

Sáhkeic and the Water Fairies

Joseph Neptune
Pleasant Point, Maine
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PASSAMAQUODDY TEXT

1. Nehè, wòt ntathuhkàkon, Sáhkeic,¹ kipóssis yali-cossínūwut yùt mecimi Sipayik. Malom=òte wesami-moke-li-cossínūwut eci-macáhat. Mam=òte Panūwapskèk pecíyat, ámsqàhs=òte pecíyat, nìt etòli-msónok luhkewákon. 'Qisi-cuwiyaníya kotunkewinúwok wtenūwikewkúníya wàht tàn etòli-kotúnkahtíhtit, peciyahtit. 'Tenūwikewkúníya.

[Listen! This is the subject of my story, *Sáhkeic*, an orphan who was always seen as a nuisance around here at Pleasant Point. Finally he was seen too much as a great nuisance around here, and at that point he left. In the end, when he arrived at the Penobscot reservation, as soon as he arrived, he found work there. Some hunters engaged him to keep their camp in order for them, out where they would be hunting, once they had arrived. To keep their camp in order for them.]

2. Malom=òte púsíhtit, púsíhtit, kótáma=òte qìn píhçetùk óliyéwīyik nìt etòli-cocòloqéhtit. 'Tahcūwi-li-wikíníya. Aki nìt wòt Sahkeyic wólí=te wtotòlaqáhqan. Wòt=òlu, Néptan=òlu cikaqha... cikaqhóma, néspihqámkul weci-kisi-'tómhotíhtit, kisihpultihtit. Yùkt-òlu kótökik, níktok-òlu matõnomõníya pqòm,² weci-kisi-sapessihtit spasūwiw.

[When they finally pushed off in their canoes, when they pushed off, they didn't go very far, when they became ice-bound there. They had to camp there. You see, there *Sáhkeic* cooked the evening meal right away. Neptune, on the other hand, shaved some pieces of inner bark off a stick of red willow so that they could smoke, after they had eaten. The others, meanwhile, they struggled with the ice, so that they would be able to get through, in the morning.]

¹The name *Sáhkeic* includes an anomalous vowel sequence. It may be a borrowing from Mi'kmaq *Sa:ke:j* 'Jimmy', a diminutive of *Sa:k* 'James', reported for the Big Cove, N.B., dialect of that language by DeBlois (1996:76).

²Neptune treats *pqòm* 'ice' here as inanimate. For contemporary speakers, on the other hand, the noun is animate. Thus one would expect to hear *mátõnáníya pqómīyil* 'they struggle with the ice', with an animate-object verb and an obviative object, rather than Neptune's *mátõnomõníya pqòm*, with an inanimate-object verb and with no obviative ending on *pqòm*.

3. Mam=öte wespásahkiwik kisi-spasihpultíhtit, àpc útömahtíniya nespíhqámkul. Néspíhqámkul kisi-w... kisi-wtómhotíhtit, on àpc 'pusíniya, on nít píhçetúk líhīyik. Píhçetúk líhīyik, mam=öte àpc wikíniya. Nít etóli-nutómúhtit psí kéqsèy cipökihtáqot wáht nihkanìw. On... Tàn yùt kisi-cipökihtáqahk, wísökahpáyu wòt Sáhkeic.

[The next morning, when they finished their morning meal, they again smoked some of the red willow bark. When they finished smoking the red willow, then they set out again in their canoes; and then they went a great distance. They went a great distance, and then they camped again. There they heard all kinds of noise in the distance ahead of them. There was so much noise that *Sáhkeic* was terribly frightened.]

4. 'Tiyániya, "Ehqi-sèks. Kàt=te nít keqsèy. Lampeqínuhsísok níktok. Témönük níktok nsukönókkiwik, knómihtúniya=hc ellukhotíhtit. Knómihtúniya=hc etóli-ollúkhotíhtit psí kéqsèy yùt. Wiküwámol 'qisihtúniyal, weyossis, amsqoçehkàn, milikultù."

[(The others) told him, "Stop being afraid. That's nothing at all. Those are water fairies. Three days from now, you'll see what they do. You'll see where they do all kinds of things here. They make houses, animals, dolls, all sorts of things."]

5. *Well*, nít úlsótömon wòt Sáhkeic. Níta, on 'qisqahsínon.

[Well, *Sáhkeic* was glad to hear that. So then he fell asleep.]

6. Nehè wespásahkiwik àpc 'pusíniya. Malom=öte nít élömiyáhtit nessúkönokkiwik, 'totóli-péciyániya qóspem, qóspem. Nít àpc wikihtit mèsq kisi-ksokaháhtihq.

[Well, the next morning, they set out again. Then, when they had gone ahead for three days, they came to a lake, a lake. There they camped again, before they could go across.]

7. Níta! Nít=yaq etóli-cipökihtáqahk aqamötù. Nít etóli-síktechpáwölut ntathukákön. Nít etóli-siktechpáyit. On àpc 'kisi-kinilüwemániya. Kisi-kinilüwemáhtit, on=yaka mèç 'qisqahsínon.

