

New International Names on the Campus

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The dramatic rise in international student enrollment in U.S. colleges and universities in recent years has given the professor a host of unfamiliar names to deal with in the classroom. Class rolls and grade sheets that once had a liberal sprinkling of Johnsons and Smiths now read like a mini-U.N., so strongly have foreign students impacted many of the nation's post-secondary institutions. Recent statistics from the Institute of International Education (IIE) reveal that 342,110 foreign students were enrolled in the U.S. colleges and universities during the 1984-1985 academic year.¹ Seventy-six institutions enrolled over 1,000 foreign students each. The top fifteen were the following schools:

	Institution	Number of Foreign Students	Percentage of Total Enrollment
1.	Miami-Dade Community College	4,316	10.4%
2.	University of Southern California	3,761	11.7%
3.	University of Texas, Austin	3,286	5.7%
4.	University of Wisconsin, Madison	2,901	7.0%
5.	Columbia University and Teachers College/Barnard	2,773	11.2%
6.	Ohio State University, main campus	2,606	4.8%
7.	North Texas State University	2,570	12.0%
8.	Southern Illinois University, Carbondale	2,565	11.2%
9.	Boston University	2,462	10.9%
10.	University of Houston, University Park	2,424	7.5%
11.	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	2,366	6.7%
12.	University of Minnesota, Minneapolis-St. Paul	2,344	5.6%
13.	George Washington University	2,221	13.9%
14.	Texas Southern University	2,154	25.0%
15.	New York University	2,115	5.7%

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Of the sixty-four countries sending over a thousand students each, the top fifteen, according to IIE, were the following:²

Country	Number of Students	Rank	Country	Number of Students	Rank
Taiwan	22,590	1	Japan	13,160	8
Malaysia	21,720	2	Venezuela	10,290	9
Nigeria	18,370	3	Hong Kong	10,130	10
Iran	16,640	4	China	10,100	11
Republic of Korea	16,430	5	Saudi Arabia	7,760	12
Canada	15,370	6	Thailand	7,220	13
India	14,610	7	Indonesia	7,190	14
			Lebanon	6,940	15

Since the most popular fields of study are engineering (22.0%) and business and management (19.0%), followed by computer and information sciences (8.0%), social sciences (5.1%), physical sciences (4.4%), education (3.6%), English language (3.2%), health sciences (3.0%), life sciences (2.9%), and liberal and general studies (2.8%), it is quite likely that most teachers will have some exposure to exotic or strange-sounding names.

For the past two years Taiwan has outranked Iran, which had been in first place since the mid 1970s. When we add the students from the People's Republic of China, in eleventh place, we have a sizeable number of Chinese names to cope with in the classroom. (All names which follow have been taken from IBM class rolls at North Texas State University. Letters in parentheses do not appear on class rolls, which have only twenty spaces for each name.)

A Sample of Chinese Names

Chang Chiou-Ling	Sheu Pei Ling Joyce
Chen Dor-Pin	Sin King Yip
Chi Shyue-Chung	Su Johnny
Chng Keng Huat	Tam To Keung
Hong Li-Chun Lily	Tan Siew Yin Christi(ne)
Hsiao Jing-Hui	Tan Choo Fai
Hwang Shi-Jinn	Tsai Yau
Jui Ying Li	Tsin Ching Chen Jess(ica)
King Shyr-Chain	Wang Hsiao-Mei
Lee Fuh-Guei	Wong Siew-Yin
Pan Yi-Tze	Wu Mei-Liang
Poon Fuk Hei	Yang, Ka-Ling

The above names are printed the way they appear on an IBM class roll, with family name first. (Some computer printouts now have commas after the family name, a practice which will be most helpful to teachers.) In both Taiwan and the People's Republic of China the family name comes first, followed by the given name, which is usually made up of two names and, fortunately for us, often hyphenated when transliterated to Roman symbols. On papers and tests students write their last name first with no comma following it (e.g. *Jui Ying Li* instead of *Ying Li Jui*); hence we spend a lot of time looking for the wrong name when we are recording grades. There are actually very few family names, fewer than a hundred, used by a billion Chinese people,³ as exemplified by the following: *Chang, Chen, Chow, Chung, Fu, Hwang, Kung, Kwan, Lin, Min, Pu, Sun, Tan, Wang, Su, Yung*, etc.⁴ The English spelling will vary (*Wang/Wong/Hwang*), depending on the transliteration system being used.⁵

