

WHAT LANGUAGE DOES HE SPEAK? THE LAST NAME GIVES A CLUE

IU MIEN

Mien clan names usually carry the Thai prefix "sae" before them; some people are dropping the "Sae". The Iu-Mien were a minority group in Laos (there, as in China and Thailand, they are known as "Yao"), and lived in the remote high mountain villages until the war drove them to the lowlands. Schools can often communicate with men who were adults in Laos in Lao, but for the older and younger generations, oral Mien must be used. Chinese characters are used to write Mien ritual books, and a romanization exists in several forms. Currently, Iu-Mien from America, Thailand, and China are trying to arrive at a standard romanized form to be used by all. Below are the Mien names in one of the current romanized forms, with variations of English spelling in parentheses. (In this romanization, the final letter represents tone, not a consonant sound—*x* is a rising tone; *h* is a high falling tone, *c* is a low glottalized tone, *z* is a rising and falling tone, and *q* is a high short tone).

Zeux (**Sae chao**)Yangh (**Sae yang**, Sae wang)Dangc (**Sae teurn**, Sae tern, Tang)Bungc (**Sae fong**, Pum, Pun)Bienh (**Sae phan**, Saepharn)Lorh (**Sae lo**, Sae law)Lioh (**Sae liew**, Saeleo, Saelio)Leiz (**Sae lee**)Zanh (**Sae chin**)Siouh (**Sae sio**)Zuaq (**Sae chou**)Tong (**Sae tong**)

According to Lemoine (*Yao Ceremonial Paintings*, 1983), the original Yao Charter named twelve clans, but those most frequently found in Laos and Thailand are: *Pien, Pung, Tang, Tsiou, Tsan, Yang, Liou, Lei*.

HMONG

Hmong clan names are also pronounced on specific tones. These are the most common clan names, with the Hmong spelling and the common English spelling. Most Hmong had very little schooling in Laos, and are not literate in any language, while they may speak two or three. Lao translation/interpretation may work for adult men, but for the older generation, the women and the young children, oral Hmong must be used. Hmong spelling comes first, then the English spellings.

*High, short**High falling**Mid, level**Low, level**Low, abrupt end*

Khab (Kha, Khang)

Faj (**Fang**)

Koo/Soom

Lis (**Lee, Ly**)

Ham (Ha, Hang)

Phab (Pha)

Hawj (**Her**)

(Kong/Song)

Muas (**Moua**)Kwm (**Kue**)

Tsab (Cha, Chang)

Hwj (**Heu**)

Tswb (Chue)

Lauj (**Lo, Lor**)Thoj (**Thao, Thor**)Tsheej (**Cheng**)Vaj (**Va, Vang**)Vwj (**Vue**)Xyooj (**Xiong**)Yaj (**Ya, Yang**)

