

Part X Texts

THANKSGIVING - PART TWO

If you already know the words for the aspects of creation that are thanked in the thanksgiving address, then you can create simple sentences just by adding the right word for thanking as follows:

tatwanuhela·tú	<i>we'll thank it</i>
tahethwanuhela·tú	<i>we'll thank him</i>
tayethinuhela·tú	<i>we'll thank her or them</i>

Use the first one (*thank it*) for the strawberry, tobacco, and water; use the *second* (*thank him*) for the creator and the elder brother sun; and use the last one (*thank her or them*) for everything else.

Each thanking can then be introduced and concluded by sentences expressing the hope for shared thinking. One such introductory sentence is the following:

Akwe·kú	uskah	tsi?	Δtwahwe?nu·ní·	yukwa?nikúhla.
all	one	that	we'll gather	our minds

Δ-	-twa-	-hwe?nuni-	yukwa-	-?nikuhl-	-a
future	pronoun	verb root	<i>our</i>	noun root	suffix

More freely this could be translated as *May we all gather our minds together as one.*

A concluding sentence for each thanking might be the following:

Ta	tho	nियोhtúhak	yukwa?nikúhla
so	how	the way it is	our minds

ni-	-yo-	-ht-	-u-	-hak
partitive	<i>it</i>	verb root	perfective	continuative

Translated freely, this is *So, let our minds be this way.*

At this point the thanksgiving consists of 18 sections of the following form:

Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Δtwahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. TΔ...-pronoun-...nuhela·tú
[name of thankee]. **Ta tho nियोhtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.**

This version can now be expanded even more by adding a reason for thanking each of the parts of creation. A generic way to do this is to thank each one for still carrying on its responsibilities. The word for *carry on one's responsibilities* is **-atlihwahatatyé·tu**. This is a perfective verb that requires objective prefixes.

-at-	-lihw-	-ahtaty-	-e?t-	-u
reflexive	noun	verb	instrumental	perfective aspect
	<i>culture</i>	<i>operate</i>	<i>use</i>	

lotlihwahtatyé·tu	he carries on his responsibilities
yakotlihwahtatyé·tu	she carries on her responsibilities
yotlihwahtatyé·tu	it carries on its responsibilities
lonatlihwahtatyé·tu	they carry on their responsibilities
yonatlihwahtatyé·tu	they (females) carry on their responsibilities

The particle **she·kú** is used for *still* and the particle **tsi?** is used as a connector. For example:

TΛhethwanuhela·tú shukwaya?tísu tsi? she·kú lotlihwahtatyé·tu.
 we'll thank the creator that still he carries on his responsibilities

More experienced speakers, of course, add more variation in their thanksgiving. Here are a few examples of fairly simple variations in the the reasons.

Thank the people **tsi? akwe·kú skΛ·nÁ yakwanuhtúnyuhe.**
 that all peaceful we are thinking

Thank the animals or birds **tsi? she·kú yethiyatkáthos.**
 that still we see them

Thank the waters **tsi? she·kú yukwatstuháti.**
 that still we go on using them

Thank the messengers **tsi? she·kú yukhi?nikú·lale.**
 that still they care for us

Thank the creator **tsi? olihwakwe·kú lowyΛnatáu.**
 that everything he has finished (created)

The whole of the thanksgiving is usually introduced by some introductory words such as:

swatahuhsi·yóst tsi? náhte? ohΛ·tú kalihwatéhtu.
 listen closely to what ahead subject matter

swa-	-at-	-ahuhs-	-iyo-	-st-
pronoun	reflexive	ears	good	make

After the thanking of the parts of creation, the speaker typically asks the audience to forgive any errors with a humble admission of still learning. The very end of the thanksgiving can be marked by the phrase **Ta tho nikawΛnÁhak. Tá·ne.**

Ta aeswatahuhsi·yóste? o·nÁ tsi? náhte? ohΛ·tú yolihwatéhtu

1. **Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Λtwahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikú·la? tsi? akwe·kú oskΛ·nÁ yakwanuhtúni (or yakwanuhtúnyuhe). Ta tho niyohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.**

2. **Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Λtwahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. TΛyethinuhela·tú yukhinulhá ohwÁtsya? tsi? she·kú yakotlihwahtatyé·tu (or yakotlihwahtatyé?tuháti). Ta tho niyohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.**

3. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Δ twahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. T Δ yethinuhela·tú onekli?shúha? tsi? she·kú yonatlihwaht Δ tyé·tu. Ta tho niohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

4. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Δ twahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. T Δ yethinuhela·tú áhs Δ na?tekutahnu·téle tsi? she·kú yonatlihwaht Δ tyé·tu. Ta tho niohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

5. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Δ twahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. T Δ twanuhela·tú (ka? niyoh Δ tés Δ ha) aw Δ hihte? tsi? she·kú yotlihwaht Δ tyé·tu. Ta tho niohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

6. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Δ twahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. T Δ yethinuhela·tú onuhkwatho·kú tsi? she·kú yonatlihwaht Δ tyé·tu. Ta tho niohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

7. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Δ twahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. T Δ twanuhela·tú oyukwa?u·wé tsi? she·kú yotlihwaht Δ tyé·tu (*or* yukwatstuháti). Ta tho niohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

8. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Δ twahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. T Δ yethinuhela·tú kaluta?shúha (*or* nya?tekalu·táke) tsi? she·kú yonatlihwaht Δ tyé·tu. Ta tho niohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

9. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Δ twahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. T Δ tyethinuhela·tú kutíli tsi? she·kú yethiyatkáthos (*or* yukwatkathuháti). Ta tho niohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

10. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Δ twahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. T Δ yethinuhela·tú ohnekanusho·kú tsi? she·kú yukwatstuháti. Ta tho niohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

11. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Δ twahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. T Δ yethinuhela·tú otsi?t Δ ha?shúha tsi? she·kú yethiyatkáthos (*or* yukwatkathuháti). Ta tho niohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

12. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Δ twahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla. T Δ yethinuhela·tú owela?shúha tsi? she·kú yonatlihwaht Δ tyé·tu (*or* lonatlihwaht Δ tyé·tu). Ta tho niohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

13. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Λtwahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla.
 TΛyethinuhela·tú latishakayu·té·se? tsi? she·kú lonatlihwahtΛtyé·tu. Ta
 tho niyohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

14. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Λtwahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla.
 TΛhethwanuhela·tú shukwa?tsíha otáhala (*or* né·n kwΛte?kékha
 wehní·tale) tsi? she·kú lotlihwahtΛtyé·tu. Ta tho niyohtúhak
 yukwa?nikúhla.

15. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Λtwahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla.
 TΛyethinuhela·tú yukhihsótha (kwa?ahsute?kékha) wehní·tale tsi? she·kú
 yakotlihwahtΛtyé·tu. Ta tho niyohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

16. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Λtwahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla.
 TΛyethinuhela·tú yotsistohkwa·lú tsi? she·kú yonatlihwahtΛtyé·tu. Ta tho
 niyohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

17. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Λtwahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla.
 TΛyethinuhela·tú kayé niyukwé·take (*or* nihΛnukwé·take)
 tehutlihwatenyá·tha? tsi? she·kú yukhi?nikú·lale (*or* yukhi?nikuhlatáti).
 Ta tho niyohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

18. Akwe·kú úskah tsi? Λtwahwe?nu·ní· yukwa?nikúhla.
 TΛhethwanuhela·tú shukwaya?tísu tsi? olihwakwe·kú lowyΛnΛtáu. Ta tho
 niyohtúhak yukwa?nikúhla.

Ta aswélheke? kΛtyóhkwa? né·n tho niyo·lé· wakatke·ní·
so as you will the people this far I am able
 né·n tekanuhelatúhsla né·n katsa? ok nú takwatóktΛ né·n wa?tkatÁ·nuke?
the thanksgiving where ever I am lacking I made an error
 né·n skwatilhih né·n tho niyo·lé· wakatke·ní· né·n elhúwa
forgive me that far I am able recently
 wakewyΛtehta?uháti né·n kanÁ·laku akata·tí·. Ta tho niyohtúhak né·n
I am learning before a group to speak
 yukwa?nikuhla. Ta ne tho.

ONEIDA WRITING SYSTEMS

Like nearly all native American languages Oneida does not have a traditional writing system. There are some traditional mnemonic figures, as on condolence canes, to help speakers recall names and parts of ceremonies, but those figures do not represent individual sounds so that words can be written with them.