Chinese given names are selected to indicate some character trait the parents wish for the child.⁶ Boys are given names which suggest bravery, strength, brilliance, and heroism. Girls are given names which suggest beauty, kindness, and charm. A few examples from the list above will suffice: *Chiou-Ling* 'autumn bell,' *Li-Chun* 'beautiful spring,' *Fuh-Guei* 'perfumed jade,' and *Ka-Ling* 'good' + 'delicate.' Several of my students selected an American name they liked and added it to their own, thus appearing on the class roll as *Hong Li-Chun Lily, Sheu Pei Ling Joyce, Tan Siew Yin Christine, Tsin Ching Chen Jessica*, etc.

In both Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, siblings and cousins of the same sex may share a common name. For instance *Keng Huat Chng*, in the table of Chinese names above, has a brother named *Keng*. One of my students reported that she and her four sisters all share the name *Ching*. Likewise, *Jade Snow Wong* stated that she has three sisters all with *Jade* as a middle name.⁷

The second largest group of international students in U.S. institutions is from Malaysia. Because of the Muslim influence in this part of Southeast Asia, many of these names will look like Middle Eastern names.

A Sample of Malaysian Names

Abdkarim Faziah Bte	Kamarulzaman Robijah
Abdul Hamid Samsiah	Meorabdulaziz Suzana
Abdullah Normah	Mohamed Yasin Rohana
Abu Bakar Rosiah	Mohamed-Yunus Norlai(li)
Awang Hashim Rosna	Othman Norazah Bt
Che Lah Salasiah	Othman Rosesuzana Bt

Hassan Norhaneza Bt
 Ismail Rose Lina Bt
 Jamian Zaini Binti

Syed Abdul Ghafur Sh(arifah)
 Syed Abdullah Al-Kha(rid Sharifah
 Fatiah Bt)

Zubairi Ainol Madzia

Several of the family names are compounds with *Mohammed*, often abbreviated *Mohd* or *Md*. Other abbreviations are *Abd* for *Abdul* and *Sh* for *Sharifah*. The *Bt*, *Bte*, or *Bti* following many of the names stands for *binti*, which means 'daughter of.' *Bin* or *Bn* after a name means 'son of,' like *Ben* in Arabic. Common first names for girls are *Norma*, *Nora*, *Norlaili*, *Rosna*, *Rose Lina*, and *Sharifah*. *Nor-* (*Nur-*) 'light' is a typical prefix for girls' names, as in *Norhaneza*, *Norlaili*, and *Normah*. The next to last name in the table above cannot possibly fit an IBM roll. The girl's name is *Sharifah Fatiah*, daughter of (*binti*) *Syed Abdullah Al-Kharid*.

The third largest group of foreign students comes to the U.S. from Nigeria, with names like those in the following table.

A Sample of Nigerian Names

Agwu Chikwendu	Ifediora Obiekwe
Anyanwu Uchenna O	Kalu Kalechi
Azaghibi Emmanuel	Nwaugha George Sunda(y)
Chucwu Eke Egbuta	Obi Zion Ikechukwu
Dawodu Solomon Oke	Onyeador Christopher (Egeonu)
Edegebele Lawrence	Oputa Bennett
Ekong Patrick Oke	Ugwa Godswill N

Although there are many tribes and languages in Nigeria, some naming practices seem to prevail throughout the country. One is the naming of a child after a day of the week. *Kwako*, for instance, means 'born on Wednesday.'⁸ The day may also be given in English, as in *George Sunday Nwaugha* in the table above. Children may also be named after the market day on which they were born. In the Ibo tribe *Ada* means 'daughter' and *Nwa* 'son.' Thus *Nwake* is made up of *Nwa* and the market day *Eke*.

