

— FUN WITH — CHINESE CHARACTERS

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Cartoonist: Tan Huay Peng



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INTRODUCTION

The genesis of the Chinese script is lengthy and remote. Very little of its history and origin is known to us as there is a lack of documentary evidence. Of the various legends concerning the creation of the Chinese script, the comparatively acceptable legend says that it was Cāng Jí 倉頡, a minister of the Emperor Huáng Dì 黃帝, who first invented the script. It was the outcome of an extraordinary occasion on which Cāng Jí observed the footprints of birds and beasts whose lines and shapes were distinct and discernible. Deeply inspired by the sight of this, he then drew the pictures of the objects in accordance with their shapes and forms. These pictures of the primitive age were further reduced to the essentials, conventionalized and in time highly stylized. In other words, they were reduced for the sake of simplicity to a few lines. These picture characters were often, especially in their archaic forms, very expressive and were called *xiàng xíng* 象形, literally "image shapes" by the Han lexicographer Xù Shèn 許慎 (30A.D. - 124A.D.); or "pictography" by many a contemporary paleographer. In some cases, however, the so-called "picture characters" were distorted beyond recognition. It is understandable that concrete objects such as phenomena of nature, man and his attributes, animals and plants, tools and implements and so forth are easily drawn and admirably adapted to represent language. Here are some examples:

For representation of phenomena of nature, there were such pictographs as rì "sun" 日, yuè "moon" 月, the older the forms of the characters, the closer the resemblance between the characters and the objects. The characters shuǐ "water" 水 (also abbreviated as three drops of water: 氺 when it functions as a determinative) and chuān "stream, river" 川 were drawn as flowing water in a stream or river. The character shān "mountain" 山 is a clear, faithful picture of a string of hills, and the same may be said of the character yǔ "rain" 雨 which is expressed by drops of water falling from heaven.

A great number of pictographs relate to man and his attributes. The character rén "man" 人 was represented by a simple linear picture depicting a variety of manners in which a man might appear. For nǚ "woman" 女 and mǔ "mother" 母, there were picture characters depicting the humble, kneeling and gentle manners of the fair sex. The two dots on the body of the latter symbolized the breasts of a mother. There were picture characters which symbolized the eye (miǎn 眇 眇), ear (ér 耳), hand (shǒu 手) (also abbreviated as 扌 when functioning as a determinative) and mouth (kǒu 口) etc.

The world of animals was also widely represented. We have such quadrupeds as hǔ "tiger" 虎, yáng "sheep" 羊, xiàng "elephant" 象, mǎ "horse" 馬 and quǎn "dog" 犬 (also abbreviated as 犾 when functioning as a determinative). As for birds, the script distinguishes between niǎo (ordinary bird) 鳥 and zhuī (short-tailed bird) 隹. In addition, there was yet another picture, wú "crow" 烏, with the omission of a dot from the head of an ordinary bird.

There were pictographs that denote plants and fruits. For instance, mù (tree) 木 highlighted the branches and roots of a tree; cǎo (grass) 艹 depicted the upward shooting of buds, while zhú (bamboo) 竹 described the dangling leaves of a bamboo tree; guǒ (fruit) 果 was a picture of the tree that bore fruit. So was the picture character mǐ (rice) 米 depicting grains of rice on top of a plant.

There were numerous pictures which bore witness to the growth of civilization in ancient China. Take a look at the characters for tools and implements; for instance, dāo (knife) 刀, chē (cart, chariot) 車, zhǒu (broom) 帚, mǐng (bow) 弓, hú (wine vessel) 盃, yǔ (spirit vessel) 鬯, cè (document, book) 冊, yǔ (brush) 帚 and wǎng (net) 網 (abbreviated as 罟) and so on.

The pictographs, which were to a certain extent comparable with the hieroglyphic characters, later evolved into the kind of characters which Xǔ Shèn called "zhǐ shì" 指事, literally "pointing to matters". In the West it was variously called "indirect symbols" or "indicative symbols". Whatever term philologists might call them, these characters were ingeniously adapted by early inventors to render abstract ideas. As a result, the scope of Chinese script was further widened.

The methods of creating such ideographs were many: the drawing of a meaningful symbol, the addition of a sign to a pictograph, making parts stand for wholes, attributes for things, effects for causes, instruments for activities, gestures for actions, to mention just a few. In a nutshell, the abstract ideas were rendered in a metaphorical or symbolic way. For example, by drawing one line: 一, two lines: 二, three lines: 三 or four lines: 四 (this ideograph is no longer in use now) the early inventors meant yī (one), èr (two), sān (three) or sì (four) respectively. By adding a dot or a line onto the horizontal line: 上 (now 上) or below it: 下 (now 下), he meant shàng (up, above) or xià (down, below) respectively. Similarly, by adding a stroke to the top of the pictograph "木" tree (一 + 木 = 末 末 末), or to the lower part of it (一 + 木 = 本 本 本), he meant mò (top branches, end of a branch) or běn (root, trunk) respectively.

While a horizontal stroke stood for yī (one), a vertical stroke 丨 was then taken to mean shí (ten). It was later corrupted into 十. A vertical line down the centre of a circle signified zhōng (centre, the middle) 中. A hand drawing a bow and arrow, needless to illuminate, meant shè (to shoot with a bow) 射. Similarly, to thrust at a person with a spear could but mean fā (to attack) 伐. A man with crossed legs symbolized the notion of jiāo (to cross, connection) 交: so did the picture of a standing man unmistakably represent the idea of lì (to stand) 立.

As civilization advanced, rapid social changes took place. Things became so complicated that the hieroglyphic characters or the ideographs could no longer suffice for the expression of massive abstract notions. Just as the proverb said, "Necessity is the mother of invention", a kind of phonetic script, called "xíng shēng" 形聲 by Xū Shēn, or better known as "determinative-phonetic characters", was invented. The method of inventing determinative-phonetic characters was quite simple and yet most ingenious that the Chinese scribes could and still can invent new characters in unlimited numbers. Because of this, the growth of Chinese script had never been so rapid and before long the determinative-phonetic characters excelled the pictographs and the ideographs in rendering the language and thereafter they became the dominant class of characters in the Chinese script. The evolution of the Chinese script to this stage could be regarded as complete, and almost all the existing Chinese characters, except for five per cent or so, are of this sort.

This new method of creation might be viewed as a kind of phonetic writing which must, however, not be taken for an alphabetic script. It was simply the combination of a determinative indicating or suggesting the sense of the word and a phonetic indicating or suggesting the pronunciation of the word. The following examples will serve to explain how this simple, convenient and progressive method works:

Determinative	Phonetic	Compound
水 shuǐ (water; abbrev. 氵)	+ 其 qí (his, her, its, this, that; originally winnowing basket, now 箕)	= 淇 qí (the River Qí)
玉 yù (jade; abbrev. 玉)	+ 其 qí	= 璣 qí (a valuable white stone or gem)
木 mù (tree; wood)	+ 其 qí	= 棋 qí (Chinese chess)

石 shí (stone)	+ 其 qí = 碁 qí (another variant of 棋 which was made of stone)
馬 mǎ (horse)	+ 其 qí = 騏 qí (a prebald horse)
鹿 lù (deer)	+ 其 qí = 麇 qí (a fabulous, auspicious animal)
鳥 niǎo (bird)	+ 其 qí = 鵠 qí (a kind of wild goose)
月 yuè (moon; time)	+ 其 qí = 期 qí (a period of time; a fixed date; expect to)
	+ 其 jī = 期 jī (a full year; anniversary)
欠 qiàn (owe; deficient)	+ 其 qí = 欺 qí (to cheat; to oppress)
心 xīn (heart)	+ 其 jī = 毒 jī (to poison; to hate)
土 tǔ (earth; land; ground)	+ 其 jī = 基 jī (foundation; base)
竹 zhú (bamboo; abbrev. 竹)	+ 其 jī = 篋 jī (a wickerwork basket)
艸 cǎo (grass; abbrev. 艸 now 草)	+ 其 jī = 萋 jī (a kind of grass)
	+ 其 qí = 莖 qí (the stem of bean)
示 shì (an omen; to manifest; abbrev. 示)	+ 其 qí = 悞 qí (fortunate; lucky)
糸 mì (the archaic form of 絲 silk)	+ 其 qí = 綦 qí (dark grey, superlative)
蟲 chōng (worm; abbrev. 蟲)	+ 其 qí = 螭 qí (part of the word 螭蟻 which is a kind of crab)
	+ 其 qí, jī or jǐ =

