

## **Story of Your Name Scrapbook**

Kristine Qian-Ting Loh

Name in Heritage Language: 罗倩婷

Ethnic Origin: Chinese

Phonetic Pronunciation: Chris-teen Chee-yen Teeng Low

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: My parents chose my Chinese name first, then found an American name that sounded similar. My Chinese name means graceful and feminine; while I don't feel that way all the time, I acknowledge that it was my parents' hope for me to move through the world with ease and grace. My middle name, like that of most Asian American people, is my name in my heritage language but spelled phonetically. Many have asked what the Q stands for in my initials and I am always happy to share the story of my name!

Like many other Asian siblings, my sister and I share the same first character in our Chinese names, 倩 "Qian." While my second character is 婷 "Ting," her second character is 菱 "Ling," which means bright. This is why our American names are Kristine and Celine to sound like our Chinese names!

Tuyết Hạnh Nguyễn Schnell

Name in Heritage Language: Tuyết Hạnh Nguyễn

Ethnic Origin: Vietnamese

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: Hạnh is a very popular female name as it is one of the four virtues of a woman (công, dung, Ngôn, Hạnh) Hạnh means proper conduct for a woman or virtuous. Tuyết means snow. So combined Tuyết Hạnh means pure virtue. Nguyễn Is the surname of the king. People took on the king's surname. I am however a descendant of the Nguyễn Dynasty on my mother's side of the family. My grandmother used to play at the royal palace as a child. She told stories of the Princess handing out

candy and money to her and the other children at the palace. The Princess was my great, great Aunt.

### Ivy Kwok

Name in Heritage Language: 燕薇

Ethnic Origin: Chinese

Phonetic Pronunciation: Legal Name: eye-vee; Middle/Chinese Name: yin-may

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: My parents (both deeply rooted in our Chinese culture) divided the responsibilities of coming up with my names — my dad thought of my legal name, Ivy, and my mom thought of my Chinese name, Yin-Mei.

My dad wanted me to have a name that was short and sweet, but with a clever twist. He told me the story of how, when he was at a restaurant, he saw three toothpicks on the table kind of in the formation of the letters I & V. The gears turning in his head prompted him to move the I toothpick below the V toothpicks, giving rise to the letter Y and thus my name!

My mom wanted me to have a very intricate, beautiful Chinese name (to contrast my simpler English name), and she chose Yin-Mei (燕薇). I had the most strokes in my name out of all my classmates in Chinese school growing up, and that was honestly really helpful for me to practice my penmanship! The two characters of my Chinese name translate to "swallow" (like the bird) and a type of rose. Swallows are nostalgic for me because we used to sell swallow nest drinks at our family store, and they were such a yummy, nutritious treat growing up!

As an environmental engineer, I'm glad both of my parents went with a nature theme for my names! 😊

### Vidya Chamundeswari

Ethnic Origin: Indian, Chennai

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: Vidya means knowledge . It's derived from its root vid (Sanskrit). The term is used to denote both intellectual knowledge and spiritual knowledge that leads to enlightenment. Chamundeswari is a fearsome form of the Hindu divine goddess Shakti (Chamundi). The goddess is also known as Mahishasura Mardini (one who killed the demon king Mahisasura).

### Paula Zaretsky

Ethnic Origin: Zaretsky - Czechoslovakian

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: I was adopted as an infant from China, by a white single woman. I was named after my grandfather, Paul, who died 7 days before I was born (though I wasn't adopted until months later). Zaretsky, my mother's maiden name, is Czechoslovakian.

### Hang Kim Loi

Ethnic Origin: Vietnamese

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: Hang is the Vietnamese name of the princess/fairy/lady of the moon associated with the Mid-Autumn Festival, perhaps the 2nd most popular holiday in East and Southeast Asia. It is celebrated on the 8th full moon of the lunar year (usually September of the solar calendar) when the moon often appears bigger and brighter. Very much a children-oriented holiday, the lantern marches rejoice the end of harvest season when families gather for good food and moon cakes. My mother was looking at the full moon anticipating my birth in August when she thought of my name.

### Kimberly Lam

Name in Heritage Language: 林卓君

Ethnic Origin: Hong Kong / Guangzhou (southern China), Cantonese

Phonetic Pronunciation: Lam Cheuk Kwan

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: I am not officially known by my Cantonese name at all; this is what I would be named if I grew up in a Chinese environment. I was born as "Kimberly Lam" and had my Chinese name unofficially.

### Preetinder Kaur Ghuman

Ethnic Origin: Indian, Punjab (five rivers) Region

Phonetic Pronunciation: Pre-thee Goo-man

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: In Sikhism (fifth largest world religion) we have a baby naming ceremony. We have a complete reading of our holy book, Guru Granth Sahib (living guru), and then the first letter on the page during the reading is used to name the baby as a blessing from God. My naming ceremony was done by my paternal grandparents at Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib in Old Delhi. The temple was built by my ancestors. I had the opportunity to go four years ago to the temple and do the baby naming ceremony for my youngest niece on behalf of my sister and brother-in-law. It was really special. Indar was my paternal grandmother's name and both my sister and I have it in our names. In Sikhism all females have the middle name Kaur which means lioness or princess. We are supposed to use our middle name as our last name since last name designates caste and wealth, and we are all equal in the eyes of God. Preeti is a very common Indian name. I only recently started pronouncing my name with the Indian pronunciation as a result of the DEI movement. Previously I pronounced it Pre-T to make it easier for others.

