

Some Common Lakota Words and Terms

From Lakota Belief and Ritual by James R. Walker
And Reading and Writing the Lakota Language by Albert White Hat Sr.

Asanpi	Milk
Ate	Father.
Heyoka	Opposite to nature
Hunka Lowanpi	The Hunka ceremony or making of relatives. Lowan means song or singing. Lowanpi means singing with ceremonies or performances.
Ihanktonwan	The Yankton people. Those who dwell by the end.
Ihanktonwanna	The smaller division of the Yankton people. Or Little End dwellers. Yanktonais.
Iktomi	Spider Like (the trickster spirit who once was called Ksa, son of Inyan).
Inyan	The Stone or Rock. <i>Before there was any other thing, or any time, Inyan was, and his spirit was, Wakan Tanka. Inyan was soft and shapeless but he had all powers. He gave of his blood to make Maka (Earth) and became hard and powerless. His blood was blue and became the waters of the earth.</i>
Isanti or Sisitonwan	Those who lived near Knife Lake east of the Mississippi.
Iwoblu	Blizzard
Iya	The second son of Inyan, who is utterly evil and the chief of all evil beings. Committed incest with his mother <i>Unk</i> and their offspring is a very beautiful, enticing and deceitful demon whose name is <i>Gnaski</i> .
Iya Tate	Wind
Kan	Incomprehensible. An incomprehensible fact that cannot be demonstrated.
Kola	A male friend
Ksa	The older son of Inyan brought forth full-grown from an egg in an anti-natural manner by <i>Wakinyan</i> . God of wisdom but he became the imp of mischief and his name is (now) <i>Iktomi</i> .
Maka	The Earth and Grandmother of all things.
Maza waken	Wakan iron or gun. (Because the shot from it is like the act of the Wakan.)
Mdewakantonwan	Spirit Lake or Sacred Lake people.
Mini wakan	Wakan water, intoxicating liquor.
Nagi	The spirit that has never been in a man. The spirit that guides man but is not part of a man. Both good and bad.
Niya	Ghost
Okaga	South Wind
Olowan	A song.
Oyate	The People or Nation
Sicun	Guardian or intellect.
Skan	The Sky
Taku Skanskan	Changes things.
Taku Wakan	Wakan Relatives. ("Relatives" relates to all things in nature, not just to blood relatives or other humans.)
Taku wakan	Things mysterious.
Tatanka	Great beast (bull buffalo or bison). The patron of ceremonies, of health, and of provision. <i>The one with the big body.</i>
Tate	The Wind, created by Skan to be his companion.
Tetonwan	People of the prairie or dwellers in the grass lands.
Tulkan	Venerable one.
Unk	Contention. Created by Maka to be her companion, but was cast into the waters and is the Goddess of the Waters and Ancestress of all evil beings.
Unktehi	One who kills.
Wahpetonwan	Those who live among the leaves or trees.
Wakan Tanka	Those that made everything. The unknowable. Above all other Wakanpi.
Wakan Wanantu	Superior Wakan.
Wakanpi	All things above mankind. They have power over everything on earth.
Wakinyan	Thunderbird created by Inyan to be his active associate.

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Wakpekute	Shooters in the leaves or forest people.
Wamaka nagi	Animal spirit.
Wanagi	That is the spirit nagi that was once in a man.
Wanagi makoce	The spirit world.
Wanbli	The Eagle.
Wani	The four Winds. The weather.
Wankanla	Wakan-ish. Wakan like. The la ending in Lakota is like the ending ish in English. Making adjectives of nouns. Meaning “of the nature of” or “diminutive of”).
Wasica wakan	Refers to white citizens of the United States. Wasica does not refer to the color of their skin, but rather to “those we do not understand”. (Because he could do marvelous things like Wakan could do)
Wasicun	Ceremonial bag of the Lakota with mythical potency.
Wasna	Pemmican, a mixture of dried meat and fruits.
Waziya	Of the north
Wi	The Sun. The chief of the gods.
Wica nagi	The spirit of a man.
Wicasa wakan	Wakan man or shaman.
Wo nagi	The spirit of food.
Wohpe	Daughter of Skan, <i>the Mediator</i> . Patron of harmony, beauty and pleasure. More beautiful than any other.
Woniya	The life, or breath of life or wanagi when it is in a man.
Yanpa	East Wind
Yate	North Wind
Yum	The Whirlwind. The god of chance, games and love.