The examples cited above were a series of words with the same (or approximately the same) pronunciation that could be written down with no possibility of confusion or misunderstanding at all. Thus 其 qí or jǐ or jī is always a phonetic, never a determinative in a compound word, though it is also the character representing such words as his, her, its, their, this, that, etc., in its own right. We may cite another series of examples in which the character 木 mù (wood) is nearly always a determinative of a compound word showing that almost all the words, which amount to 1,585 included in the largest Chinese dictionary, have something to do with wood:

Determinative	Phonetic	Compound
木 mù (wood)	+ 卜 bù (final particle)	= 朴 pò (a kind of oak; Quercus dentata; also the simplified form of 樸)
	+ 卜 bù (final particle)	= 朴 pō (an old knife-shaped weapon)
	+ 卜 bù (to divine; to foretell)	= 朴 pū (simple and plain)
木 mù (wood)	+ 土 tǔ (earth; land; ground)	= 杜 dù (the russet pear, to shut out; to stop; to prevent)
木 mù (wood)	+ 反 fǎn (to turn over, to rebel; to turn back)	= 板 bǎn (board; blocks for printing)
木 mù (wood)	+ 木 mù (wood)	= 林 lín (forest; grove; copse)
木 mù (wood)	+ 公 gōng (public; open to all)	= 松 sōng (the pine tree; loose)
木 mù (wood)	+ 同 tóng (together; same; alike; with; with)	= 桐 tóng (a name applied to various trees e.g. sterculia platanifolia)
木 mù (wood)	+ 每 měi (each; every)	= 梅 méi (plum; prunes)
木 mù (wood)	+ 票 piào (warrant; bill; ticket)	= 牌 pái (mark; beacon; signal; flag, notice)
木 mù (wood)	+ 黄 huáng (yellow)	= 横 héng (crosswise; horizontal, side way)
木 mù (wood)	+ 櫃 guì (cupboard; wardrobe)	= 櫃 guì (cupboard; wardrobe, shop-counter)
木 mù (wood)	+ 欄 lán (door-screen)	= 欄 lán (railing, animals' pen)
木 mù (wood)	+ 權 quán (heron, small cup)	= 權 quán (weight; power; authority)
木 mù (wood)	+ 覽 lǎn (look; inspect)	= 欖 lǎn (the Chinese olive)
木 mù (wood)	+ 登 dēng (to rise; to mount)	= 橙 chéng (orange)

A further 1,550 such examples may be added to the list, if we wish, of which the character 木 mù is always a determinative though it is the pictograph for wood itself. Furthermore, 木 mù can also function as a phonetic in the compound 沐 mù (to wash, to bathe; to cleanse; to enrich by kindness; to receive favours; etc.). Hence, apart from the fact that every pictograph and ideograph can be used as a phonetic, certain such pictures and symbols can be determinative as well. Since the number of determinatives was comparatively small, a radical system was devised to use the determinatives as a convenient means of classifying the characters in dictionaries. The first great dictionary *Shuō Wén Jie Zì* 說文解字 of Xú Shèn, which was completed in 121 A.D., recognized 540 radicals, or bù shǒu 部首, in all. This number remained unchanged until the imperial dictionary *Kāng Xī Zì Diǎn* 康熙字典 of the Ching Dynasty (1644 A.D.—1911 A.D.) reduced it to 214, at which they still remain today.

As time went on, the Chinese language, as with all other languages, underwent gradual changes. The phonetical change, in particular, of the language was so great that sound combinations which started almost identical and so could be fairly represented by the same phonetic became entirely unlike in the course of time. A typical example was the common phonetic 工 gōng (work; originally a picture of a carpenter's square) in the following determinative-phonetic characters: 功 gōng (merit; det. 力 lì "strength"), 工 gōng (dispute; det. 言 yán "talk"), 工 gōng (red; det. 朱 zhū "silk"), 扛 kāng (to carry; det. 手 shǒu "hand"), 杠 gāng (bench; det. 木 mù "wood"), 江 jiāng (river; det. 水 shuǐ "water") and 貢 gòng (tribute; det. 貝 bèi "shell, money") etc. They are hardly homophonous in modern Chinese even though they originally have one and the same sound. In particular, the cases of 工 gōng, 杠 gāng, and 江 jiāng are even worse, for there is no similarity at all between the sound of the phonetic and that of the compound character.

Such are the primary structural methods of Chinese script which generally falls into three main categories in nature, namely pictographs, ideographs and determinative-phonetic characters described above. We may therefore call them sān-shù 三書 (three categories of script) instead of liù-shù 六書 (six categories of script) which were distinguished first by Liú Xūn 劉歆 and Xú Shèn in the latter Han Dynasty (25 A.D.—220 A.D.). As for the other three types of characters, namely huì yì 會意, literally "meeting of ideas" (associative compounds or logical compounds), zhuǎn zhù 轉注, literally "transferable meaning" (mutually interpretative symbols) and jiǎ jiè 假借, literally "borrowing" (phonetic loan characters), they were classified neither in accordance with the structure nor with the nature, but with the usage of the characters.

Take the *hui yì*, associative compounds or logical compounds for instance, it is a sheer significant combination of two or more pictographs or ideographs so as to form a new character representing a new idea. Thus, 明 *míng* "bright" consists of the pictographs of 日 *rì* "sun" and 月 *yuè* "moon" (日 + 月 = 明); 鲜 *xiān* "fresh" consists of the pictographs of 鱼 *yú* "fish" and 羊 *yáng* "sheep" (鱼 + 羊 = 鲜); 好 *hǎo* "good; to love" consists of the signs for 女 *nǚ* "woman" and 子 *zǐ* "child" (女 + 子 = 好); 歪 *wāi* "awry; slanting" is a combination of the signs for 不 *bù* "not" and 正 *zhèng* "upright" (不 put on top of 正 = 歪); 尖 *jiān* "sharp point; tapering" is a combination of the signs for 小 *xiǎo* "small" and 大 *dà* "big" (小 put on top of 大 = 尖). Very interesting and expressive are such logical compound characters as 众 *zhòng* "mulberry tree" where many hands (扌) are plucking leaves of a tree (木), and 男 *nán* "man" which shows someone employing his strength (力) in the fields (田) as opposed to 安 *ān* "peace, safety" which is the feeling of a woman (女) staying at home (宀). All these associative compounds differ from the determinative-phonetic characters in that the "resulting" sound of the compound has no relationship with the sound of any of the elements in the combination. The following set of equations may well serve to show the difference:

Huì Yì, Associative Compound

日 + yuè = míng

Xíng Shēng, Determinative-Phonetic Character

nǚ + qí = qí

A small category of Chinese characters whose significance has been very much debated is the so called *zhuān zhù* or mutually interpretative symbols. Apart from having the same determinative or bù shǒu 部首, these mutually interpretative symbols are synonymous in meaning and can be substituted for each other. This is a way of usage, not a method of structure, however. In reality, these characters consist of one indicator of sense i.e., the determinative and one indicator of sound i.e., the phonetic. Structurally, they belong to the determinative-phonetic characters.