Children may be named after some special event or circumstance at the time of their birth, a practice found in many other African nations.⁹ The name *Kalechi* above means 'praise God,' which the father uttered after a son was finally born into the family. One of my Nigerian students named *Sarauniya* 'queen' was born on the day Queen Elizabeth II visited Nigeria in 1959.

Under the influence of Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century, many African families began to give their children both a traditional African name and a Christian name. A spirit of nationalism has reversed this trend in the twentieth century in countries like Zaire, Chad, and Togo.¹⁰ Christian names, however, still prevail as one of a person's names in Nigeria. Oftentimes they are Biblical - *Emmanuel, Solomon, Zion*.

The fourth largest group of international students in U.S. institutions is from Iran, which has suffered a 70% decline in enrollment since the all-time high of 51,310 students in 1980.¹¹ If we add Saudi Arabia in twelfth place, Lebanon in fifteenth place, and Jordan in sixteenth place with 6,750 students studying in the U.S., then we have a very large number of names reflecting the naming practices of the Islamic world. The most popular male name is, of course, *Mohammed*. Variations of the name include *Mahmoud, Mahmed, Ahmed, and Hamid*. This name often appears on class rolls in abbreviated form as *Mohd* or *Md*. The following names from the Middle East are predominantly from Iran and Saudi Arabia.

A Sample of Middle Eastern Names

Abounayan Saad	Haghanegi Mehran
Abu Amad Ziad	Hodan Mohammed Ali
Abu-Hannoud Said	Lirgeshasi Masoud
Aldokhail Nasser	Nowrouzi Azin
Al-Maqshaei Abdulrah(im)	Rouhani Payam
Al-Meshari Abdulaziz	Salari Ladan
Al-Shuwikhat Ahmed	Tamer Abdul-Ellah Om(ar)
Basravi Mirja Nasir	Tavakoli Gholamhosse(in)
Bohalika Ali Salman (Mohd)	Turkustani Abdulhafe(ez)
El-Amrani Lalia Wafa	Zahri Shaher Mohd

Many of these names begin with *Abu-*, which means 'father of.' Thus, *AbuKamal* means 'father of Kamal.' Likewise *Ben* means 'son of'; hence *Ben-Ahmed* means 'son of Ahmed' and *Ibn-Mustapha* means 'son of Mustapha.' *Abdul*, from *Abd* 'slave,' is often joined with *Aziz* 'God,' giving the name *Abdulaziz* 'slave of God.' *Abdelgalil*, from *Abd* and *ElGalil* (another one of the ninety-nine names for God) also means 'slave of God.'

Many Iranian family names end in the suffix *-i*, which follows the name of the place the family is from or some famous person the family is a follower of: *Basravi* (from Basra-Iraq), *Khomeni* (from Khomain), *Najafabadi* (from Najafabad), *Tehrani* (from Tehran), *Goodarzi* (after

Goodarz, a tribal leader), *Mohammadi* (after the prophet Mohammed), and *Nourouzi* (from Nourouz, the New Year).

Many Saudi Arabian names begin with *Al-*, the Arabic word for 'the': *Al-Ahdal*, *Al-Ghamdi*, *Al-Haider*, *Al-Mahfouz*, *Al-Meshari*, *Al-Ramadhan*, *Al-Shuwikhat*, *Al-Wahaid*, etc.

Typical Muslim names for boys are *Aziz*, *Hassan*, *Ibrahim*, *Jamal*, *Kamal*, *Khalid*, *Mustapha*, *Rashid*, *Said (Syed)*, *Shariff*, and *Zoheir*. Typical names for girls are *Alia*, *Aziza*, *Fatima*, *Jalila*, *Malika*, *Nadia*, *Naima*, *Saida*, *Zakia*, and *Zohra*.

The fifth largest group of foreign students is from Korea; it has moved ahead of Canada, which has dropped to sixth place in the 1984-1985 academic year.