[So! The noise was even louder there, they say. Then the subject of my story was scared to death. There he was scared to death. So they calmed his fears once again. When they had calmed his fears, then at last he was able to sleep.]

8. Wespásahkiwik àpc, on=na wqosökahániya. Nít kötók sípúhsis matawéyu. Mátawéyu naka cinítöme. Cinítöme naka túciw pömamkiye, wölamkiye. Naka psí=te támà pçotékon, naka pçotékon yùt eléktek. Nít pömamkiye. Nít wölam[kíye].

[When morning came again, then they went on across. There another stream opened (into the lake). There was an opening, and the water was shallow. The water was shallow, and moreover there was a sandy beach, a nice sandy beach. And all around was a clearing, and the clearing was level here. A beach ran along there. The beach was nice and sandy.]

9. Níta! Nìt yúktok lampeqínuhsísok pemölukhotíhtit. Mílikönul kisihtuhtícil wikūwamsísol, weyossísok, amsqocehkánok. Péci=te yùt yaláptultúwok yùt pemskihkek. Aqqát[alè] úlínömon wöt ntatkuhkákon, eli-lúkhotíhtit yùkt wénik. Pömawsuwínuhsísok yúktok. Nìt=te=na wtólsítan[íya] táhálu=te níla. Kéhtol.

[So! That was where these water fairies carried out their work. They made all kinds of houses, animals, dolls. They even trampled around here on a stretch of grass. The subject of my story was ever so happy to see where they worked, whoever they were. They were little people. And they had feet to match, just like mine. Sure enough.]

10. Níta! Nìt 'tolömiyániya. Malom=öte wtoli-peciyániya nìt etöli-kotunkahtíhtit, etöli-kotunkahtíhtit. 'Qisihkosíniya. Wóláhte wíkuwa. Malom=öte kisihkosihtit, nìt=te yúktok kotunkéwinúwok 'kotunkahtíniya. Nìt nekòm 'totöli-enúwíkan.

[So! They headed over there. Finally they came to the place where they would hunt, where they would hunt. They built a camp. Their camp was nice and big. Finally, when they finished their camp, then the hunters went hunting right away. (Sahkeic) was there putting things in order.]

11. Nekòm ahtöli-enúwíket kiwacíye. Wisöki-kiwacíye. Ma=te kisapem[qosiw]. Ma=te kisqahs[iw]. Kiwacíye. Malom=öte wtolúhsan yùt, etöli-qsawehkómíkek, nìt elóssit. Söláhki=te élapit elömamkiyak, pemamkiyak, nikt=tahk wénik etölahiyáwölotícik wàht skinuhsísok. Aqqátalè wölitahásu eci=yaq olíyat. Naci-witáhíyan.

[As he went on taking care of the camp, he grew lonesome. He was terribly lonesome. He wasn't good for anything. He couldn't sleep. He was lonesome. Finally he walked over here to where there was a point of land, where he lay down. All of a sudden, as he looked off down the beach, along the beach, here were some boys playing off in the distance. He was so very happy that he went toward them. He went to play with them.]

12. Aki némàht, mèsq némàht péciyàhq nokka-cuwapötokhultíniya. Nìt=te li-cuwapötokhultúkk, cuwapötokhultúkk. Aqqátalè moskeyinèkk. Ma kisi-witahiyèw. Uci-macéwsan.

[Ah, but at his destination, before he could reach his destination, they all jumped into the water. They jumped off into the water (in all directions); they jumped off into the water. He was terribly sorry about the vanished (boys). He couldn't play with them. So he walked away from there.]

13. Áyùt wélaqíwik 'qilūwítahátömon tán 'toli-kisi-msónan nihiht, nikt etölahiyáwölotits[ópönik]. Malom=öte mihqitahásin. Wespásahkiwik nìt naci-kotúnkahtíhtit àpc yúhùht uskítapèm, nekòm 'qisi-molöqámkukhúsin yùt íhík, pemamkiyak. Kisi-molöqámkukhúsit yùt pémamkiyak, on=yaka túciw 'tahsósüwon 'tolömalökáhmon. 'Kísi-púnömon 'sískuk naka yùt iyèy, páhsölat³ 'qisi-púnömon weci-kisölátok. Níta.

³*páhsölat*: This word has not been confirmed. In the English version of his story, Neptune indicates that *Sáhkeic* used a milkweed in order to breathe, but compare Penobscot *pahsalnskihko* 'thick reed grass', with

[That very night, he sought out in his mind some way to catch them, the ones who had been playing. Finally it came to him. In the morning, when these men of his had gone off again to hunt, he covered himself with sand, here on the beach. He covered himself with sand, here on the beach, and then he made a hole in his hat. He put it over his face, and then he put a milkweed stem through it, so that he could breathe. So!]

14. Níta! Nìt elóssit, komötu=te wnútüwà, eqaháhtit naka túciw ’tolahīyawölotinīya. Yúkt=te=lu nísūwok etōli-eménahkécik yúktok, on ’tehsahqi-winiyutīniya nìt elossínölit, on etuci-pkikálat. Qéy!

