

KOREAN

Compiled by Clinton R. Nixon

NOTES

Korean names are constructed as family name then given name. Family names are passed down through a male lineage, but women do not change their names when married, except outside of Korea.

45% of all South Koreans have the family name of Kim, Park, or Lee. The distribution of names is not nearly as heterogeneous as in many other cultures. In fact, there are only about 250 family names total. Because of this distribution, the above chart is made so that one could easily roll 4d6-4 on the common family name chart to get a name, with Kim being the most common result. (Rolling a zero would send you to the rare family names chart.)

Romanization of Korean names is not standardized in any way. The names above are more or less phonetically correct, but common romanizations are put beside the names where appropriate, such as "Lee" for "Yi," which is actually pronounced in Korean as "E." North Koreans tend to use a "r" sound for "n" or "l," which provides "Rhee," "Ryu," and "Roh" above.

Each family name is composed of three to six clans, with each clan being a historical topographical origin of that name. Up until recently, it was illegal to marry someone of your same clan. This is still discouraged by traditionalists, as all clan members share a slight blood tie. Incest is one of the most heinous and unthinkable of all crimes in Korean culture.

COMMON SURNAMES

1. Lim
2. Moon
3. Shin
4. Ahn (alternately: An)
5. Choi
6. Oh
7. Hwang
8. Chong (alternately: Chung, Jung)
9. Yi (alternately: Lee, (DPRK) Rhee)
10. Kim
11. Pak (alternately: Park)
12. Hong
13. Kang
14. Chun
15. Yoo (alternately: (DPRK) Ryu)
16. Noh (alternately, (DPRK) Roh)
17. Yang
18. Han
19. Song
20. Oak

RARE SURNAMES

1. Kyo
2. Nan
3. Dongbang
4. Mangjeol
5. Bi
6. Sobong
7. Ae
8. Ogum
9. Hu
10. Po
11. Tan
12. Jeup
13. Janggok
14. Woon
15. Namgung
16. Bi
17. Myo
18. Nu
19. Gwok
20. Hu

ANCIENT SURNAMES

These are taken from early Korean history, with a pretty wide range of years. They are in no way an actual representation of a particular time period, but would work well for a fantastic Korean historical setting.

1. Bae
2. Choe
3. Jeong
4. Son
5. Seol
6. An
7. Cha
8. Han
9. Hong
10. Kim
11. Kwon
12. Nam
13. Eo
14. Wang
15. Yeon
16. Goi
17. Gojong
18. Gongsun
19. Danggum
20. Dae

NOTES ON GIVEN NAMES

Korean given names have many rules behind them. The most important is that one syllable of a typical two-syllable name is carried throughout a family. For example, a father and his two sons and one of their sons might be Kim Du Ho, Kim Ho Jin, Kim Dak Ho, and Kim Kwang Ho. Whether the syllable is used as the first or second syllable does not particularly matter.

MALE

1. Haneul
2. Iseul
3. Jin Ho
4. Joo Chan
5. Jung Hun
6. Chang Uk
7. Du Ho
8. Jong Pil
9. Min Kyu
10. Kwang Ho
11. Suk Chul
12. Young Su
13. In Ho
14. Bon Hwa
15. Chul
16. Hyun-Ki
17. Hyun-Shik
18. Young Sam
19. Dak Ho
20. Chul Moo

FEMALE

1. Kyung Soon
2. Iseul
3. Haneul
4. Joo Eun
5. Bo Bae
6. Eun Young
7. Sun Hee
8. Mi Young
9. Mi Sun
10. Min Hee
11. Hyun Ja
12. Eun Ju
13. Jong Hui
14. Son Yong
15. Min
16. Yon
17. Hyun Ja
18. Hye Su
19. Kyoung Mi
20. Na Young