

# Lesson 1: Greetings & Asking Name

---

## Setting

Nuj Nplhaib is a freshman attending University of California, Davis. The following conversation takes place at the Memorial Union Bus stop on campus where Ntxawm waits for her Chinese friend to meet up with her. She sees Nuj Nplhaib waiting for the bus alone, so she walks over to start a conversation with him.

## Dialogue

- Ntxawm : Nyob zoo, koj puas yog Hmoob?  
 Nuj Nplhaib : Nyob zoo, kuv yog mas.  
 Ntxawm : Thov txim, koj lub npe hu li cas?  
 Nuj Nplhaib : Kuv lub npe hu ua Nuj Nplhaib Vaj, koj ne?  
 Ntxawm : Kuv yog Ntxawm xeeb Lis.  
 Nuj Nplhaib : Kuv zoo siab tau ntsib koj.  
 Ntxawm : Kuv los ib yam thiab mas.

## Vocabulary

- |    |           |                    |
|----|-----------|--------------------|
| 1) | nyob zoo  | hello , hi         |
|    | nyob      | live , stay        |
|    | zoo       | good               |
| 2) | koj       | you , your , yours |
| 3) | puas yog  | are , is , is it   |
|    | yog       | is , to be , yes   |
| 4) | kuv       | I , me , mine      |
| 5) | mas       | polite particle    |
| 6) | thov txim | excuse me , sorry  |

- |     |          |                              |
|-----|----------|------------------------------|
| 7)  | lub npe  | name , the name              |
|     | npe      | name                         |
| 8)  | hu ua    | call , to be call            |
|     | hu       | call                         |
| 9)  | li cas   | what                         |
| 10) | ne       | question particle            |
| 11) | xeem     | last name                    |
| 12) | zoo siab | happy                        |
|     | siab     | liver (verbally means heart) |
| 13) | tau      | have , to have               |
| 14) | ntsib    | meet , met                   |
| 15) | los      | also                         |
| 16) | ib yam   | same , the same              |
| 17) | thiab    | as well , and , also         |

Pronouns:

- |     |                 |                 |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------|
| 18) | Hmoob           | Hmong           |
| 19) | Ntxawm Lis      | personal name   |
| 20) | Nuj Nplhaib Vaj | personal name   |
|     | nplhaib         | ring            |
| 21) | Vaj             | Hmong last name |
| 22) | Lis             | Hmong last name |

## Helpful and Interesting Notes

- 1) The word “mas” is used very often in polite conversation. Adding “mas” after a word or a sentence makes it more polite.

Ex. thov mas - “thov” means please, zoo mas, yog mas, tau mas, ib yam mas

- 2) The word “ne” is a question particle that can only be put at the end of a word or a sentence. Any word or sentence that ends with “ne” is always a question.  
Ex. Koj ne? - And you? or Koj puas yog Hmoob ne? - Are you Hmong?
- 3) The word “xeem” means last name. When a person says “kuv yog Ntxawm xeem Lis”, it literally means, “I am Ntxawm last name Lis”. But in translation, the meaning is “I am Ntxawm Lis”. In Hmong, it is understood very well and it is used in formal settings between adults when meeting for the first time.
- 4) The word “siab” literally means liver. The phrase “Koj siab zoo” means you liver good. In English it means, you have a good heart. “Siab” - liver is used as a heart. In English when we say you hurt my heart, we would say “koj ua mob kuv siab” in Hmong. It means you hurt my liver. Just remember the meaning of “siab” means heart when it literally means liver.
- 5) Nuj Nplhaib and Ntxawm is a famous couple who was married to each other in a Hmong folk story. Nuj Nplhaib is a very famous qeej<sup>1</sup> player, while Ntxawm is among the most beautiful lady in her village. After they got married, Ntxawm was taken away by the tigers. Nuj Nplhaib made a sword and trained days and nights until the sword was able to cut his parents’ cow in half with one stroke. He then went to the jungle and kill the tigers. Finally, he was reunited with his wife again.

## Translation of Dialogue

- Ntxawm : Hi, are you Hmong?
- Nuj Nplhaib : Hello, yes I am.
- Ntxawm : Sorry, what is your name?
- Nuj Nplhaib : My name is Nuj Nplhaib Vaj, and you?
- Ntxawm : I am Ntxawm Lis.
- Nuj Nplhaib : I am happy to meet you.
- Ntxawm : I am happy as well.

---

<sup>1</sup> Qeej is a Hmong bamboo pipe instrument that is used to play during weddings and funerals. In ancient times, any young Hmong boy that knows how to play qeej is always attractive to young ladies and the elders. Now days, qeej is still used for Hmong traditional rituals during funerals and perform for entertainment during Hmong New Year or special events.

## Progress Checklist

After finishing this lesson, you should be able to

- Say hello, ask if someone is Hmong, and answer yes to a question.
- Ask for someone's name and tell them your name.
- Say that you are happy to meet them.

\* When you are able to do the above, move on to lesson 2! If you are still having troubles, review the lesson until you fully understand all the vocabularies and the dialogue.

Total New Words:            22

Total Words :                22

Next Lesson : Asking Nationality & Language