[So! As he lay there, suddenly he heard them coming ashore, and right away they were playing. And these two, they were wrestling, and they threw each other on top of the place where he was lying, and then he grabbed them. Hey!]

15. Níta! On yúktok ’koti-kcós-kessinīya, yúktok lampeqinuhsísok. Katáma. ’Tahtōli-cuwahpöluhsölókun. Kōma wqiseyúwawì nisù. Péskúwol ’qíseyúwal, [kötók] eci-lahket. [So! Then they were about to get away, these water fairies. But no. They kept on leading him toward the water. He couldn’t handle two. He could handle one, so he let the other go.]

16. “Kénuk kōma-te-na kéqsèy koti-lehlólu. Npáwátömon kmawahīyawölotinèn.”

[“But I’m not going to do anything to you. I want us to play together.”]

17. “Tàn=ehta nòt tóké kcícihtàq nílùn nkincémossömòn élehlíyin, cù knehpohòq=c.”

[“If our king learns anything at all about what you’re doing to me, he’ll surely kill you.”]

18. “Kátáma=kahk=ölu kéqsèy koti-lehlólu. Kōma=te koti-nehpuhúlu. Npáwátömon=öte=na níl nwtáhīyan.”

[“But I’m not going to do anything to you. I’m not going to kill you. I just want to play with you.”]

19. “Kátáma=ehta nílùn nkiseltomakéwönewìn wèn nwtahīhyemanèn. Nilùn téhpu.”

[“But we’re not allowed to play with anyone. Just among ourselves.”]

20. *Well*, kéhtol. Kéhtol mílan...

[Well, sure enough. Sure enough, he gave him...]

-*skihko*, the combining form of *mskihko* ‘grass’ (Siebert 1996:292, 346).

21. “Ntahcūwi-lúkhotìpon élökítok, kincémoss. Akì tǒké nkóspìsun kmíllon. Yùt kposkómon. Kpéhtutúlon=c nuhsímìs, npehenómúmsìs. Nòt kwitahìyánìya. Kénuk=òlu ktahcūwi-wòleyúwan⁴. Psíhkòmòn yùt nkóspìsun, kisi=hc wítahìyánìya nuhsímìs.”

[“We have to do as the king says. But look, I’ll give you my belt now. You put this on. I’ll ferry my younger sibling over to you, my little sister. You’ll play with her. But you’ll have to treat her well. If you wear this belt of mine, you’ll be able to play with my younger sibling.]

22. Nìt=te tèt olòmìyèkk. Nìt=tahk, ucì-macáhan nìt.

[Then they headed off into the distance. And at that, he went away from there.]

23. Wespásahkíwìk, akehtól=òte, ’péhtulánìya pìlsqéhsìsol. Wòlikóssu=na wòt pìlsqéhsìs. Wòlásòkiqáhsu, wòlikóssu. Sòmáhtūwìw. Kí! Naka ksi-mokǒsewáltóqe. Wáhte péciyétul wpiyehsumsìsol. Téhpū=tahk kší-pqíqe naka ’tutsitáhsin. Naka ’qospìsin naka wsòmáhtūwin táhálu=te=hp alamóssit, alamóssit. Sòmáhtūwìw.

[In the morning, sure enough, they brought over the girl. She was pretty, too, this girl. She had a nicely shaped face; she was pretty. She was agile. Well! And she had dark black hair. Her hair came way down here. But her face was dark red and her feet were tiny. And she wore a belt and was as agile as a humming bird, a humming bird. She was agile.]

24. Kama=te ’qisi-wecūwawehláwìyil. [Kǒmàc] winpásu. Malom=òte síktéhsònu, ’tópin. Kisòlahsímìt, on àpc ’qiltúwan, on katáma. [Nìt] eli-qásqit.⁵

[He couldn’t get close to her. He really rushed. Finally he was all tired out, and he sat down. When he finished resting, he tried once again to catch her, but he couldn’t. That’s how fast she ran.]

25. Níta! Mam-òte-hc, “Kénuk kìs ckuwíhìyìk kotunkewinúwok. Tòqc natahqáne.” On macehkawótìnìya, natahqánìya.

[So! Finally (she said), “But the hunters are coming already. Quick, let’s go and cook.” So they walked off to go and cook.]

26. ’Tiyal-yaq “Níta! Kìs yúktok weckuwyácìk. Nìl nmacáhan. Àpc sepáwǒnu npeci.” Kéht[ol=al] olòmih[ìyà].⁶

[She told him, “So! They’re already coming this way. I’m leaving. I’ll come again tomorrow.” Sure enough, she left.]

⁴The original recordings were evidently made on phonograph records: here the record skips.

⁵The bracketed material in this passage is conjectured, since the recording is unclear at these points.

⁶The recording fades out at the points indicated here by brackets.

27. *Well*, nìt=te kisi... kisihpúltihtit, psí kèq kisi-wísūwonòk, nìt=te wkúwin. Eci-wisòki-suwáhtaq. Nìt=te wkúwin.

[Well, once they had eaten, and he had put everything in its proper place, then he went to sleep. He was awfully tired. So then he went to sleep.]

