



# Names and given names

In a general manner, a Vietnamese name is made of three or four elements. The first one corresponds to the family name or rather to the name of a clan followed by a frequent but not compulsory second element indicating the sex of the person ( **thị** for feminine names and

**văn** or **ngọc** for masculine names for example ). As for the third and fourth elements, they are used to designate the given name of people.

Thanks to this given name, one can identify the person involved. No words are reserved specially for male or female given names. However there exist certain terms that are attributed more easily to girls. It is the case of words that express beauty, grace, tenderness or names of flowers. On the contrary, for boys, one finds words that express strength, courage, fatherland or names of heroes.

## tên họ

It could often be that children of the same family may have the same principal given name and be differentiated by secondary given names. If Vietnam counts more than three hundred names of clans, it can be said that more than 80% of Vietnamese or Kinh belong to one of the following twelve clans: Nguyễn, Trần, Lê, Ngô, Phạm, Vũ, Đỗ, Đặng, Dương, Đinh, Hoàng and Đào.

A great number of Vietnamese bear the name Nguyen. This is due a great deal to opportunities granted by the last dynasty of Nguyen in the goal of consolidating its basis and its popularity with all social strata. That is why the majority of Europeans have the habit of attributing in a wrong way the name Nguyễn to all Vietnamese. Thanks to names reserved and granted to ethnic minorities, it is easier to spot and know their belonging without having to ask for supplemental information.