Europeans introduced alphabetic writing to northeastern America through missionaries. Of all the missionary groups the early French Jesuits made the most effort to learn native ways, especially among the Mohawks. For learning and writing the Mohawk language they used letters from the Roman alphabet and tried to be as consistent as possible in matching letters to sounds. This is not easy. All languages use differences in sound some of which are important differences for distinguishing words, e.g. the difference between *till* and *dill*, and some of which are less important differences which are just part of your mouth accommodating the surrounding sounds, e.g. the difference between the 't' in *till* and the 't' in *still*. With practice over time speakers learn to pay more attention to the important sound differences in their language and less attention to the automatic sound differences. Unfortunately a sound difference that may be important in one language may be inconsequential in another and vice versa. A good writing system should have symbols for all the important sound differences but it will get needlessly complex if it includes all the unimportant automatic ones. The French system for Mohawk was fairly good except for representing accents and rhythms and a version of the French system is still in use among the Mohawks. It is not totally unambiguous, however. For example, it uses 'o' to represent the o-sound, 'n' to represent the n-sound, and 'on' to represent the nasalized u-sound. When you see an 'on' written you have to figure out whether it is an on-sound or an u-sound. The writing system also uses 'en' to represent the nasal vowel ʌ-sound.

Oneida and Mohawk are closely related languages and there are examples of people in the 1800's writing Oneida by simply using the Mohawk system. A few letters, a Bible, and some hymnals exist using this system. But most Oneida speakers in the 1800's did not use any writing system at all.

Throughout the nineteenth century there were individuals, some white anthropologists and a few natives, who made studies of the Iroquoian languages and they all seem to have developed their own writing systems. There is a lot of overlap in these personal systems and a good deal of variation in consistency from individual to individual.

By the turn of the century the general principle that some sound differences are important (they carry meaning differences) and some aren't (they are automatic adjustments) and that each language sorted the two types differently was becoming clearer. It became known as the phonemic principle. In the 1930's this principle was applied to Oneida and a writing system was devised for the WPA sponsored writers' project that produced a hymnal and a manuscript collection of about 800 texts. The hymnal was the most widespread example of written Oneida in Wisconsin until the tribal school began. This writing system used letters from the

Roman alphabet plus a few special characters taken from the International Phonetic Alphabet.

A simplified version of the writing system was used in the hymnal as opposed to the manuscript texts. That was possible because sung Oneida is different from spoken Oneida. When sung the tune of the song determines the rhythm of the words so all the marks invented to indicate accent and rhythm can be left out. Glottal stops and whispering, which are important parts of the spoken language, are also omitted when singing. In addition for the hymnal, words were broken into syllables to better match the beats of the tune. All this makes it relatively easy to use the writing in the hymnal for singing.

The 1930's version used for the spoken language is a perfectly adequate writing system. Linguists studying the language over the next few decades, however, began to make a few adjustments and those adjustments were incorporated into the writing system used in the language project of the 1970's which produced some curriculum and a wide range of written materials.

To illustrate one of these adjustments consider the following example. The 1930's version used both the letter 't' and the letter 'd' while the 1970's version used just 't'. The two systems are convertible. Both use the letter 't' before 'k', 't', 's', and silence. A 't' before anything else in the 1930's system corresponds to a 'th' in the 1970's system. A 'd' in the 1930's system always corresponds to a 't' in the 1970's system. The two systems are not changing the sounds of the language, just the letters used to represent the sounds like *kwik* vs. *quick* or *boyz* vs. *boys*. Which system is better? Well, initially the 1930's system seems a bit more natural (for English speakers) because it uses both 't' and 'd' just like English. However, English is not terribly consistent. The 't' sounds in *still* and *water* are a lot closer to a 'd' sound. But the big difference comes when one constructs Oneida words out of stems, prefixes, and suffixes. In the 1930's system if a stem ends in 'd' and the suffix starts with 'h', then the 'dh' has to change to 't'. If the suffix starts with 'k', then the 'dk' has to change to 'tk'. In the 1970's system the stem ends consistently in 't' no matter what the suffix starts with. The trade off, then, is that the 1930's system may be a bit easier for learning your first few words but seeing how complex words are made up becomes harder later on and involves lots of spelling rules such as the ones above while the 1970's system is more unEnglish-like to begin with but simpler in the long run.

There are similar differences in that the 1930's system has both 'k' and 'g' while the 1970's system has just 'k'; the 1930's system used 'j' and 'c' while the 1970's system has 'tsy' and 'tshy'. The 1930's system also used raised letters for whispered sounds while the 1970's system uses underlining.

In addition to these standardized systems many individuals have their own writing system or adapted one of the standards ones. Consequently one is likely to encounter a lot more variation in spelling than in pronunciation among speakers. The spelling used in these lessons (the 1970's system) is consistent.