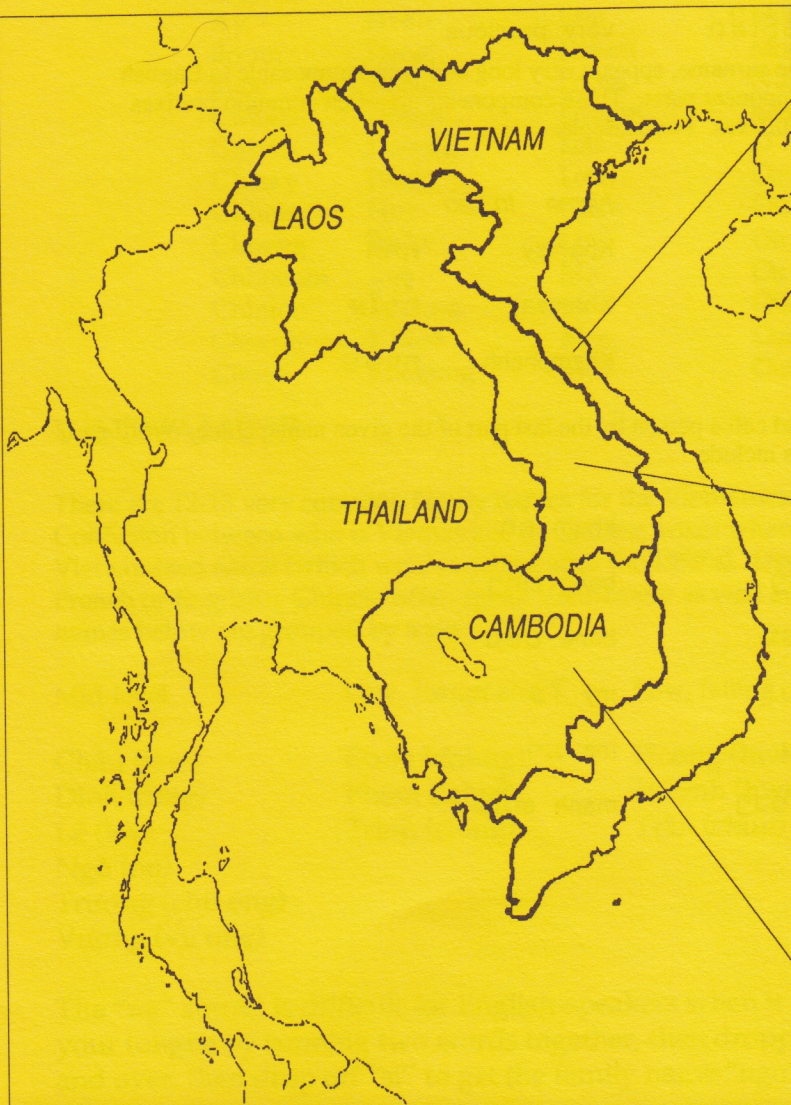
KHMU, KAMMU, KMHMU

The Khmu people from the highlands of Laos are from the same large language family as Khmer and Vietnamese. There are two types of written language in published form, and each one represents a regional dialect better than the other. There is no agreement yet on which one will become the standard. The system developed by the Swedish team uses symbols close to the International Phonetic Alphabet and diacritics to show tone (Kàm Ràw; Kammu). The other, used by Frank Proschan in his thesis, does not use tone marks; the result is "Kmhmu", for the name of the people.

Khmu did not have last names; each person belongs to a "totem group", which is important to know for marriage and other interactions. The naming system goes like this, for our good friend Kàm Ràw:

Grandfather:	Laang
Father:	Ràw (son of) Laang
	Kàm (son of) Ràw
Son:	Danny (son of) Kàm

Normally, a person takes a name from the mainstream society as well, either Lao or Thai; this is probably the legal school name for most Khmu children.

	ETHNICITY	LANGUAGE(S)
	From Vietnam	
	VIETNAMESE	Vietnamese
	CHINESE	Cantonese, Vietnamese
	Vietnamese Montagnard	
	SRE	Sre, vietnamese
	JARAI	Jarai, Vietnamese
	RHADE	Rhade, Vietnamese
	BAHNAR	Bahnar, Vietnamese
	CHRU	Chru, vietnamese
	From Laos	
	LAO	Lao
	Laotian minority groups	
	HMONG	Hmong, Lao
	IU-MIEN	Mien, Lao
	KHMU	Khmu, Lao
	LAHU	Lahu, Lao
	T'IN	T'in, Lao
	From Cambodia	
	KHMER (Cambodian)	Khmer

LAO

The most striking feature of Lao names is that they are long, and appear unpronounceable. The usual order is the same as English, given name followed by family name. The given name often falls into two parts, a common prefix followed by any of a number of common suffixes (Khamtsy, Khamsey, Khamphanh). Close friends may drop the prefix, and simply use the suffix: Sy, Say, Phanh, etc.