The remaining category of Chinese characters, which is more or less a kind of phonetic characters, is known as *jǐ jiè* or loan characters. As the term implies, this is not a structural classification either, but another way of linguistic usage. The method was as simple as to borrow the existing character of a homophonous word. For example, at the very inception of invention, there was no such character for the word *lái* "come", an idea difficult to depict. However, there had already been in existence a pictograph for a cereal plant 来 王来 which homophonously sounded as *lái*. So the ancient

scribes did a very easy and convenient task by borrowing the existent character 來 lái for the representation of the word lái "to come". Similarly, the pictograph 萬 wàn "scorpion" was borrowed to represent the word wàn "ten thousand". 其 qí "a winnowing basket" was borrowed to represent the word qí meaning "his", "her", "its", "their", "this" and "that". A very interesting example is the word xī "west", represented by this picture character 𠂔 xī which originally meant that the bird was in the nest. Xū Shàn's reason for such a loan was that the bird rested in its nest at a time when the sun was setting in the west. It had therefore been borrowed to render the word xī "west". All these transferences occurred because they were homophones.

In short, the Chinese script can be structurally grouped into three categories, namely pictographs, ideographs and determinative-phonetic characters.

What we have just described above is about the structural evolution of the Chinese script. The course of such evolution is lengthy, yet it may be divided into the following four stages:

1. **The Primitive Stage (or the Legendary Period):** this is the earliest stage of the Chinese script at which the pictographs originated from sheer pictures of objects. Although we have no direct archaeological evidence for this, Táng Lán 唐蘭 has nevertheless estimated that it must have been in existence for more than 10,000 years.

2. **The Archaic Stage (or the Pre-Historic Period):** this is the stage of the ideographs which covers a period from the emergence to the completion of the indirect symbols. We have not only good reasons to believe, but also documentary evidence to prove that this happened about 5,000 – 6,000 years ago.

3. **The Neo-Archaic Stage (or the Post-Historic Period):** this is the period of determinative-phonetic characters, which continued for a span of 1,600 years from the later Yīn Dynasty (1384 B.C. – 1112 B.C.) down to the Hān Dynasty (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.). Almost all the materials of the ancient Chinese script that we now have belong to this long period. It was not only in this period that the Chinese script had completed its structural evolution, but towards the end of this stage, the Chinese script had gone through and finally completed its formal evolution as well.

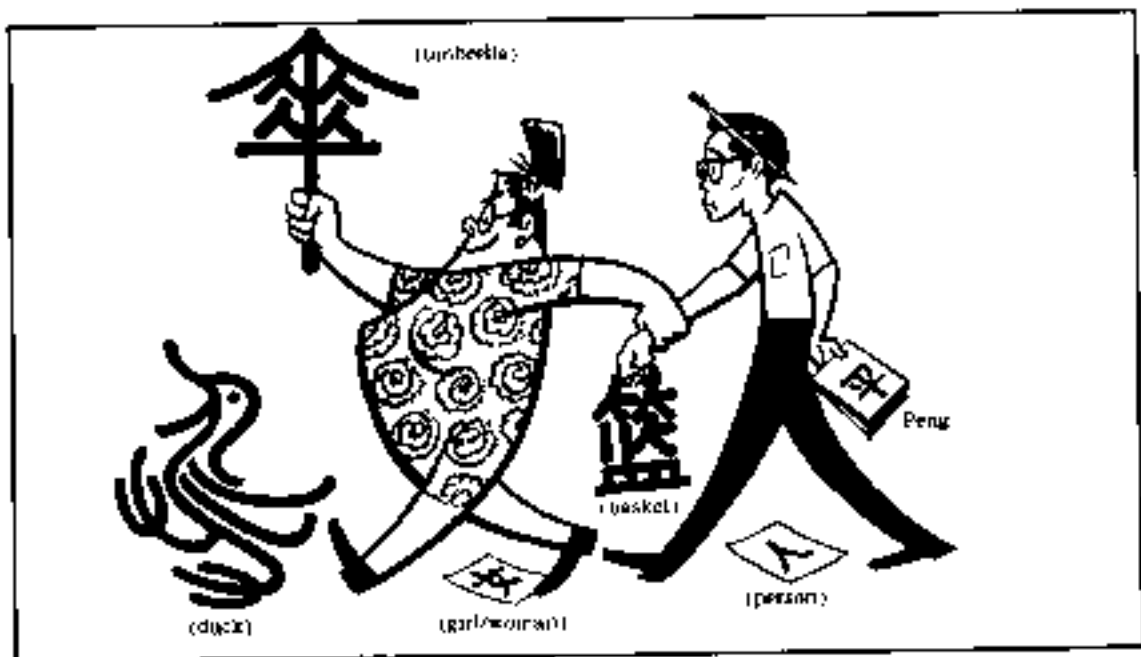
4. **The Contemporary Stage (or the Modern Period):**

As far as the development of the Chinese writing system is concerned, this is a stage of stability. Both the structural evolution and the formal changes could be said to have reached a state of perfection. Structurally, unlike the pictographs or the ideographs, the determinative-phonetic characters continued

to grow. Formally, however, after the appearance of the 楷書 kǎi shū (standard script), which is still the normal script form and the basis of the printing form used today, some time in the period of Wei and Jin Dynasties (221 A.D. – 580 A.D.), little formal changes had taken place ever since. It was not until the early 1950s that the Government of the People's Republic of China started to introduce a kind of simplified form for two thousand odd Chinese characters. This was done all for a very good cause of simplicity and convenience, but at a very handsome expense of damaging as well as distorting the beauty and logical structure of the Chinese script.

To sum up, the Chinese script had completed its structural evolution long before the beginning of the Western era. However, that does not mean that it ceased to grow thereafter. On the contrary, like the Chinese language it represents, it is a living as well as a metabolic system of writing, one of the most epoch-making inventions of mankind. Although many characters had become obsolete in the process of changes, new characters could be easily and simultaneously created for any newly arisen mass of events, things or notions because the Chinese had discovered a simple, convenient means of creating new characters.

Dr Ong Tee Wah
18 January 1980



PREFACE

As a means of visual communication, Chinese written characters are fascinating in their ingenuity and originality. The earliest form of Chinese writing was **pictographic** – stylized pictures of objects. Graphic **symbols** supplemented pictographs to represent simple abstract thoughts. Later, for transmitting complex ideas, **ideographs** were created from already existing simple characters, conveying ideas by the juxtaposition of interchangeable elements.

To meet the demand for thousands of new characters, the Chinese resorted to **phonetic or harmonic** writing, relying on the radical for the sense and the phonetic for the sound.

Today, many complex characters have undergone **simplification** to facilitate writing by reducing the number of strokes.

Chinese characters are generally built up from 214 root characters or radical elements. These comprise the basic building blocks for innumerable compound characters. Some of these radicals or primitives are capable of standing independently as characters. Others function as components of compound characters. In combination, they assume variant or contracted forms. By understanding the basic meanings of the elements that form a character, it is possible to discern the significance of the whole character. Hence, the importance of studying the radicals.

This collection of cartoons introduces systematically the more commonly used radical elements and the compounds they build up, together with related or associated characters.

As a mnemonic aid, it analyses each character, tracing its evolutionary development from the original seal character to the regular and simplified forms.

Based on authoritative source materials, both Chinese and English, it draws inspiration from the lofty, yet down-to-earth, wit and wisdom of the Chinese mind. Above all, it takes an appreciative look at Chinese written characters through the imaginative and discerning eye of a cartoonist.

While every effort has been made to be as accurate as possible, strict precision of representation is by no means the overriding concern; for humour and delight has been given more than just an instrumental importance.

Originally published as a regular feature of The Straits Times Bilingual Page, it is now presented as a collection and an appetizer to introduce readers to the delightful and fascinating world of pictographs and ideographs.

Have fun, then, with Chinese characters!

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女

nǚ
woman;
girl;
daughter

The original pictograph for woman depicted her in a bowing position. Apparently, for ease in writing, man reduced this to a humbler form - a woman kneeling down 𡚦 - but not for long. The modern version 女 graphically portrays the big stride woman has taken to keep up with man.



