

## CHAPTER X.

## A D J E C T I V E S

#59 In Lakota, as in English, there are Descriptive and Limiting Adjectives.

Descriptive adjectives (denoting a quality or a condition of a thing)

śa	red
zi	yellow
haŋska	tall
ptécela	short

Limiting adjectives (pointing out or designating) are of three kinds:

- 1) articles
- 2) pronominal adjectives
- 3) numeral adjectives

As a rule, adjectives follow the nouns which they modify, as in

ógle śa, red shirt  
táspañ zi yellow apple (i.e. orange)

The adjective uses the same form for all genders and for all cases. Hence there is no question of agreement of the adjective with the noun. It has three numbers, singular, dual, and plural, which are formed like those of the noun.

As has been said repeatedly, the dual is of the first person only, one addressing another and including him in the action, being, or condition. It is formed from the singular by either prefixing or inserting the inseparable personal pronoun "u(k)". When the adjective accompanies a noun, the dual is expressed in the adjective only, as in

Wíktśa uŋháŋska, We (I and thou) are tall men.

The plural of adjectives is formed by the termination "pi", if they refer to animate things. When a noun and its adjective are in the plural, plurality is expressed in the adjective alone, as mentioned before. If, however, the noun and adjective are followed by a finite verb, the plurality is expressed only in the verb.

N.B. Plurality is also expressed -- without using the suffix "pi" -- by duplicating the differentiating syllable of an adjective, a process which is very common, as in

sabespa (from sapa), black  
haŋska (from haŋska), tall  
waśéste (from waśé), good  
táŋkíŋyan (from táŋkíŋyan), great  
ptéptécela (from ptécela), short

# #60 COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES

While in English we have two ways of comparing, that is, by inflection, adding "er" and "est" to form the comparative and superlative, and by phrasal comparison, using the adverbs "more" and "most", in Lakota we have only the latter method.

## The Comparative Degree

a) The comparative is formed by placing the adverb "saŋpa", more (which is usually shortened into sam or saŋb), before the adjective, as in

sam ksápa, more wise, wiser  
sam śíce, more bad, worse

When, however, the object with which another is contrasted is mentioned, the inseparable preposition "iŋ", with reference to, is prefixed to "sam". This composite adverb follows the noun or pronoun with which comparison is made, as in

Hoksíla kíŋ atkuku kíŋ isám haŋska.  
(boy the his father the more than tall)

The boy is taller than his father.

When the pronoun is a personal pronoun, the abbreviated personal pronoun of the Third Class of verbs (cf #49) is used and prefixed to "isám", as in

Hoksíla kíŋ misám haŋska. The boy is taller than I.  
Hoksíla kíŋ nisám haŋska. The boy is taller than thou.  
Hoksíla kíŋ uŋkísamŋapi haŋska. The boy is taller than we.  
Hoksíla kíŋ wíciśam haŋska. The boy is taller than they.

N.B. Note that in "uŋkísamŋapi", the plural "pi" does not belong to "saŋpa", but to the personal pronoun "uŋk".

b) The comparative is expressed quite often by employing other adverbs or verbs meaning that one thing surpasses or is above another, as in

Wóllake uŋ kíŋ he itáŋcanye kíŋ he iwáŋkabtu śni.  
(servant the his lord the is above him not)

The servant is not greater than his lord.

Waniyetu yammi omakihe.  
(winters three he follows me)

He is three years younger than I.

This, however, is not a comparative in the true sense.

- c) The comparative is expressed also by using two contrasting clauses, one with a positive, the other with a negative adjective or verb, as in

Masti'heala kin wasté, tka sintehla kin síee.  
(rabbit the is good but rattlesnake the is bad)

The rabbit is better than the rattlesnake.

- d) The degree of diminution, "less", must be expressed in the manner described above. The adverb "kitanla" a little (less) is often used. Something that is "less good" is a little good, kitanla wasté.

#62

#### The Superlative Degree

- a) The superlative is formed by placing the adverb "iyótan", most, before the adjective, as in

akícita iyótan ohítika kin  
(soldier most brave the)  
the bravest soldier

- b) The superlative is expressed very often by using the adverb "lila", very, which precedes the adjective, as in

lila támaheca, very lean

The adverbial suffix "hea" (hoe), very, is also used, as in

tákaheca, very big

For the sake of emphasis it is also used with "lila", as in  
lilaheca táka, extraordinarily big

- c) The corresponding degree of diminution, least, is formed or expressed in like manner, as in

iyótan císčila, most small, smallest  
lila císčila, very small  
lilaheca císčila, extraordinarily small

(#61, 62)

### LIMITING ADJECTIVES

#### The Articles

#63

- 1) The definite article, the, is "kin" in Lakota (pronounced "ki") Sometimes, however, especially in certain phrases, "ci" (pronounced "ci") is used instead. This occurs when the preceding word ends in an "a" which had been "a" originally. Old-timers often use "kina" instead of "kin".

The article always follows the word or group of words to which it belongs, as in

wówapi kin, the book  
wówapi wasté kin, the good book

The article, in turn, is followed very often by the demonstrative pronouns, he, hena, le, léna, when these pronouns are to be emphasized, as in

wicása kin he, that man.

When the noun has been mentioned before or is known, kin, kin he, and kin hena, become k'un (k'on), k'un he, and k'un hena. These expressions are equivalent to "the above-mentioned the afore-said", as in

akícita k'un hena, the soldiers mentioned before

Sometimes, where "kin" would be replaced by "ci", k'un is changed into c'un, as in

Yúhka emakiye c'un wéksuys.  
(then he said to me the I remembered)

Then I remembered what he had told me before.

- 2) The indefinite article, a, an, is "wan", an abbreviation of the numeral "wanji", one.

Like the definite article, it follows the word or group of words to which it belongs, as in

cañ wan, a tree

#64

#### Pronominal Adjectives

When pronouns are used adjectively, that is, when as adjectives they modify nouns, they are called pronominal adjectives. There are

- 1) Possessive adjectives
- 2) Demonstrative adjectives
- 3) Interrogative adjectives
- 4) Indefinite adjectives

(#63, 64)