28. Níta! On àpc wespásahkiwìk 'peci-nathúlan, on=yaq macehuláníya, wòt=yaq kíncémoss elóssit. Wáhte pecihtūwe, na pihtaltóqe, na kinináqs[u]. 'Peci-nattókaláníya yúhtol, 'pilsqehsísōmol. On àpc náthuláníya yúhtol kótōkil Sahkéicil, on 'tahqátūwan yùt ópōsik. Wáht nìt épit nìt wetápit.

[So! Then the next morning, she came to take him (across the lake), and then they they took her off in their canoe to where the king was lying. His beard came way down to here, and he had long hair, and he was big. They brought her to the far shore, this girl of his. Then they came back to take *Sáhkeic* there as well, and he climbed up here on a tree. He sat way up where he could look out.]

29. Sóláhkìw yùt élápit yùt=tahk wèn élíkit elóssit, nìt=al 'qonatōkósìn. Nìt lampeqínuhsísok mèc=al 'qótamqàhk yùt etōlolukhotícik, etōlapilōmuhtícik. Kótōkik etōli-kospahlácik ápèq wihpulácik. Ú míllukhótūwok=ehta. Elōmi-nasqaháhtit, péci=yaq táhálu naskuhúnol naka *rakes* 'tuwehkáníya, psí=ehta kèq. Nekka-kisehláhtit, on 'sákhiptúníya kéqsèy ánsa piyeskomōni-nukhómon, on 'sunihpuláníya. I! Nìt étólóqsit, étōli-pútūwet wòt, étōli-pútūwet, wòt=te kúhu, pusqáhsu.

[All of a sudden, as he was looking out here, (he saw) someone lying here, all dirty, stretched out about as long as this. There were as many as a thousand water fairies there, working away, carrying water. Others were washing him, then wiping him off as well. Oh, they were just doing all kinds of things. They were combing his hair, they say, not only using combs of some kind, but rakes, everything. When they had finished doing all of this with him, then they brought out something like corn flour and rubbed him with it. Ooh! Then he was falling asleep, breathing deeply, breathing deeply; and he slept; he was sound asleep.]

30. Mam=ōte kísehláhtit, on=na nìt àpc wesūwehuláníya. 'Tépéssìn àpc. Am=ōte wáht péthuláhtit àpc etōlahīyahtítpon.

[At last they finished with him, and then they came to take him back again (in their canoe). He got in again. Then they took him back over to where they had been playing.]

31. 'Tíyal=yaq "Nehè, mílin nkospísun."

[(The water fairy) told him, "Hey, give me my belt."]

32. “Ma=te kkisi-millúwon kospísun. Nìt=te=hc tòké mìlòl kóspísun, nìt=te=hc kàt=te=hc àpc wèn nisahĩyáyek.”

[“I can’t give you your belt. Once I have given you your belt, I won’t be able to play with anyone again.”]

33. ’Tíyal=yaq “Àpc=oc pílŭwèy kèq kmíllon, weci=-hc -kisi-nisahĩyáyeq. Kìs=õna ulitahátõmuwákõn ntíhin nkincémossõmòn, weci=-hc=õna kíl -kisi-wítahĩyémot=õna nílùn weceyawíyék.” Kéhtol.

[He told him, “I’ll give you something else so that you two will be able to play together. I have our king’s permission now, too, so that you’ll be able to play with her where we come from as well.” Sure enough.]

34. ’Tíyan=yaq “Kéqsèy=õlu mìlìn.” Ma ’púnehtúwon yùt. On ’sakoli-kolõnómon, weci-mílat yùt yèy, yùt pihitinèy.

[Then he told him, “Give me something, then.” He wouldn’t let go of this (belt). And he kept a firm grip on it, so that (the water fairly) would give him this (other) thing, this bracelet.]

35. “Ipà yùt nahsõnomùn.” ’Kisi-nahsõnómon. ’Tíyal “Nehè nisáhĩyaq nuhsímis.”

[“Listen, put this on.” He put it on. He told him, “Go ahead, play with my sister.”]

36. Nìt=yaq élíyat, wõlí=te nqóciye wkisi-ehkosqénal. Nìt etuci-wõlitahásit, on=õte ucéman. ’Tíyan=yaq “Níta, yùt kospísun.” On macáhan. Macahánĩya.

[Then, when he walked over to her, he went right up to her and embraced her. He was so happy that he kissed her. He told (the water fairy), “Well, here’s your belt.” Then he went off. They went off.]

37. Akì níhtol ’qísí-nisũwínĩyal níhtol lampeqinusqehsísol. Nìt=yaq=õna tucíw, ’tiyalí-acilqontínĩya, ’tiyaluhsánĩya. Aqqátalè wõlitahasu. Wisõki-wõlitahásu wòt Sáhkeic. Kiskátom. Níta nìt. On naci-tolaqahqánĩya.

[You see, he was married to her now, to this water fairy girl. And at that point they walked off arm in arm, they walked around together. He was incredibly happy. He was very happy, this *Sáhkeic*. He was married. That was that. And they went off to prepare the evening meal.]