Peng



女儿
女工
女皇
女人
女士
女王
女性

nǚ ér
nǚ gōng
nǚ huáng
nǚ rén
nǚ shì
nǚ wáng
nǚ xìng

daughter
woman worker
empress
woman
lady
queen
the female

女婿
女子
女朋友
女主角
女主人
妇女
子女

nǚ xù
nǚ zǐ
nǚ péng yǒu
nǚ zhǔ jué
nǚ zhǔ rén
fù nǚ
zǐ nǚ

son-in-law
girl or woman
girl friend
female lead
hostess
woman
children

Example:

我们的工厂有很多女工。

Wǒ men de gōng chǎng yǒu hěn duō nǚ gōng

It means, "Our factory has many woman workers."

子

zǐ

infant;
child;
son

This character for child originated from a representation of an infant with outstretched arms and legs. Eventually it was modified to one with legs swaddled in cloth bands. Evidently, to the Chinese parent, the worry of infant care lies in keeping one end wet and the other end dry.



Part 6



子弹

zì dàn

bullet

子弟

zǐ dì

young generations

子女

zǐ nǚ

children

子孙

zǐ sūn

descendants

子夜

zǐ yè

midnight

子音

zǐ yīn

consonant

子子孙孙

zǐ zǐ sūn sūn

descendants

孩子

hái zǐ

child

Example:

这个孩子很聪明。

Zhè ge hái zǐ hěn cōng míng.

It means, "This child is very intelligent."

好

Hǎo

good;
right;
excellent

Man combined 女 (girl or daughter) with 子 (child or son) to form a character for goodness and excellence. From experience he must have found his greatest good in the possession of a wife and a child or a son and a daughter. It is also good that his wife sticks to his child.



Reed

人 女 女 如 好 好

好吃
好处
好感
好汉
好久
好看
好听
好象

hǎo chī
hǎo chù
hǎo gǎn
hǎo hàn
hǎo jiǔ
hǎo kàn
hǎo tīng
hǎo xiàng

delicious
benefit; advantage
good impression
worthy man
a long time
good looking
pleasant to the ear
look alike

好笑
好心
好意
好在

hào xiào
hào xīn
hào yì
hào zài

funny
kind-hearted
well-intentioned
fortunately; thanks to

好转
好人好事

hǎo zhuǎn
hǎo rén hǎo shì

turn for the better
good personalities
and good deeds

Example:

这首歌很好听。

Zhè gē qǔ hěn hǎo tīng.

It means, "This song is very pleasant to the ear."

安

ĀN

peace;
contentment

The character for peace and contentment is made up of woman (女) and roof (宀). Man conceived the idea that to attain peace he should have only one woman under the roof or confine her within the house.



安定	ān dìng	stable	安慰	ān wēi	comfort, console
安静	ān jìng	serene; quiet or peaceful	安心	ān xīn	feel at ease; free from worries
安乐	ān lè	peace and happiness	安装	ān zhuāng	install; assemble
安眠	ān mián	sleep peacefully	安分守己	ān fēn shǒu jǐ	law abiding; be contented with one's lot
安宁	ān níng	peaceful; free from troubles	安居乐业	ān jū lè yè	live and work in contentment
安排	ān pài	arrange	不安	tù ān	uneasy; worried
安全	ān quán	safe; secure			

Example:

用行人大桥过路最安全。

Yòng xíng rén dà qiáo guò lù zuì ān quán

It means, "The safest way to cross the road is to use an overhead bridge."

字

zì

written
character

To preserve written characters from deterioration man transcribed them on bamboo bound into books. Such precious written words came to be cherished as a child (子) is cherished under a roof (宀). Hence 字: the written character.
Pictured here under the roof is a precious youthful character being preserved from deterioration.



PG 110



字典
字号
字迹
字据
字句

zì diǎn
zì hào
zì jī
zì jù
zì jù

dictionary
name of shop
handwriting
written receipt
words and
expressions

字母

zì mǔ

letter of an
alphabet

字条

zì tiáo

subtitle

字体

zì tǐ

style of
calligraphy

字里行间

zì lǐ háng jiān

between the lines
writing (words)

写字

xiě zì

Example

他的字体很美。

Tā de zì tǐ hěn měi.

It means, "His handwriting is very beautiful."

豕

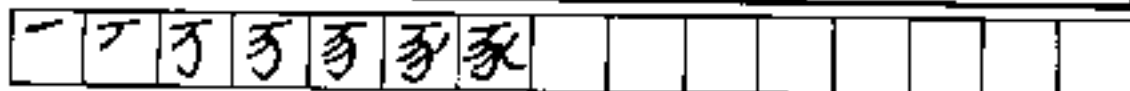
shǐ

pig

In this pictograph of pig the head is replaced by a line (一). On the left are the belly and paws (豕) and on the right the back and tail (乚). The domestic pig might well symbolise prosperity to man, so closely knut and tied together were their lives. This interdependence probably gave rise to the proverbial saying: "The schoolmaster should not leave his books, nor the poor man his pig."



PENG



豕 (shǐ) is the literary term for pig and is practically obsolete. 猪 (zhū) is being used instead.

猪排	zhū pái	pork ribs
猪肉	zhū ròu	pork
猪油	zhū yóu	lard
猪肝色	zhū gān sè	maroon colour
懒惰	lǎn duō	lazy pig

Example:

回教徒不能吃猪肉。

Huí jiāo tú bù néng chī zhū ròu

It means, "Muslims cannot eat pork."

妻

qī
wife

When man marries woman he puts a broom 𦏧 into her hand 𦏧, bestowing upon her the rulership of the house. Hence: 妻 a legal wife — one who wields the broom, using it to take care of house, home and husband. Here we see how a legal wife wields a broom to take care of a philandering husband whose only concern is to take care of illegal wives.



9216



妻舅
妻室
妻子

qī jiù
qī shì
qī zǐ

brother-in-law
legal wife
wife

妻离子散
贤妻

qī lí zǐ sǎn
xián qī

broken up
family
good wife

Example:

他有一个美丽的妻子。

Tā yǒu yí gè měi lì de qī zǐ.

It means, "He has a pretty wife."

木

mù
tree;
wood

This is a photograph of a tree with its branches (一), trunk (丨) and roots (丿). Only the trunk and branches are suggested because 木 also stands for wood. The 木 pictured here didn't stand very long though.



一 寸 才 木

木板

mù bǎn

wooden plank or
board

木材

mù cái

lumber

木筏

mù fá

wooden raft

木工

mù gōng

carpentry

木瓜

mù guā

papaya

木屐

mù jī

clogs

木匠

mù jiàng

carpenter

木刻

mù kè

wood carving

木料

mù liào

timber; lumber

木偶戏

mù bù xì

puppet show

木炭

mù tàn

charcoal

木头

mù tóu

wooden block; wood

木星

Mù Xīng

Jupiter

木乃伊

mù nǎi yī

mummy

木已成舟

mù yǐ chéng zhōu

(wood has become a boat) What's done cannot be undone

麻木

má mù

numb

Example:

小英喜欢看木偶戏。

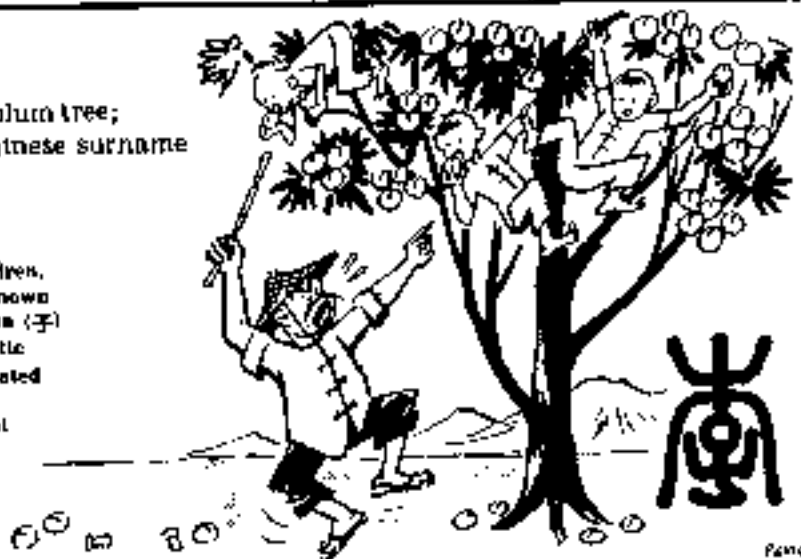
Xiǎo Yīng xǐ huān kàn mù bù xì

It means, "Xiao Ying likes to watch puppet shows."