Examples of Lao surnames (created after 1943)

Souk-som-boun	ສຸຂສົມບູນ	health, prosperity
Vieng-kham	ວຽງຄຳ	golden city
Souk-ban-dith	ສຸຂບັນດິດ	mature pundit
Vong-kham-keaw	ວົງຄຳແກ້ວ	gold lineage
Vong-sa-wat	ວົງສາວັດ	prosperous lineage
Vong-pra-chan	ວົງພຣະຈັນທຸ	moon lineage
Va-tha-na-tham	ວັທນະທັມ	culture
Luang-pra-seut	ຫລວງປຣະເສີດ	very precious

The given name, which, like the surname, appears very long and unpronounceable to English speakers, can be broken apart into component parts. These components are often common prefixes followed by one of several common suffixes. For example:

Prefix	Suffix	Name	In Lao
Kham	sy	Khamtsy	ຄຳສີ
Kham	say	Khamsey	ຄຳໃສ
Kham	phanh	Khamphanh	ຄຳພັນ

Often close friends drop the prefix, and call a person by the last part of the given name, alone. Word parts that are often seen in Lao given names include

thong ທອງ	boun ບຸນ	kham ຄຳ
sy ສີ	pheng ເພັງ	bang ບາງ
say ໃສ	phone ພອນ	bone ບອນ
sone ສອນ	phanh ພັນ	my ໄມ
souk ສຸກ	phoun ພູນ	ma ມາ
dang ດັງ	phouang ພວງ	manh ຫມັນ
vong ວົງ		

CAMBODIAN

Names with two "h"s are definitely Cambodian. Cambodian names, like the language, are not tonal; this is different from the other languages described here. The alphabet is non-Roman, so the transliteration (English spelling) varies from writer to writer. There are a great variety of family names; they tend to be short one syllable words (*Chhom*). Given names tend to be two or three syllables (*Rattana*, or *Rat ta na*). The usual order in Cambodia was family name followed by given name.

<i>Given names</i>	<i>Family names</i>
Sokha សុខា	Chea ជ័រ
Neary នារី	Chhom ឆ័ម
Bona បុណ្យ	Pok ពុក
Chantha ចន្ទថា	Hem ហែម
Rattana រត្ននា	Som សម

Other examples of Cambodian family names:

Ang	Hang	Koeuh	Mon	Phen	Som
Ay	Hean	Lim	Moun	Phoeun	Sous
Boeun	Heng	Loeum	Moung	Phuon	Ta
Buon	Hoeum	Loeun	Nay	Poeun	Thoun
Chham	Hoeun	Loeuth	Nem	Pok	Vann
Chhan	Hoeung	Lon	O	Ra	Voeun
Chhay	Hong	Loun	Oeu	Ram	Voeuth
Chhem	Hok	Luom	Ok	Roeun	Vuy
Chheng	Huon	Luy	On	Roeung	Vy
Chhoeum	Keo	Ma	Ou	Sam	Yam
Chhuon	Kheung	Mai	Ouk	San	Yan
Choeun	Khlok	Mee	Oum	Sat	Yang
Chuon	Khoeung	Men	Oun	Seng	Yay

VIETNAMESE

There are 12-13 very common family names for the Vietnamese people; *Nguyen* is the most common. Confusion between who is Vietnamese or Chinese arises when an ethnic Chinese family uses its Vietnamized name (which were required after the 1950's). Usually Vietnamese speak only Vietnamese (or French or English); Chinese often speak Vietnamese as well as Cantonese (and possibly Mandarin). The names below are grouped by tone:

Mid-level	Low, abrupt end	Low, falling	Broken	High
Châu (jow)	Đặng (dahng)	Hòang (hwong)	Lữ (lu-u)	Lý (lee)
Dinh (ding)	Phạm (fahm)	Hùynh (hwen)	Nguyễn (nwe-en)	
Lê (lay)	Trịnh (ching)	Trần (chun)	Võ (vo-o)	
Ngô (no)			Vũ (vu-u)	
Trương (chu ong)				
Vương (vu ong)				

The "ng" sound is difficult for English-speakers when it comes at the beginnings of words. Train your tongue by running two words together, then dropping off the first sounds: "sing-oh" over and over, then drop off "si" to get the family name "ngo".