38. Nìt=yaka túcìw wewáptun. Yaláptaq 'tútsitáhsin yùt, spasüwìw, wikíhtit. Wòt=òkahk...
Wòt=òlu sakòm *Neptune* etòli-toláqihpìt, sòláhki yùt elápit.

[After that, she left visible tracks. She left tracks with her little feet all around their camp that morning. When Chief Neptune had eaten his evening meal, he suddenly looked down here.]

39. “Ú, wèn=al=lu yaláptaq?” Àpc 'pilūwitàhásin. “Níta! Kuskínuhsòmòn wòt, pìlsqehsìsol 'tíywan. Nìt weci-tuci-wòlitahasits. Kòmàc wisòki-wòlitahásüwináqsu Sáhkeic.”

[Oh! Who has been leaving tracks around here?” Then he suspected (the truth). “So! Our young man, he has a girl. That’s why he is so happy. *Sáhkeic* really is looking awfully happy.”]

40. Níta! Nìt=te kisi[hpúlthitit], nìt=te wkúwin. Wisòki-suwáhtu. 'Kúwin.

[So! When they had eaten, he went to sleep right away. He was awfully tired. He slept.]

41. On=yaq yúhùht wítapì, wtíyan yá uskítapèm wòt Nep... Néptan, wòt sakòm, 'tíyan=yaq
“Níta! Kkoskomösìpon, nitapehtúkk. Koti-mokehtéhmonèn moteköni-màn.”

[Then, they say, Neptune, this chief, told these friends of his, his men, he told them, “So! We’re in luck, my friends. We’re going to strike it rich with furs in a hurry.”]

42. “Nìt=òlu tàn ktoli-kcicíhtun?”

[“But how do you know that?”]

43. 'Tiyà=yaq “Ipà=te ckuwapásiq. Ipà sakíhtuk yùt wèn eláptaq. Ipà=te sakíhtuk.”

[He told them, “Just come over here. Just look here where someone has left tracks. Just look.”]

44. Akehtól=òte. Nìt=al 'qonsitáhsin. Wèn yaláptu. On=yaq níta. Akehtól=òte.

[Sure enough. The footprints were about this long. Someone had left tracks all around. So that was it. Sure enough.]

45. Wespásahkíwik naci-kotúnkahtíhtit 'possöníhtehmóniyal=òte wtúlūwal kehkikkikílicíhì weyossis. On nsuköniw eli-kotúnkahtíhtit kótáma 'kishútuwöníya nehpahtú[htit]. Nìt=te 'pusíníya. Macaháníya.

[In the morning, when they went off to hunt, they filled up their canoes right up with all kinds of game. And after three days of hunting, they couldn’t even take everything they had killed in their canoes. Then they shoved off again. They left.]

46. On=ölu 'qósátkan wòt Sáhkeic. Ma=yaq koti-macehéwi. 'Tíyal=yaq "Ktahcūwi-macáha. Ktahcūwi-apathullòpon. Tòkèc skàt apathulluw[èhk], Pestomuhkatik pettàqq, kōma ktapathúlluhpòn, ítòmuk=c, 'Nehpaháwal nakàt.' Ktahcūwi-apaci."

[But *Sáhkeic* was reluctant to go. He wasn't going to leave. (Chief Neptune) told him, "You have to leave. We have to take you back. If we don't take you back, and word comes to Passamaquoddy country that we haven't brought you back, they'll say, 'They have killed the missing (boy).' You have to go back.]

47. Mam=öte wáhka 'poqámal. Kama=tahk=öte 'poqamawíwal. Mam=yaq=öte sákhíyat nisūwihitíci. 'Tíyal=yaq "Oli. Níl=öte=hc=öna ntolíyan."

[In the end, they could hardly persuade him. They couldn't persuade him at all. Finally, his wife appeared. She told him, "Go. I'll go, too."]

48. Níta! Nít=öna pémisúkit=öna wòt, pémisúkit=öna wòt lampeqinusqèhs. Malom=öte Tókuk⁷ eliwihtásik, pecisúkit. Nít=te öté káskiyáhtit yùt Tókuk. Nít=te mcóssol. Ma nomihtúwon nít. Ma nomiyawíwal. Aqqátalè moskéyinè wtuletimkòl. Aqqátalè moskéyinè wákàt nisūwihitähà.⁸

[So! There she was as well, paddling along, paddling along, this water fairy woman. Finally she came in her canoe to a place called *Tókuk*. That's where they went over some rapids, at *Tókuk*. That was the last of her. She didn't see it. They didn't see her. (*Sáhkeic*) was terribly sorry about his old lady. He was terribly sorry about his late wife.]

ENGLISH TEXT⁹

[ADS = representative of the American Dialect Society, JN = Joseph Neptune]

ADS: You can just begin any time now.

JN: Yeah.¹⁰

ADS: Well, what is the name of this story?

JN: Well, this is hunting—Indian hunting expedition.

ADS: Oh, yes.

JN: Yeah.

⁷*Tókuk*: Apparently 'at the wave', a locative form of *tóku* 'wave' (also given as *tókūwek*). This is a Penobscot place name, referring to a place on the river near Old Town.