李

lǐ
plum or plum tree;
also a Chinese surname

Owing to its prolific nature and its popularity with children, the plum tree came to be known as the tree (木) the children (子) are fond of. In this ideomatic ideograph children were located under the tree, thus: 李. This, unfortunately, has not always been true in life.



一 十 才 木 李 李

李树	lǐ shù	plum tree
李子	lǐ zi	plum
行李	xíng li	baggage, luggage
行李箱	xíng li xiāng	trunk

Example:

去旅行、最好不要带太多行李。
qù lǚ xíng, zuì hǎo bù yào dài tài duō xíng li.

It means, "When travelling, it is advisable not to bring along too many baggage."



rén

man;
person;
human

Man's pictographic profile presents an insight into his evolutionary development. Created from earth and equipped with hands and feet, lowly man eked out an existence from the ground with his hands 𠂇 to help him stand on his feet 止. Discarding both hands and feet, he used only his head 𠂇. Today, in the race of the survival of the fittest, he loses his head completely 𠂇 and finds himself barely able to keep his feet.



Pema



人才	rén cái	men of talent	人生	rén shēng	the life of man
人格	rén gé	personality	人为	rén wéi	man-made
人工	rén gōng	artificial; man-made	人物	rén wù	personage; notable figure
人口	rén kǒu	population	人行道	rén xíng dào	pavement; sidewalk
人类	rén lèi	mankind	人山人海	rén shān rén hǎi	huge crowds of people
人们	rén men	general term for a number of people; men	行人	xíng rén	pedestrian
人民	rén mín	people			

Example:

在裕廊飞禽公园有一个人工瀑布。

Zài Yú Láng fēi qín gōng yuán yǒu yí gè rén gōng pù bù

It means, "There is a man-made waterfall in Jurong Bird Park."

大

dà

big;
great

The ideographic representation for "big" is simply a front elevation of a full-grown man with arms stretched out to the limit 大. What conveys the idea of "big" is not the size of the man but his demonstrative gesture. Some of the assortment of characters pictured below are trying to show what "big" means. Others are merely trying to show off.



22CMH

一 十 大

大胆
大概
大家
大批
大人
大声
大厦
大事
大学

dà dǎn
dà gài
dà jiā
dà pī
dà rén
dà shēng
dà shù
dà shì
dà xué

daring, bold
probably
all (people)
in great numbers
adult
loud voice
big building
important matter
university

大选
大约
大使馆
大众化
大自然
大快人心
大同小异

dà xuǎn
dà yuē
dà shǐ guǎn
dà zhòng huà
dà zì rán
dà kuài rén xīn
dà tóng xiǎo yì

general election
about
embassy
popularized
the world of
nature
to the satisfaction
of the masses
more or less the
same

Example:

小英很自大，所以人人都讨厌她。

Xiǎo Yīng hěn zì dà, suǒ yǐ rén rén dōu tǎo yàn tā.

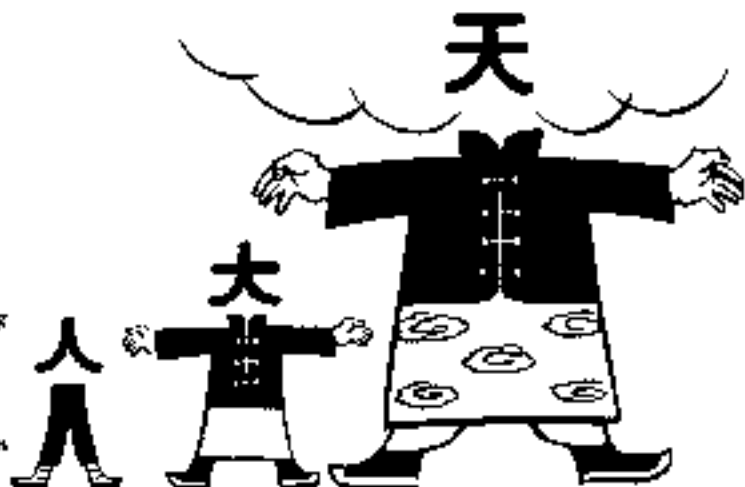
It means, "Xiao Ying is very conceited, so everyone dislikes her."

天

tiān

heaven;
sky;
day

This stylized representation shows man's ability to stand on his feet (人), extending his arms egotistically (大). But high above man (人), he is ever so great (大), stretches the heavenly firmament (—), filling the empty space above his shoulders and directing his footsteps. Hence: 天, meaning heaven... man's rightful and authoritative head. Since the growing light of the sky where is the dawn of day, 天 came to mean also "day".



PC 146

一	二	子	天										
---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

天才	tiān cái	genius
天空	tiān kōng	sky
天光	tiān guāng	daylight, day-break
天桥	tiān qiáo	overpass (over-head bridge)
天然	tiān rán	natural (not artificial)
天生	tiān shēng	inborn
天下	tiān xià	the whole world

天真	tiān zhēn	naïve; innocent
天资	tiān zī	natural endowment
天主教	tiān zhú jiào	Roman Catholic
天南地北	tiān nán dì běi	far apart
白天	bái tiān	daytime
明天	míng tiān	tomorrow
前天	qián tiān	day before yesterday
昨天	zuó tiān	yesterday

Example.

明天我要去日本。

Míng tiān wǒ yào qù Rì běn.

It means, "I am going to Japan tomorrow."

夫

fū

husband;
distinguished
person

夫夫夫



A youthful person (人), grown big (大) and attaining maturity at 20, used a hairpin (一) and was vested with the virtue cup of manhood 夫. Given an honourable name, he was considered a distinguished person, qualified as a prospective husband. Hence 夫 means a distinguished person or husband.

P. 114

一 二 夫 夫

 农夫
 农夫
 渔夫
 丈夫

 nóng fū
 nué fū
 yú fū
 zhàng fū

 farmer
 coward
 fisherman
 husband

 夫妇
 夫妻
 夫人
 大夫

 fū fù
 fū qī
 fū rén
 dà fū

 husband and wife
 husband and wife
 wife, madam
 medical doctor

Example:

小兰的丈夫是个农夫。

Xiǎo lán de zhàng fū shì ge nóng fū

It means, "Xiao-lan's husband is a farmer."

