

whats_in_a_name

There are two Commonthroat words that yinrih use to refer to themselves. The most basic is <qgKqg>, which is analogous to the word "man" or "human", it's a common name referring to anyone of their species.

the other is <sfqJq-g>. This word has two morphemes (not counting the deictic inflection). It's a combination of the word <sfq-g> which refers to the planet Yih, and the suffix <-Jq> which denotes a resident of a place or a member of a group, similar to the English suffixes -ese or -an. The word is therefor analogous to the English "Terran" or "Earthling". There is a bit of controversy surrounding the use of the word <sfqJqg> to refer to yinrih in general. The yinrih have been an interplanetary civilization for nearly 95 thousand years. Even though all yinrih descend from ancestors on Yih, the vast, vast majority of the total yinrih population has never had the soil of Yih under their palms. Many people who live on Yih, especially if they were hatched there, object to the use of <sfqJqg> to refer to yinrih in general, saying it should only refer to people from Yih.

Unfortunately for these objectors, <sfqJqg> has a certain sci-fi flare to it, just like the English "Terran". So in spite of the fact that none of the missionaries are Yih natives, they decided to introduce themselves to humanity with <h sfqJqI> "We are people from Yih". The word (minus the 1st person ending) is pronounced /yip, short high strong whine, huff, long high weak growl, huff/, which the very ad hoc human First Contact team hears as "yinrih".

In English the word "yinrih" is sometimes treated like the name of a species, and thus follows the English convention of zero plurals like "fish", "sheep", "deer", etc. It is also not capitalized, just as the word "human" is not capitalized. However, since yinrih are also sapient, the word is sometimes treated like a proper noun referring to a culture, and is thus styled "Yinrih". With all that in mind, the following examples are all considered correct usage:

I saw three yinrih resting in a tree.

The Yinrih speak many languages.

A yinrih is auditing one of my college classes.

The phrase "monkey fox" is also in common use. Many humans (the sort of people who get offended on others' behalf) regard it as a slur, but most yinrih themselves don't mind, especially given that both monkeys and foxes are known for their cleverness.

The word "cynoid" (dog-shaped) is favored in some circles. Many yinrih who are fans of human culture use the word to describe themselves since it has a pulp sci-fi ring to it.

There's also a taxonomic name as described in an earlier post, "Vulpithecus fidelis". If you want to refer to both tree dwellers and yinrih together, or to their common ancestor, the word "vulpithecin"

is used, coined by analogy with "hominin".

Yinrih use the word <qMqmg> to refer to humans. The word is an onomatopoea of the English word "human".

Yinrih, especially Wayfarers, may use the word <sFsFg> (friend) to refer to humans. When the missionaries ask for the name of the country they've landed in, the humans respond "Texas". When asked for the meaning of the word "Texas", the humans say that it means "friend".

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