-niizhing gaa-bi-dgoshing. Haa gaa-shkwaa-wiisniwaad, mii wi, mii'sh maaba kiwenziinh, "Nahaag sa gga-zhichgem. Nbiish, nbiish gga-naa-, gga-maajiidoonaawaa ooshtoodi'sh gidaabik, maanda gidaabik. Mii oodi ge-zhaayeg. Nongo shkwaa-naawkweg gga-ni-maajaam. Oodi'sh gidaab-, gida-, aapji go gidaabik mii iw oodi nikeyaa, gchi-mtigoog oodi yaawag. Mii niwi zhingwaakoog. Gijya'iing aapji'sh go oodi [naa]⁵, gijya'iing oodi [inaabkin] mtigoong mii oodi naa tegin wzaswaan, zaswinan, mii go zaswin, zaswinan. Mii maa boonmawaad, mii maa baashkaawiyaad niwi go naa e-gaachiinjig miigz-, mii wi sa naa, gewii wniijaansan. Naa'sh maa gga-ndinaanaa, miigwaans, gaawii go gchi-miigwan. Mii wa go gaa-nji-maawnji-gaachin bneshiins gaa-naa-, gaa-niniganaad," gii-jigaazo giyyenh. "Mii oodi gga-bi-gbeshim'sh oodi naagshig. Haa, waabang'sh gga-bi-bskaabiim." "Ahaaw," kidwag giyyenh mii'sh maamig. Bngii noopwaan gii-bii-, gii-bi-daapnamwaad miinwa'sh wi nbiish, gii-maajaawaad. Wiiba'sh go naa gii-, maaba go naa, shkwaach gaa-dgoshing wiiba gaa-

⁵ The square brackets indicate that we are unsure of the word.

ni-ngangaazod. Aapji go wewiib wii-, wi naa, gii-niisaakiiye miinwaa gii-
maajigidaakiiye oodi, gii-ni-dkamii maa ziibiinsing, gii-maajigidaakiiyed maaba
naa, ntaam gaa-dgoshing, mii maaba e-jepzid. Haa, mii bi-, gii-naagshi. Aapji gye
miinwaa, memdage go ninaa, gii-mno-naagshi, weweni go nangoonsag, kina go
nangoonsag gii-zaagewewag. Yaazhoo-waabang, gchi-kizheb, zhaazhi gye miinwaa
maaba ntaam gaa-dgoshing debwewetood oodi, mii go miinwaa, boodwe,
niibiishaaboo dishtoon. Mii'sh maaba kiwenzii gii-naa, gii-oo-nkweshkawaad oodi,
haa zhaazhi giizhtoon niibiishaaboo. Mii ziignamaagaazod waa-mnikwed. Miinwaa
bkwezhgan gii-miingaaza wi waa-miijid kizhebaaw-wiisnid maaba kiwenzii. Mii'sh
giiyenh go ekdod wa naa e-jepzid, "Gii-dgoshin oodi wiiba go naa ngii-dgoshin
jibwaa-naagshig, jibwaa-naagshig," kida. "Ngii-kwaandwe maa naa, gchi-mtigoong.
Mii maaba gaa-naanag." Din'ni-, din'nmawaan'sh gye niwi naa miigwaansan niwi go
naa. "Ngii-gbesh oodi. Mii dash oodi, gaamya'iing'sh oodi naa, ngii-naab," kida.
"Gchi-aazhwayiing oodi maanda gchi-aazhbig e-teg, aazhwa'iing oodi enwek go naa
n-maamiikwaabminaagwag, geyaabi aanind oodi gwetaani'aabkaa," kida. "Mii go'sh,
mii oodi giija'iing oodi e-naabkaag, naa go eta go wi naa, goon yaa," kida. "Mii oodi
e-piitaabkaag. Mii dash e-nendmaan," kida giiyenh aw nini e-jepzid. "Aapji go oodi
ndaa-zhaa" kida giiyenh. "Ndaa-oo-ndagkendaan oodi gewiinwaa, gewiinwaa oodi
ezhi-bmaadziwaad oodi Nishnaabeg e-yaajig. Ndaa-oo-ndagkendaan gewiinwaa
oodi ezhi-gshkitoowaad wii-naadmaadzowaad wii-bmi-yaa-, miinwaa wi naa,
naandoodizwaad kina gegoo ezhi-bmaadziwaad ndaa-oo-ndagkendaan. Nga-bsk-,
ndaa-bskaabwiidoon'sh wi gegiinwi maanpii wii-maawni-, naa, ji-
naadmaagoowingbane gewiinwaa ezhi-gkendmaan," kida giiyenh. Aapji go naa