A Sample of Korean Names

Chung Moo Kyun	Kye Myong In	Park Choongbum
Hong Kyungmin	Kye Myoung Lim	Park Hwa Ja
Joo Soon-Hee	Lee Jong Wok	Park Nam Seon
Kim Do Young	Lee Sung-Ho	Rhie Kitae
Kim Kyu Dong	Lee Taesoon	Shim Jae Song
Kim Ookyong	Moon Gun Choi	Yoon Jong-Ryul
Kim Woosuk	Paek Shaun	

Like the Chinese, the Korean students often write their names on assignments starting with the last name first, e.g. *Kim Kyu Dong* instead of *Kyu Dong Kim*. Also, they have the Chinese practice of giving siblings a common name. For example, Pyung Jo and Pyung Sik are brothers as are Chang Ho, Chang-Mim, and Chang Uck.

The three most common family names in Korea are *Kim*, *Lee*, and *Park*, with their variant spellings. Like the Chinese, the Koreans have a small number of family names used by millions of people. As the *Korea Annual* (1982) reports, "If you see the name *Kim*, *Lee*, *Pak*, *An*, *Chae*, *Cho*, *Choe*, *Chong*, *Han*, *Ku*, *Ko*, *Im*, *O*, *No*, *Sin*, *Yu*, or *Yun*, you can be fairly sure that it is the family name, whether it appears as the first or third word in the sequence. There are, however, a total of more than two hundred family names in Korea."¹² A typical girl's name is *Young Hee*; a typical boy's name is *Chul Soo*. In fact, the last part of the name is often a clue to the sex of the person - *Chul*, *Soo*, and *Sung* for males and *Hee*, *Ja*, and *Hwa* for females.

Because of the limitations of time and space, I will mention only two other international groups with fairly large representations in U.S. institutions - Japan and Thailand.

A Sample of Japanese Names

Amemori Michiko	Nakahara Masamori
Araya Yuko	Nakahara Yuki
Harada Kunihiko	Nakamoto Etsuko
Maeda Yuko	Nurase Yuji
Matsuki Minako	Nagao Kayoko
Miyago Norio	Tsuchimoto Roy
Mizoguchi Haruyo	Yamada Miyuki

The above names are easy to pronounce, since the Japanese language requires that each syllable have at least one vowel, or one vowel and no more than one consonant. (Certain consonants, like the *n* sound, can form a syllable by themselves.) Many Japanese products on the market today reflect this principle: Honda, Isuzu, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Suzuki, and Toyota. Girls' names often end in the diminutive suffix *-ko*: *Etsuko*, *Hanako*, *Yumiko*, etc.¹³ They are often associated with flowers or seasons, as in *Kiku* 'chrysanthemum,' *Hana* 'flower,' *Matsu* 'pine,' *Haru* 'spring,' *Aki* 'autumn,' and *Yuki* 'snow,' whereas boys' names are more frequently associated with their place in the family (*Jiro* 'younger fellow,' *Saburo* 'third one,' *Goro* 'fifth one,' etc.)¹⁴ Since Japanese doesn't have an *r* sound, words spelled with an "r" are pronounced with an "l": *Araya* is pronounced *alaya* and *Nakahara* is pronounced *nakahala*. In writing, the surname comes first, as it does in Chinese and Korean.¹⁵

Thai names are easy to recognize because they are so long and seldom fit the twenty spaces on the IBM card. Indeed, some last names take up all twenty spaces. Thai students have only two names, a family name and a given name. A 1916 law required everybody to have a surname for legal and official use.¹⁶ Many families chose long Sanskrit names. Given names are often selected by a Buddhist monk whose knowledge of Sanskrit and Bali influences the length of the name and the complexity of its meaning.

A Sample of Thai Names

Bhetraratana Wiroj	Potipimpanon Somboom
Chandrasekaran Perin(kolam)	Prateepreecha Kasem
Daloonpet Supatchree	Rakhiran Varoporn
Gajasuta Saisri	Satheinsep Pornchai
Jiearatrakul Tamrong	Tantisrisuk Suwannee

Kijthavarakul Vijit	Thothong Wantana
Kittisiripornkul Tho(ngchai)	Traivaree Teeravat
Kritkanjanapan Kanja(na)	Triratanachat Somsri
Luegutaisilp Dhanit	Vatanasuchart Chinac(hart)
Patcharapiayopong Ch(aiwut)	Yongboonkird Thnanuw(at)

Even though these names are long, they are relatively easy to pronounce since transliteration is fairly phonetic with minor exceptions. *Th* tends to be /t/ most of the time; e.g. *Thothong* is pronounced totaŋ. The *-kul* suffix is pronounced kun (cf. *Jiearatrakul*, *Kijthavarakul*, and *Kittisiripornkul* above).