太

tài

too;
over;
excessive

By underlining "big" (大) with a line (一) man came up with a superlative character (太) meaning too much or over the limit. In the ecstasy of double happiness and the rapture of marital bliss that followed, man bestowed upon his wife a flattering title: 太太 a double emphatic. As shown below, she took him seriously and lived up to it. Man thereafter reduced the underline to a wavy-weeny stroke 太

太太太太



一 大 太

太多
太后
太监
太空
太平
太太
太阳
太子

tài duō
tài hòu
tài jiǎn
tài kōng
tài píng
tài tài
tài yáng
tài zǐ

too many
empress dowager
eunuch
outer space; sky
peace
madam
sun
prince

太极拳
太空船
太空人
太平门
太平洋
太阳能

tài jí quán
tài kōng chuán
tài kōng rén
tài píng mén
Tài Píng Yáng
tài yáng néng

kind of traditional
Chinese martial
art
spaceship
spaceman
emergency exit;
safety exit
Pacific Ocean
solar energy

Example:

太空人已在月球登陆。

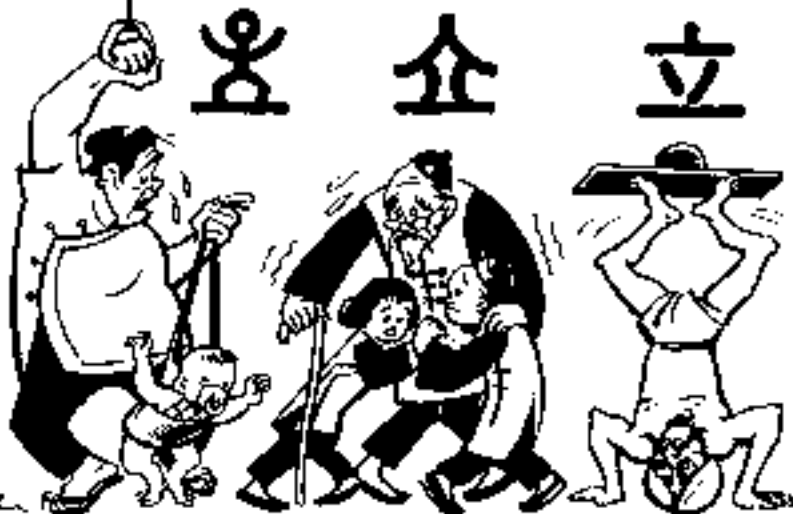
Tài kōng rén yì zài yuè qiú dēng lù。

It means "The spaceman has already landed on the moon."

立

lì
stand.
rise up

This character, meaning plain standing or rising up, portrays a person standing - not in the abstract, but on firm, stable ground 土. Originally written 𠂔, it was modified to 𠂔 and finally to 立. Illustrated here are some human characters, firm and infirm, trying to stand on stable ground and demonstrating that plain standing is not plain sailing.



Fans

一 六 立

立场	lì chǎng	standpoint; position	立约	lì yuē	enter into an agreement
立法	lì fǎ	legislation	立正	lì zhèng	attention! (army command)
立功	lì gōng	perform meritorious service	立志	lì zhì	be determined (to do something)
立即	lì jí	at once.	立足	lì zú	base oneself on
立刻	lì kè	immediately.	建立	jiàn lì	establish; erect
立体	lì tǐ	instantly	设立	shè lì	set up, establish
		three-dimensional			

Example

我们在花园里建立起一座纪念碑。
Wǒ men zài huā yuán lǐ jiàn qǐ yí zuò jì niàn bēi.
It means, "We have erected a monument in the garden."

小

xiǎo
small,
petty;
young

A vertical stroke (丨), separating two little ones (丩), gave man his concept of "small". The idea was also derived from the division (÷) of an object (丨) already small by its nature. To man, division (÷) makes small (小) and multiplication (×) makes big (大) a thing. Our illustration shows how to multiply happiness by dividing sorrow.

小
small



大
big

MANA

丨

丩

小

小吃

xiǎo cǎi

snacks

小丑

xiǎo chǒu

clown

小岛

xiǎo dǎo

small island; islet

小姐

xiǎo jiě

lady; Miss

小麦

xiǎo mǎi

wheat

小声

xiǎo shēng

low voice,
whisper

小时

xiǎo shí

hour

小偷

xiǎo tōu

thief

小心

xiǎo xīn

careful; cautious

小型

xiǎo xíng

small scale

小学

xiǎo xué

primary school

小组

xiǎo zǔ

small team or
group

小题大作

xiǎo tí dà zuò

make a mountain
out of a molehill

Example:

我喜欢巴金的小说。

Wǒ xǐ huān Bā jīn de xiǎo shuō

It means, "I like Ba Jin's novels."

尖

jiān
pointed;
sharp



By placing small (小) on top of big (大) man came up with an ideograph to describe anything that tapers from big to small. Hence: 尖, meaning pointed or sharp or, figuratively, sharp-witted. But not all objects which are small at the top and big at the bottom are sharp or sharp-witted, as the examples on the right prove.



Peng



尖兵
尖刀
尖兵
尖端

jiān bīng
jiān dāo
jiān bīng
jiān duān

vanguard
sharp knife
peak; apex
highest point

尖刻
尖利
尖锐
尖塔

jiān kù
jiān lì
jiān ruì
jiān tǎ

trenchant (of
words; speech)
sharp
sharp; pointed
spire

Example:

这是一把尖锐的刀。

zhè shì yì bǎ jiān ruì de dāo

It means: "This is a sharp knife."

tián

 rice field;
grain field

From dawn to dusk man toiled in the field, taking to heart the proverbial saying, "Never leave your field in spring or your house in winter." The character he shaped for "field" was a pictograph of a ploughed field with furrows and cross-paths: 田. By the sweat of his brow he reaped the fruits of his labour. But all that toil has left its mark of furrows and cross-paths, not only on the field, but also indelibly on his brow.



力

力
strength.
force:
power

Is the negatal form () the long middle line (), curved at the top to make less room, represents the sinew that binds muscles to bone. The other line () pictures the fibrous sheath of the sinew.

The modern version of *力* is a powerful graphic impression of the forearm with muscles in tension — a symbol of strength. We present here muscles in action as demonstrated by a truly strong character, one who is far from ninety.



Conclusions

丁力

力量	lì liàng	physical strength; force
力气	lì qì	effort; strength
力求	lì qú	strive; make every effort
力争	lì zhēng	endeavour; fight for

力不从心	lì bù cóng xīn	ability falling short of one's wishes
力谋进步	lì móu jìn bù	struggle for improvement
力争上游	lì zhēng shàng yóu	aim high
人力	rén lì	labour force, manpower

உருவங்கள்:

团结就是力量，
*tǒng yì jiù shì lì liang

It means, "Unity is strength."

男

nán

man;
male;
masculine

A field (田), where strength (力) is exerted, is the symbol for "masculine" man 男, the male of the human species. This is probably because the home is where the female of the same species exerts her strength. Our picture shows strength being exerted — by the male (男) in field-work, the female (女) in housework, and their offspring (子) in promotional work.



男孩
男女
男人
男声
男性
男校

nán hái
nán nǚ
nán rén
nán shēng
nán xìng
nán xué

hóu
men and women
man
male voice
male
male attire

男子
男朋友
男子汉
男男女女
男女平等

nán zǐ
nán péng yǒu
nán zì hàn
nán nǚ nǚ nǚ
nán nǚ píng děng

man, male
boy friend
man; hero
men and women
equality of men
and women

Example:

很多好厨师都是男性。

hěn duō hǎo chú shī dōu shì nán xìng

It means, "Many good chefs are males."

日

rì

sun;
day



The sun was first depicted as a circle with an "eye" or centre and rays extending to the corners of the earth ☉. This was simplified to ☺, then modified: ☻ and finally squared off: 日. Just as surely as the rising and setting mark the "day" (日) for man, the sun's shining upon the wicked as well as the good demonstrated that it sees the whole world with one eye.



Janio



日报	rì bào	daily newspaper
日本	Rì Běn	Japan
日常	rì cháng	daily; usual
日出	rì chū	sunrise
日光	rì guāng	sunshine
日记	rì jì	diary
日历	rì lì	calendar
日期	rì qī	date
日蚀	rì shí(shì)	eclipse of the sun

日新	rì xīn	daily wages
日夜	rì yè	day and night
日子	rì zi	day; life
日光浴	rì guāng yù	sun bath
日内瓦	Rì Nèi Wǎ	Geneva
日用品	rì yòng pǐn	daily necessities
日常生活	rì cháng shēng huó	daily life
日以继夜	rì yǐ jì yè	day and night; non-stop

Example:

我明天要上山顶看日出。

Wǒ míng tiān yào shàng shān dǐng kàn rì chū.

It means, "I'm going to the hilltop tomorrow to watch sunrise."