maaba gkendaagzi gewii waa-zhi-, naa, gii-oo-zhimno-, mnagkenjigewin oodi gchi-aazhwiying. Aah mii'sh sa maaba akiwenziiyag, aapji naa g-debwendaan dibendaanan wi naa "Aabdeg oodi wii-zhaayin," kida. "Aabdeg'sh go sa gga-zhaa." Mii'sh gye giyyenh maaba e-jepzid gye, "Wiindmawshin naa, noos. Niim'shk-, gaawii maaba da-mnendziin iishpin gkendang iw naa. Bkaan ngoji zhaayaan. "Gga-wiindmaw'sh noos, da-maajiinaashkaan maanda naa bwaajmowin. Gga-wiindmawaa noos oodi bbaa-ndendyaanh," kida. "Gaawii maanpii nihi, maanpii ngii-shkwiisii, wii-ni-skoonwiyaanh. Mii sa, aabdeg'sh go oodi gwii-zhaa," jigaaza giyyenh. Mii sa go wi, mii sa gii-ni-maajaad. Mii oodi gchi-aazhwiying wii-bbaayaad, bbaa-ndagkenjiged. Mii'sh go e-shkwaa-naawkweg, mii gewii, mii go, eko-niizhing go naa, gaa-dgoshing e-bi-dgoshing. Mii go geyaabi nookwegoojin, gaawii go gegoo gnawaabmaasiin niwi kiwenziiyan. Enwek gchi-gonaa zhaagwenmishki maa. Mii'sh giyyenh e-kdod, "Gaawii nii oodi ngii-dgoshnasii gidaabik," kida giyyenh. "Gaawii waawaaj go naa gaawaanh maanpii ngii-dkamii ziibiinsing bemjiwang. Mii go gaa-ni-dkamiiyaan, mii... ngii-ni-waabndaan iw naa waa-ni-zhaayaan, gmaapiich go gewii ndoo-ni-ngaashkaa," kida. "N-maamiikwendaan maa ni-, geget enkamgag wa naa, waa-ni-dakiiyaan. Mii go, aapji, engoonsag, engoonsag miinwaa maamind ni-gaachiingin naa e-zaagkiigin nowanj gego naandegin bkaan zhinaagwad, mii'sh e-nendmaan. Aabdeg go gewii gegoo maamind naabdidgenan wii-nnaandweding. Aabdeg go gewii maanda gegoo nang'ndedigenan wii-naadmaagoowing maanda gegiinwi ezhi-bmaadziying." Aapji go maanaa nowanj gegoo, nowanj gegoo dazhinaa-, nendmaw maaba iidig maage ezhi-maamiikwaamdang maanaa pane

edakaadming.⁶ Mii sa go maa gaa-ni-nji-naagshig, gii-ni-dbikad, mii'sh maa gii-gbeshid, Yaazhoo-waabang gii-nishkaa. "Aaniish naa aapji genii ge-ni-kidwaamba?" nendam wa naa, "ge-nag aw akiwenzii. Gaa go waawaaj aabta- aabtooying ngii-dgoshnasii oodi wi naa. Baani⁷ wii-dgoshing, wii-zhaayaan. Mii go naa wi, gdaa-ni-giiye-, gdaa-ni-giiye go wa naa ndawaaj," dinaan. "Gaawii booch gii-gshkitoosii oodi gidaabik wii-dgoshnan. gdaa-ni-giiwenaashkwan⁸," kida giiyenh. Mii'sh maaba kiwenzii baapid. "Tahaa," kida maaba kiwenzii. "Washme niizhwaaso-bboon maanpii gii-bi-zhi-naashkaagoonaaban," kida giiyenh. Maanpii gewii yaa wa bezhig gaa-yaad, gaa-ngajtood maanda go naa, wii-nnaandaw'ged," kida. "Mii aw gaa-bi-nji-, gaa-bi-nji-naashkaagoowaanh maanpii wii-bi-ndagkendmaan wii-naadmawag maaba, wii-ni-naabshkawag maaba. Mii'sh iw gaa-zhi-kwejmizhyin wii-gidaakiiyeyaan maa gidaabkoong. Gaawii genii oodi ngii-dgoshnasii," kida. "Mii go genii maa genii gii-ninaa, ngii-ni-gbesh oodi naa, gaa-dkamiyaanh ziibiinsing. Mii go naasaab ezhich-, gaa-zhchigeyin, mii genii gaa-zhiwebziyaan." Mii wi. Mii wi, mii wi gete-dbaajmowin bezhig. Ngii-miigechwi'aa aazha maa niwi de-mnik ching go maanda naa aadzookaan. Mii wa Dan Pine-ban ngii-miin-, ngii-miingoonaa wi. Aapiish naa'sh ko n-noondaan wi. N-zhaagnaashiim, zhaagnaashiimang go naa, daanaabjikaaznaawaa wii-dbaad'damwaad.

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⁶ E-dkokaadming is a synonym.

⁷ Baani is a synonym for baamaa.

⁸ Could also be spelt as gdaa-ni-giiyenaashkwan.