Certain given names are popular - *Kitti*, with its variations *Kittikhun*, *Jitti*, *Kittinand*, and *Kittiporn*. *Somboom*, *Sombatt*, *Somchai*, and *Somsri* are frequent names. Children from the same family are often given names with the same sound. Like Chinese names, these names have meaning: *Somboom*, 'perfect,' *Kanjana* 'gold,' *Vigit* 'brave,' etc.

Not a lot of information has been published, at least in English, on the naming practices of these different international groups which are filling our classrooms. One of the best sources of information has been the students themselves, who are eager to talk about their own names, an important part of their person. Much of the information in this article comes from compositions the students wrote concerning their names. Although foreign student enrollment has leveled off and may begin a slow decline because of a worldwide economic recession, we will still have a new and fertile field for onomastic research for years to come.

Notes

¹ *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 9, 1985, 34.

² *Ibid.* The enrollment at North Texas State University, in seventh place in number of international students, followed a similar pattern for 1984-1985: 1. Taiwan (336), 2. Thailand (278), 3. Nigeria (259), 4. Iran (226), 5. Malaysia (177), 6. Hong Kong (126), 7. Korea (117), 8. Jordan (113), 9. Saudi Arabia (91), 10. Canada (68), 11. India (60), 12. Mexico (41), 13. Pakistan (41), 14. Japan (36), and 15. Indonesia (35).

³ Charles F. Berlitz, "Hwang it all-which Wong are you?" *Horizon* 14, No. 3 (Summer 1972), 120.

⁴ William Frederick Mayers, *The Chinese Reader's Manual* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1910; repub. by Gale Research Co., Detroit, 1968), vii.

- ⁵Howard Nelson, "For Chinese Read Pinyin," *Geographical Magazine* 50 (April, 1978), 479-80.
- ⁶Jade Snow Wong, "How to Pick a Chinese Name," *Holiday* 27 (May, 1960), 36.
- ⁷*Ibid.*, 38.
- ⁸J.L. Dillard, *Black English: Its History and Usage in the United States* (New York: Random House, 1972), 124.
- ⁹See J.H.M. Beattie, "Nyoro Personal Names," *Uganda Journal* 21 (1957), 99-106; T.O. Beidelman, "Kaguru Names and Naming," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 30 (1974), 281-93; Mario Cisternino, "Evolution of Birth Names Among the Kiga of Western Uganda," *Anthropos* 72 (1977), 465-85; Mataebere Iwundu, "Igbo Anthroponyms: Linguistic Evidence for Reviewing the Ibo Culture," *Names* 21 (1973), 46-49; Adrian Koopman, "The Linguistic Difference Between Nouns and Names in Zulu," *African Studies* 38 (1979), 67-80; Jon Middleton, "The Social Significance of Lugbara Personal Names," *Uganda Journal* 25 (1961), 34-42; and Paulus M. Mohome, "Naming in Sesotho: Its Sociocultural and Linguistic Basis," *Names* 20 (1972), 171-85.
- ¹⁰A law was passed in 1972 that all newly born Zairans must be given authentically Zairian names. Similar actions have been taken in Chad, where President Tombalbaye abolished all Christian names, and in Togo, where President Eyadema decided to suppress baptism names of European origin (Cisternino 465).
- ¹¹*Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 5, 1984, 21.
- ¹²*Korea Annual 1982* (Seoul, Korea: Yonkap News Agency, 1982), 331.
- ¹³I.V. Gillis and Pai Ping Ch'i, *Japanese Personal Names* (Peking, 1940), Preface.
- ¹⁴Lewis Bush, *Japan Dictionary* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), 134.
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*, 133.
- ¹⁶Valentin Chu, *Thailand Today: A Visit to Modern Siam* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), 150.