OVERSEAS CHINESE (VIETNAM)

Most of the Chinese speak the Cantonese dialect of Chinese, but it has a Vietnamese 'flavor' and local vocabulary. The Chinese family names, written in characters, have been Vietnamized—put into the closest Vietnamese equivalent, either by sound or meaning—after 1954 or when processing out of refugee camps. There is a tremendous variation in spelling. What is given here is the character, a Cantonese romanization, and the usual Vietnamese equivalent. The most common names are at the beginning of the list.

阮	Nguyen	鄭	Cheng (Trinh)
陳	Chan (Tran)	彭	Pang (Banh)
李	Lee (Ly)	文	Man (Van)
張	Cheung (Truong)	羅	Lo (La)
黃	Wong (Hoang, Huynh)	鄧	Deng (Dang)
何	Ho (Ha)	蘇	Su (To)
王	Wong (Vuong)	馬	Ma (Ma)
林	Lum (Lam)	石	Sek (Thach)
余	Yee (Dui)	曾	Jung (Tang)
吳	Ng (Ngo)	廖	Liew (Lieu)
劉	Lau (Luu)	溫	Won (On)
朱	Chu (Chu)	白	Bach (Bach)
周	Chau (Chau)	金	Kam (Tuyen)
方	Fong (Phuong)	沈	Sum (Sam, Tham)
鄺	Kong (Phuong)	高	Ko (Cao)
江	Gong (Giang)	莫	Mok (Mac)
楊	Yeung (Duong)	宋	Soong (Tong)
范	Fan (Pham)	譚	Tan (Dam)
趙	Chiu (Trieu)	鍾	Choong (Chung)
胡	Fu (Ho)	許	Hee (Hy)
馮	Fung (Phung)	孫	Seen (Ton)
陸	Luk (Luc)		
梁	Leung (Luong)		

Chinese who came from Saigon/Cholon often went to Chinese school and Vietnamese school; they are bilingual and biliterate. Chinese from the north had less opportunity for education because education was reserved for the Vietnamese party members' children. Those from the urban areas like Haiphong probably had ten years of school, achieving fluency and literacy in Vietnamese, but not in Chinese. Those from the remote areas of the north had little or no education, and are probably not literate in any language; to communicate with parents, oral Cantonese will be necessary.

VIETNAMESE MONTAGNARD

The minority groups living in the Central highlands of Vietnam were closely allied with the Green Berets, and recently 200 families entered the U.S. after escaping Vietnam through Cambodia to Thailand.

Ethnic groups include Rhade, Jarai, Sre, Mnong, Chru, Bahnar, Bru, Lat, Sedang, Rengao; they, taken together, can be called "ana chu", or 'sons of the mountains'. Listed below are names of prominent minority leaders. The underlined individuals studied in the U.S.

Y Thih Eban, Y Ju Eban, Y Klong Adrong, Y Jut Buon To (Rhade)

Rcom Anhot, Nay Blim, Nay Luett, Rcom Plol, Slu Nay (Jarai)

Hiup, Ber, Paul Nur (Bahnar)

Touneh Yoh, Touneh Ton, Touneh Han Tho (Chru)

Toplui Pierre K'Briuh, Toplui K'Broi (Sre)



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FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

Since 1988, religious refugees have come to the United States from the former Soviet Union. Some are Russian, some are Ukrainian, some are Armenian, and so on. In the Sacramento area, most of these new arrivals are Christian—usually Pentacostal or Baptist. Armenians may not understand, speak or read Russian; Ukrainians are likely to be bilingual in Ukrainian and Russian after age 9 or so. Children under 7 years of age have probably not been to school at all.