⁸The recording ends abruptly at this point. The last few episodes of Neptune's story, reflected in the English version, apparently went unrecorded.

⁹In the ADS recording, the English material transcribed here precedes the Passamaquoddy text given above.

¹⁰Here there is a brief and barely audible exchange in Passamaquoddy, apparently between Neptune and a child.

ADS: Well, would you rather tell it in English first?

JN: I'd rather.

ADS: All right. You do that. Tell it in English.

JN: Yeah. Yeah, I'd rather.

ADS: All right. Supposing you begin now, then.

JN: Well, this [is the] story of the Passamaquoddy Indian boy, who was an orphan, and had no home. And he stays, one place t'another. He has no home at all. So—so he thought, you know, he'd—he'd go some other place, where he could find a home.

So he walked, clean to Penobscot, 'nother reservation, Penobscot Indians. And when he, when he got there—and in two, three days' time, there was, uh... Indian hunters were just ready to go on a hunting expedition. And they wanted a boy, to look after the camp, when they hunting, when they get—separated, at the hunt... hunting grounds. Because that time, what we call *làks*,¹¹ an Indian devil, when this Indian devil finds that a camp is vacant, he destroys everything. He's harmless, though, you know; but that's what he does. That's why the Indians call him "Indian devil," because they don't like him. He destroys everything, what's in the camp.

So they—so they had to have a guard. So they called this—they named this boy guard *Sáhkeic*. *Sáhkeic*...¹² *Sáhkeic* means, "guard."

And they say they took him up, they took him along with 'em, these hu... these hunters. Neptune was the chief of the group, and *Nattánas*, and *Ínoss*, and *Sapátis*, *Sapátis*¹³. There were four Indians, two canoes.

And when they was goin' up the river, they didn't go but great—not a great ways. They got ice-bound, ice-bound. So, the other three went to work and—free up the channel, so they could go through. And *Sáhkeic* and Chief Neptune build a fire and prepare for the campin' ground. After they got the campin' ground all fixed up for them to sleep at night, they, uh—this Neptune went to work and got some *nespihqámkul*. That's what we call the squawbush or in Indian, smoke. They smoke that. Indian smoke.

ADS: What do you call that?

JN: *Nespihqámkul*. Yeah, that's 'tomáwey, see¹⁴. Yeah.

And, uh, *Sáhkeic* was preparing for supper. And after they have their supper, had a smoke of this *nespihqámkul*. And they—after they smoke, of course, they went to bed. They was tired, you know, pulling upstream on a strong current.

The next morning, all the channel was all clear. So they proceeded upriver, and they

¹¹The term *làks* (pl. *laksúwok*) is little used today, but originally designated the wolverine, *Gulo luscus* (Chamberlain 1899:34, Szabó 1981:104).

¹²Here a dog yelps, briefly interrupting the speaker.

¹³*Nattánas* is apparently derived from "Nathan" or "Nathaniel," *Ínoss* from "Enos," and *Sapátis* from the French "Jean Baptiste."

¹⁴Passamaquoddy 'tomawèy 'tobacco'. Neptune gives this word a partly Anglicized pronunciation here.

went upriver quite a long ways. They made pretty good time, the second day. And they had to put up another camp.

Why, after they got into bed, they heard noise, ahead of them. Of all the noise, the sound, you know; but these old fellas, old Indians, knew just what they was. But *Sáhkeic* was awful scared. And they told him, they said, “You needn’t be scared. That’s nothing at all. We’ll see those ones. We’ll see their work.” All right.

Well, *Sáhkeic* went to sleep. The next morning, at breakfast, had a smoke of *nespiqámkul*. After the smoke, then they proceed upriver again.

And that third day, they come to a lake, a small lake, and they went ’cross—they didn’t go across the lake. Uh, night overtook them; they had to sleep. Just, uh, the foot the lake. And talkin’ about your noise, of all the noise, a man ever could’ve heard...¹⁵

...Seems so he wants to run away. And they kept encouraging. They said, “That’s nothing at all, that. Them’s nothing at all. Tomorrow we’ll—you’ll see their works. And you’ll like it.”

So, next day, they went ’cross the lake. And they come to a—’nother inlet of a small brook, a very shallow water, sandy bottom. There is places, you know, a kind of an opening, and it’ll be sandy beach. And along the sandy beach, they seen all kinds of different things, you know, what those water fairies made, out of clay. All kinds animals, and wigwams, and—different things, and canoes. All that stuff, they made. And they even—they write, on the sands. And little bit of a footprints, nothing more than—four inches long, three inches long. They made a track along on the—on the sand.

And, uh, so they kept going up this river till they got up to the huntin’ grounds. And they build a camp; they build their camp, nice big camp. Kind of a point, like, you know, little grove. And that’s where the sandy beach started from, you know, kind of an opening, like.

And course af... The next... After they got the—camp built, they, these hunters, you know, they go upriver, you know, to se... set their traps, and left the little boy, left the li... *Sáhkeic* to look after the camp, so the Indian devil, or *làks* won’t destroy their camp, their belongings, whatever they had.