月

yuè

moon;
month

To form the character for moon (or lunar month) man chose the crescent 丿. The original photograph suggested two phases of a waxing new moon 𠄎. Tiltting it: 𠄎 and then directing it earthwards. 月 exposed man to the influence of moonbeam radiation — with striking consequences. Pictured here is a beaming moon casting its spell on some beaming moon-struck earthlings.



月饼

yuè bǐng

mooncake

月蚀

yuè shí

eclipse

月光

yuè guāng

moonlight

月经

yuè jīng

menstruation

月刊

yuè kān

monthly
publication

月亮

yuè liàng

moon

月票

yuè piào

monthly ticket

月球

yuè qiú

the moon

月色

yuè sè

moonlight

月蚀

yuè shí (shí)

eclipse of the
moon

月薪

yuè xīn

monthly salary

月夜

yuè yè

moonlit night

月下老人

yuè xià lǎo rén

matchmaker

赏月

shǎng yuè

enjoy the
moonlight

Example

我们一面赏月，一面吃月饼。

Wǒ men yí miàn shǎng yuè yí miàn chī yuè bǐng

It means, "We are mooncakes while enjoying the moonlight."

明

míng
brilliant;
bright;
enlightened



Ming combined the sun (日) and the moon (月) to produce an ideograph for bright, brilliant or enlightened. He called it "ming" (明) and used it after for the brilliant Ming Dynasty of China which came in the wake of the Dark Ages of Europe. Today science and technology has ushered in the dazzling Space Age — with man very much enlightened and the future very much bedarkened.



PENG

日 月 明 明 明 明

明白	míng bái	understand; clear
明亮	míng liàng	shining, bright
明朗	míng lǎng	bright and clear
明媚	míng mèi	bright and beautiful
明年	míng nián	next year
明显	míng xiǎn	obvious
明智	míng zhì	wise
明晃晃	míng huǎng huǎng	glaring; shining
明信片	míng xìn piàn	postcard

明辨是非	míng biàn shì fēi	distinguish right from wrong
明目张胆	míng mù zhāng dǎn	openly, blatantly
明争暗斗	míng zhēng àn dòu	struggle overtly and covertly
明知故犯	míng zhī gù fàn	commit mistakes deliberately
明知故问	míng zhī gù wèn	question knowingly

Example:

我叫白你的意思。

Wǒ míng bái nǐ de yì sī

It means, "I understand what you mean."

白

hái

clear;
white;
plain

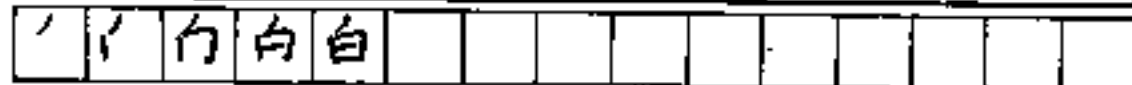
As the sun (日) peeps above the horizon its very first ray (光) begins to dispel the shadowy haze of night. Hence, 白, the symbol for clear, white or plain, men easily understands anything that is bright (明) and clear (白), an "bright and clear" means to understand (明白). Apparently, this is not always easily understood as our picture shows.



明
白



P. 10



白菜
白费
白富

bái cài
bái fèi
bái fù

Chinese cabbage
in vain; waste
The White House
(official residence
of the president
of America)

白茫茫

bái māng māng

an endless
whiteness

白日梦

bái rì mèng

daydream

白血球

bái xuè qiú

white corpuscle

白手起家

bái shǒu qǐ jiā

start from scratch;
build up from
nothing

白喉
白色
白糖
白兔

bái hóu
bái sè
bái táng
bái tù

diphtheria
white colour
white sugar
white rabbit

坦白

tǎn bái

frank

真相大白

zhēn xiàng dà
bái

matter that is
finally made clear

Example:

他对我很坦白。

Tā duì wǒ hěn tǎn bái.

It means, "He is very frank to me."



dàn

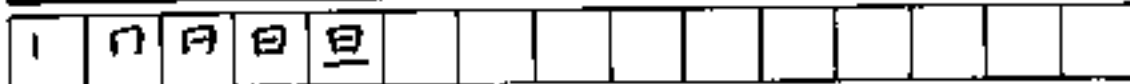
dawn;
daybreak

旦旦旦

The daily appearance of the sun (旦) above the horizon (—) gave man his concept of dawn 旦. From the sun's early rising rose the proverbial saying: "To get up early for three mornings is equal to one day of time." Man preached this — from the rising of the sun to its setting — but it never dawned on him to practice it.



FENG



旦暮

dàn mù

morning and
evening

花旦

huà dàn

prima donna in an
opera

旦夕

dàn xī

in a short while

元旦

yuán dàn

New Year's Day

旦夕之间

dàn xī zhī jiān

within a single day

一旦

yī dàn

once; as soon as

Example:

元旦是公共假期。

yuán dàn shì gōng gòng jià qī

It means, "New Year's Day is a public holiday."

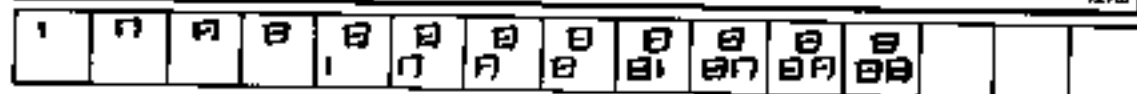
jīng

crystal;
brilliant;
sparkling

To reflect his brilliance, Nan arranged three suns (日) into a symmetrical, geometric pattern and crystallized this into a sparkling ideograph and graphic symbol for crystal: 晶. For generations nan has been gazing into his crystal ball but, crystal-clear though it was, he couldn't see much of a future in it.



KKL16



晶体
晶莹
晶体管
结晶

jīng tǐ
jīng yíng
jīng tǐ guǎn
jié jīng

crystal
lustrous; brilliant
transistor
result; product;
crystallization

亮晶晶
水晶

liàng jīng jīng
shuǐ jīng

shuǐ jīng
crystalline

Example:

这本书是他多年研究的结晶。

zhè běn shū shì tā duō nián yán jiū de jié jīng

It means, "This book is the result of his many years of research."

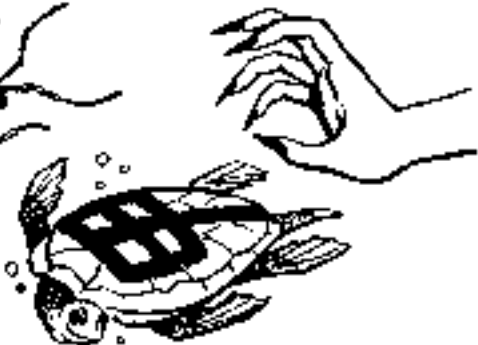
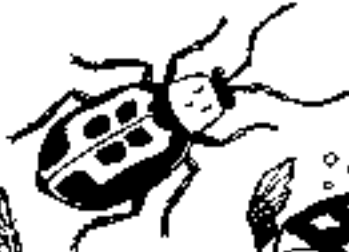
甲

jiǎ

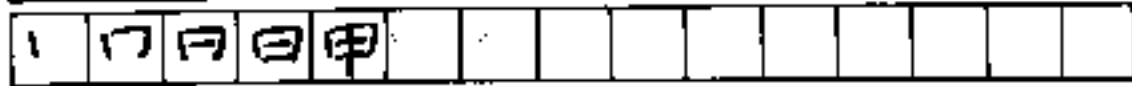
first;
armour or
protective
covering

The guiding mark 甲 (meaning first) is the first of the "ten stems" — the decimal cycle of time reckoning. Originally written: 𠂇, it was later enclosed in a square: 田. To differentiate it from 田 (field) the vertical line was extended downwards: 𠂇. A subsequent modification came to suggest "helmet" because of its resemblance: 𠂇. By extension, the modern form, 甲, covers a whole range of hard protective coverings like armour, shells, scales and nails used not only for protection, but also for aggression.