### Sreyoshi Bhaduri

Name in Heritage Language: শ্রেয়সী | শ্রেয়োশী

Ethnic Origin: India, West Bengal & Maharashtra

Phonetic Pronunciation: Sray-ohh-She Bhaa-do-ree

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: In a gist, Sreyoshi means, "The Best". The name is a derivation of the sanskrit word, "shreshth" which means unrivaled. I have found that the name is

popular among Hindus in the Indian states of West Bengal and Maharashtra, although the spellings may vary. In our family, the name Sreyoshi stands for someone who epitomizes superlative brilliance in thoughts and actions. Clearly, my mum, who was the one who named me, wanted me to strive to be the best in all that I think, do, and become. Thanks, Maa!

### Vandana Khanna

Name in Heritage Language: Vandana वंदना

Ethnic Origin: Indian

Phonetic Pronunciation: Vun - duh - nah

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: My name means prayer in Hindi. When I was born, my parents say all their prayers were answered.

### Ranul Jain

Ethnic Origin: Latin word Luna/Lunar

Phonetic Pronunciation: Rah - nul

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: During my birth, my parents had initially intended to name me Lunar, owing to the lunar eclipse that occurred on that day. However, their belief in Indian numerology led them to reconsider the name. Instead, my grandfather suggested the name Ranul, which is an anagram of Lunar and met the numerology criteria. It was particularly important for my parents to give me a unique and uncommon name, which made the process of selecting the name even more significant to them.

### Stephanie Song

Name in Heritage Language: 宋佳欣

Ethnic Origin: Taiwanese

Phonetic Pronunciation: Song Jya Shin

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: For my ethnic Chinese name, around the time I was born, my mother asked my uncle in Taiwan to come up with a Chinese name since I am of Chinese descent. He hired an astrology agency to come up with 5 iterations of a Chinese name. They looked at the sky, what month and year I was born, what time I was born, and came up with 5 different given names to give a 3 character Chinese name. My parents looked at the meaning of each one and how it sounded and settled on my current name. They all had auspicious meanings.

For my formal official English name, my parents were scrambling last minute and could not leave the hospital without naming me. In the end, they settled with Stephanie since they were watching tennis at the time and one of the player's first name was Stephanie. I did not do well in tennis as I grew up.

### Thuong Le

Ethnic Origin: Vietnamese

Phonetic Pronunciation: Tung

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: I was named after a famous Vietnamese composer and Thuong means love in Vietnamese.

### Victoria Png

Name in Heritage Language: 方世真

Ethnic Origin: Chinese

Phonetic Pronunciation: Victoria Ping/Fahng shih jenn

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: The Chinese character for my last name is 方, which like many other characters is pronounced differently depending on the dialect spoken. In Mandarin, the character is pronounced Fahng or in Cantonese it is pronounced Fong. One of the dialects spoken by my dad's family is Teochew, which is why his last name was P'ng

(pronounced Pung) when he was born in Malaysia. When he emigrated to the US, the apostrophe was dropped to avoid confusion and the pronunciation was Americanized to Ping.

My mom's siblings were named after virtues that her parents hoped they would embody throughout their lives - meaning, love, compassion and ambition. Similarly, my parents wanted to name my brother and me after attributes they hoped we would possess. For my name, they decided on 真, which means "true" or "real." They hoped I would be true to myself. My mom also thought about her siblings' names and what she and my dad hoped for my future. My parents wanted me to find true meaning and love in my life. They believed that with compassion and ambition, I could achieve anything I set my mind to. My dad's name has the character 国, which means "country." Building upon that, my parents wanted me to have the world and to make a difference in it. So they combined the two meanings, giving me the name 方世真. The name symbolized the hope that I would live a true and meaningful life, while also striving to make a positive impact on the world.

### Tracy Thanh Truc Nguyen

Name in Heritage Language: Nguyễn Ngọc Thanh Trúc

Ethnic Origin: Vietnamese

Phonetic Pronunciation: Win Knock Tawn Tru

Preferred Pronouns: She / her / hers

Story of my Name: Vietnamese names usually have three or four words. The first word (from left to right) is the family name. The last word is equivalent to the first name in Western names. My middle name (Ngọc) is named after my mom's middle name and Thanh is my dad's middle name.

Nguyễn: most common surname in Vietnamese; 40% of Vietnamese people

Ngọc : "jade, precious stone, gem".

Thanh : meaning "blue, green, young"

Trúc : bamboo : Symbolize noble women, resilience, flexibility, simplicity