And, uh, he didn’t stay there but three or four days and he got very lonesome. He got very lonesome t’stay there. He has to stay there all day long. These hunters, you know, they gone all the day, upriver, settin’ traps and doin’ all the hunting. They didn’t...

And, uh, one afternoon, he went up on the grove. He was layin’ there, very lonesome. All at once he saw those little fellas playing on the—on the sandy beach. Little bits o’ fellas. And, you know, there’s quite a—quite a few of them.

And he was some glad. He thought he could ’a’ play with them. So he started on the run, and it was just before he got there, you know, these water fairies jumped overboard. So black there he couldn’t see them. So... And he was sorry, he couldn’t play with them.

So, that night, he was planning, trying to get up a scheme so how he could—how he could play with ’em. So, he got a scheme. He buried himself in the sand. And he, his hat, put it over his face, made a hole, and got a milkweed, so he could breathe. Stuck out, from his hat. And he made himself [...].¹⁶

¹⁵Here the record skips, so a few words may have been lost.

¹⁶A few words are inaudible here.

And after a while these water fairies came 'shore again, and they commenced to play. He could feel 'em; he could feel when they stepped on [his]¹⁷ stomach, once in a while. And, they'd wrassle, these water fairies.

At last he felt, that there must be two or three, fell right on top o' him. And he made a grab. When he made a grab, an' he grabbed two. Oh, they play—they beg and beg to let 'em go. He says, "No. I don't want to harm you fellas. I want to *play* with you fellas. I'm awful lonesome." Told 'em what they—just how he got up there and all.

He said, "Well."

The water fairies said, "You must let us go. If the king knows that, you know, he'd surely kill you."

"Well, I'm not going to harm you at all. I want to—I want to play with you fellas."

Said, "We are not allowed to play with you."

Well—well, they had a fight. They want to get away. So he couldn't handle two, but he could handle one. He let one go, and he could handle—he could handle one, all right.

And so the little fella says, the water fairy says, "See, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you my belt, for security. Tomorrow, I'll bring my sister, here, for you to play with. As long as you wear that belt, you could play with her; but you cannot touch her. You cannot touch her, long as you wear that belt of mine. And the king wouldn't know it, long as you have my belt along."

So he took the belt, an' they went off. Sure enough, next day, they—when he looked across the lake, he seen the canoe coming. There was three, two water fairies and the girl. And when this—when they landed where he was, they jumped out of the canoe.

He said, "*Nehè*, this is my sister. I want you to use her good..."¹⁸

He grabbed her, you know, so he could have a good time in all the things they were doing, you know. She was just like a humming bird, she was so quick. And she was all covered with that long hair. She was all covered. And, uh...

So he'd be very tired at night, when they went to sleep. He'd be playing with the girl, just runnin' around on the beach, you know. And still he was quite—he wasn't lonesome, long as he was, runnin' around with this girl.

And, uh, just before the hunters came—and she always know that the hunters are coming. Says, "*Nehè*." Says, "You must go now. The hunters are coming. I got to go. And I'll be back again tomorrow. And tomorrow, when we come, we'll take you where the king is. [The] king is coming tonight." All right.

So he went home, cooked supper. She helped him cook supper. And, uh, she couldn't—he couldn't hold her, you know. Sometimes he wanted to grab her, you know. She was going just like that, just as quick as a humming bird, you know. She was that quick. She didn't leave no tracks either at all, around the camp. Couldn't make no tracks.

So, just before these hunters came, you know, she says, "*Nehè*, let's go. The hunters are right near at hand."

"All right. Come here."

So next day, after the hunters went back, an' he went down the beach, an' she came, had another—good time. In the afternoon, the canoe came, after this—after this *Sáhkeic*.

¹⁷Here the recording seems to have "their," which does not fit the sense of the passage.

¹⁸The record skips again at this point.

She says, “*Nehè*, I’m goin’ to—we’re goin’ to take you, where the king is. He wouldn’t see you, an’ he wouldn’t know you, long as you wear that belt. He wouldn’t harm you.”

Well, they paddled, just little ways; and they went across the lake.

And she says, “You see that great big boulder on a ledge, o’ granite?”

He says, “Yes.”

“Well, that’s where the king is.”

And, uh, they landed just a little, above the—ledge. That’s where this girl got off; and [they] got off the canoe, and went towards the ledge. And before they got to the ledge, there was a great big hemlock tree, with a big limb.

Said, “You go up on that and sit down, and watch us what—just what we’re goin’ to do, with the king.”

All right. So he climbed up; and he looked down, where they—where they was workin’.

Well, there was a great big man, was layin’ down, with a long hair. He had a long beard. His beard was... Well, it was supposed to be white; but it was dirty. His hair was dirty, and he was dirty himself. So the water fairies were—talkin’ about your water fairies, it was *thousands* of them.

They got workin’, and they went out and give him a bath. Rakes, and brushes, and pails—they was all busy luggin’ water—some with their leather, you know, something like a chamois leather. They washed him; and one of them took charge, and he’d give him a kick to lay over. And he was ’sleep, you know. And he’d lay over, great big fella, you know, layin’ there.