RUSSIAN

Family names that end in “ov” and “in” are probably Russian. Names that end in “skiy” or “sky” are also Russian, but there is an ethnic connection to the people of Poland (whose names often end with “ski” in American English,. If a man named *Ivan Kozlov* has two children, *Svetlana* and *Petr*, this is how their names are patterned:

Kozlov Petr Ivanovich

Kozlova Svetlana Ivanovna

The suffixes “ovich” (for a boy) and “ovna” (for a girl) indicate that this person is “of” the man named “Ivan”. Family names also have a male form and a female form, as these examples show:

Male	Female
Kozlov	Kozlova
Petrov	Petrova
Fedorov	Fedorova
Ivanov	Ivanova
Zaikin	Zaikina
Istomin	Istomina

Козлов	Козлова
Петров	Петрова
Фёдоров	Фёдорова
Иванов	Иванова
Зайкин	Зайкина
Истомин	Истомина

For names ending in “sky”, the female form is “skaya” (Bachinsky/Bachinskaya).

UKRAINIAN

Ukrainian names tend to end in “o”, “ik”, “uk”.

Eryomenko
Goroshko
Kirichenko
Lyashenko
Melnik
Yakimchuk
Zaharchuk
Ivanuk

Ерёменко
Горошко
Кириченко
Ляшенко
Мельник
Якимчук
Захарчук
Иванюк

Ukrainians and Russians have the same kinds of given names:

Girls' given names & nicknames

Natalia	Natasha
Nadezhda	Nadya
Olga	Olya
Svetlana	Sveta
Irina	Ira
Elena	Lena
Valentina	Valya
Galina	Galya
Rufi	Rufa

Boys' Given names & nicknames

Anatoliy	Tolya
Boris	Borya
Dmitry	Dima
Evgeniy	Zhenya
Konstantin	Kostya
Nikolay	Kolya
Mikhiel	Misha
Timofey	Timosha
Yakov	Yasha

ARMENIAN

Many Armenian names end in “ian” or “yan”, like these: *Muradyan*, *Avagyan*, *Ayvazyan*, *Bunyatyan*, *Mgeryan*, and *Deukmejian*.

The “g” is not pronounced as in “go”, but represents an sound most like “h”—*Mgeryan* is pronounced like “mm-hair-ee-un”.

What are the major value contrasts between Vietnamese, Lao, Khmer, Hmong, Mien, and Chinese cultures and the American culture?

American	Asian
•negotiable social roles	•well defined roles, usually in terms of kinship, gender, status
•look towards the future	•past generations define and affect present individuals
•hopeful, optimistic	•accepting, fatalistic
•success measured in material terms, fulfillment, mastery of challenges	•success measured in terms of accomplishment, correct behavior, status
•belief that world operates according to logical laws of science	•spirits, ancestors, past lives cause things to happen
•status differences minimized, relations informal	•status differences often codified in the language
•events and relationships organized by time	•events organized by social relationship
•discourse style is syllogism: if A and if B, then C	•discourse style is narrative, allegory, parable, proverb, allusions
•understanding based on making terms explicit	•understanding requires knowledge of unstated assumptions
•interpersonal style marked by confrontation, competition, friendly aggression	•harmonious relationships and proper behavior important in social interactions
•friendships short-term, non-binding	•friendships long-term, based on reciprocal obligation
•man can and should conquer nature	•man is part of nature
•social control based on persuasion, individual appeal, guilt	•social control based on filial piety, propriety, intervention of a third party
•individuals possess potential that should be maximized.	•good of the group supersedes individual gain
•children are individuals as are parents; to depend on the other is taken as a sign of incompetence	•children owe parents a debt for birth and rearing
•children are expected to earn their own way, not depend on their parents' reputation.	•children are an extension of the parents.

South east Asia

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