

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
táŋkínŋyan (from táŋkínŋyan), 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

Hokśíla kiŋ atkuku kiŋ 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

Hokśíla kiŋ misám haŋska. The boy is taller than I.
Hokśíla kiŋ nisám haŋska. The boy is taller than thou.
Hokśíla kiŋ uŋkísamŋapi haŋska. The boy is taller than we.
Hokśíla kiŋ 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 kiŋ he iŋŋeŋŋe kiŋ he iwáŋkabtu śni.
(servant the his lord the is above him not)

The servant is not greater than his lord.