They washed him, and after they got him washed, and then they went to work and combed his hair. They’d give him a shampoo, and then combed his hair. And his hair was just as snow white after they got it—after they give him a shampoo. And his beard the same way.

And, uh, they went and got some—some kind of a powder, you know. They covered him all over, you know, just the same as the talcum powder, what we have nowadays.

ADS: Yes.

JN: I guess they must have that—that, at that time, too.

But they... Well, he felt so good, you know, he fell ’sleep, you know. You couldn’t wake him up at all.

And after they got through, they—they went, they went back. And then, they—they got—they got their man. They got *Sáhkeic*. Come down, got in the canoe, and went and got the girl. And they took him back, to the camp. They played.

He says, “*Nehè*. I got something else here now, to give you, that you could play, with my sister.”

“All right.”

“So,” he said, “you give me my belt, and I’ll give you something else.”

Says, “Oh, no. Nothing doin’. I wouldn’t give—I wouldn’t give up this belt.”

Says, “You give me the one. I want [to] show you how this works.” So he gave him the—bracelet. Says, “You put that on.”

And he had his belt still on. He took that off, but he wouldn't give it up. After he got the bracelet on, he says, "Now. You're just trying to play with my sister."

Says, "Yes, to play, with your sister." And he wouldn't give up the belt. "I'd give up anything 'fore that, you know."

And, uh, he says, "*Néhe*, after I give you that bracelet, I got permission from—from my king. Now you're married to my sister. You're married to my sister. Be sure to use her good. See, if you don't, we'll know it; and we'll come and get her. You'll never see her again."¹⁹

...She made a tracks. After they was married, she made a tracks, when they was cooking supper for these—hunters. And this Chief Neptune was settin' there alongside the fireplace, eatin' his supper. When he looked down, he saw the tracks. And he notice *Sáhkeic* was very happy. Oh, he was [a] happy boy. But they couldn't see his wife. He was some happy boy. And he'd go right to sleep, he was so tired, you know, playing with his—wife. And, uh...

And Chief Neptune said to his men, he said, "Now, this is something wonderful. We struck something. We goin' to have a good luck. We goin' to have a good luck."

Says, "How do you know?"

"Oh, I know. You just come over here. You see them tracks down there?"

They looked at the tracks, the girl's tracks, barefooted, where she was walkin' around.

"But how did it get there?"

"It's *Sáhkeic*'s work. It's *Sáhkeic*'s work."

Well, they didn't say nothing to him. They went upriver. They got *all* kinds o' game. They loaded with... They loaded their canoe with it. And, uh, they was only there three, four days, they got all—all the game they wanted, that they could take care of.

So they had to go downriver, to their home. And *Sáhkeic* wanted to stay, he says. But Neptune says, "No, you can't stay. We got to—we got to take you back, where we got you. If the chief of the Passamaquoddy knew, that we took you up the—upriver, and not brought you back, well, they might think that we—murder the little boy, or done something to him. We got to take you back."

So, his wife appeared. "Just go. I'll be down there. I'll—I'll go wherever you go. Just go. I'll be down there."

So they started. When they got down there, just before the—Indian Island, now, in Old Town, that's what they call *Tókuk*. And this girl, his wife, you [know], she was paddling the canoe, you know, when she went down along that—undertow. It was the last time she was seen.

And *Sáhkeic* wanted to land, on Indian Island, before they got down.

Says, "No, you cannot land."

He wanted to go back, to look for his wife. He thought, you know, that his wife was drowned.

Well, he was awful sorry. So he had to land him down there, and see they brought the boy back. And he run back, up the island, you know, a place called *Tókuk*.

When he got up there, you know, his wife was there, in a canoe. And he got on, and went up. And that was the last time—no, that was the...

¹⁹The record skips again here.

And week afterwards they come back, and notify the people, that he was not coming back again, that he was not coming back in, unless, when he brings a message, to the Indians, whatever it's goin' to happen. "I'll bring the message," says he.

Well... They was gone, and when they got back... And they didn't get back for two or three days, not till a month—they didn't come back for one year. They were very disappointed.

When they got back, they had a boy. They had a boy with 'em. And they was some glad, when they saw him.

He says, "Now, I belong on both sides, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot. And whatever that's goin' to happen to you people," he says, "we'll know it. They'll never, they'll never get—harm you people, by war, any warriors."

Sure enough. You see, whenever the Mohawks, trying to sneak in with our tribes, this tribe or that one, an' he always notify us. See, he always notify, so the Mohawks always lose their battle, whenever they came here. That's why, water fairies were connected with her. He always—he always notify us no matter what's going to happen. Yes, he always notify us. That's how the Mohawks would never—could kill not even one Abenaki Indian. Yes.

ADS: What kind of Indians?

JN: Beg your pardon?

ADS: Abenaki Indians?

JN: Yeah. Abenaki Indians. These Abenakis, you know, on New England states. From Cape Cod up. Abenaki Indians, you know. We only branch from the Abenakis, you know, to the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot. Yeah.

ADS: So that's the end of the story, is it?

JN: Yes.

ADS: Well, that's very interesting.²⁰

²⁰The record skips again here.

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