十
田
甲
𠂇
𠂇



P. 114



甲板

jiǎ bǎn

deck of a ship

甲虫

jiǎ chóng

beetle

甲等

jiǎ dēng

first class or first
grade

甲克

jiǎ kè

jacket

甲壳

jiǎ qiào

crust

甲鱼

jiǎ yú

soft-shelled turtle

甲骨文

jiǎ gǔ wén

inscriptions on
oracle bones

甲状腺

jiǎ zhàng jiàn

thyroid gland

装甲式

zhuāng jiǎ lìng

armoured corps

Example:

有许多人在甲板上作日光浴。

Yǒu xǔ duō rén zài jiǎ bǎn shàng zuò rì guāng yù.

It means, "There are many people sunbathing on the deck."

早

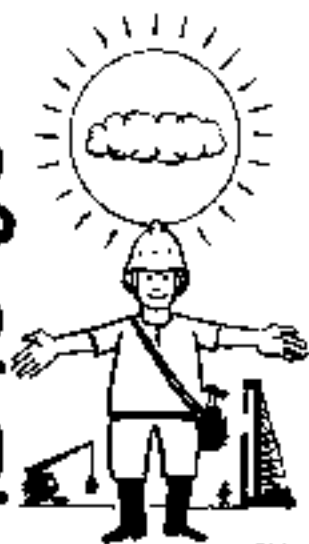
zǎo

early;
morning

早 (meaning early or morning) is the time of the day when the sun (日) has risen to the height of a man's helmet (十). 十 is the old form of 甲, originally meaning helmet. Since another meaning of 甲 (十) is "first", the character 早 signifies also the first (十) sun (日), that is, the early morning: 早.



早
早
早



Paris

一	二	三	四	五	六	七	八	九	十	早									
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

早安
早班
早餐
早操
早晨
早春
早婚

zǎo ān
zǎo bān
zǎo cān
zǎo cǎo
zǎo chén
zǎo chūn
zǎo hūn

good morning
morning shift
breakfast
morning exercise
early morning
early spring
marrying too early

早年
早期
早日
早上
早晚

zǎo nián
zǎo qī
zǎo rì
zǎo shàng
zǎo wǎn

one's early life
early stage
at an early date
(early) morning
morning and evening

Example:

請早日答復。
qǐng zǎo rì dá fù

It means, "Please reply as soon as possible."

休

xiū

rest;
cease

This is a refreshing character for any person (人) working near a shady tree (木). It literally means "rest" (休) and pictures a person (人) or (亻) leaning against a tree (木). Of the tree the Chinese proverb laments: "One generation plants the tree under whose shade another generation takes its ease." Exemplifying this, we show a character leisurely basking in the sunshine and leaning himself against a tree planted by an older generation.



Peter

ノ イ 亻 付 付 休

休会
休假
休息
休闲
休憩
休学

xiū huì
xiū jià
xiū xi
xiū xián
xiū xiá
xiū xué

adjourn (meeting)
on leave
rest or relax
lie fallow (land)
don't expect
suspend one's
schooling without
losing one's status
as a student

休弄
休业
休战
休整
休止

xiū nòng
xiū yè
xià zhàn
xiū zhěng
xiū zhǐ

recuperate or
convalesce
wind up (business)
ceasefire
rest and reorganize
cease or stop

Example:

他在医院里休养。

Tā zài yī yuàn lǐ xiū yǎng.

It means, "He is recuperating in the hospital."

东 (東) dōng east

Man turned his head around, looking for a suitable sign for "east" — the direction he faced when he saw the sun rise every day. He succeeded one morning when he observed the sun (日) through the trees (木). So sun (日) behind tree (木) became east (東). Fortunately, sunrays did not turn man's head, otherwise he would have been left facing the wrong direction.

日 + 木 = 東 = 東



H2-16

一	二	三	四	五	六	七	八	九	十	十一	十二	十三	十四	十五	十六	十七	十八	十九	二十
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

东方	dōng fāng	the East
东风	dōng fēng	east wind
东京	Dōng Jīng	Tokyo
东欧	Dōng Ōu	Eastern Europe
东西	dōng xī	things; East and West
东半球	dōng bàn qiú	eastern hemisphere
东方人	Dōng Fāng Rén	Oriental

东南亚	Dōng Nán Yà	Southeast Asia
东奔西走	dōng bēn xī zǒu	busy oneself with
东山再起	dōng shān zài qǐ	stage a come-back
东西南北	Dōng Xī Nán Běi	East, West, South, North
东张西望	dōng zhāng xī wàng	gaze (or peer) around

Example:

太阳由东方升上来。
 tàiyáng yóu dōng fāng shēng shàng lái
 It means "The sun rises in the east."

西

xī
west

As the sun settles in the west birds roost in their nests; so a crane-hatched bird's nest provided the cradle for "west", and nest became west 西. Man's fertile imagination conceived a new ideograph — a nest with a brooding bird: 𪛗, hatching up a new form: 𪛘, which finally developed into a full-fledged character for west: 西. As all "things" exist between east (东) and west (西), the combination east-west, meaning "things", came to be applied to anything from east to west.



𪛗



𪛘



𪛙



西

PLMC

一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十 十一 十二 十三 十四 十五 十六 十七 十八 十九 二十

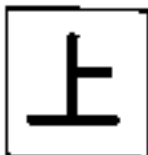
西边	xī bian	west side	西洋	Xī Yáng	the West
西餐	xī cān	Western-style food	西医	xī yī	a doctor trained in Western medicine
西方	xī fāng	the West	西藏	Xī Zàng	Tibet
西瓜	xī guā	watermelon	西装	xī zhuāng	Western dress
西湖	Xī Hú	West Lake in Hangzhou	西半球	xī bàn qiú	western hemisphere
西南	xī nán	southwest	西班牙	Xī Bān Yá	Spain
西欧	Xī Ōu	Western Europe	西伯利亚	Xī Bó lì yà	Siberia

Example:

西瓜有许多种子。

Xī guā yǒu xǔ duō zhǒng zǐ.

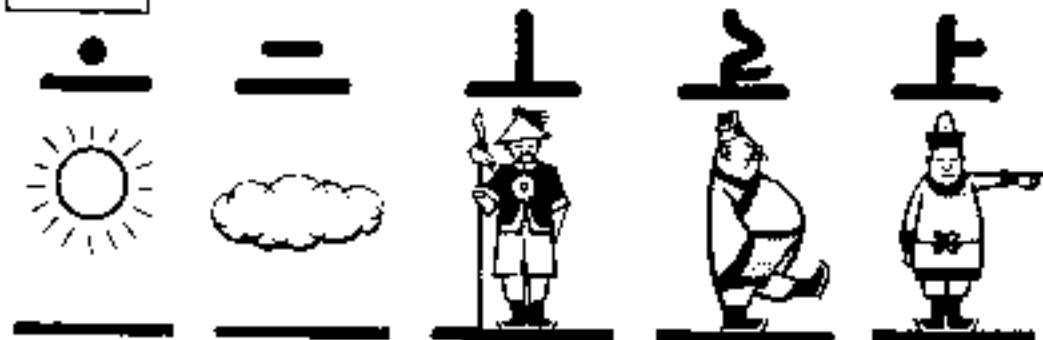
It means, "A watermelon has many seeds."



shàng

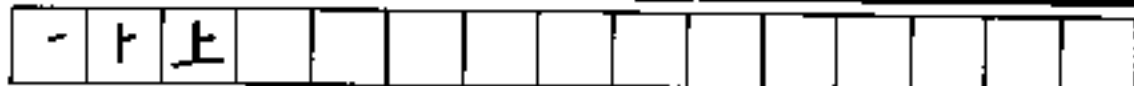
up;
above;
ascend

Since up and down, above and below are relative and abstract terms, man conveyed the ideas graphically by relating a simple stroke to a horizontal foundation line 一. This stroke above the base line was originally a dot, 丶, extended to a line, 二, propped upright 上, embellished: 𠂔 and finally stabilized: 上.



Pictured above are the abstract ideas of up and above, translated very stiffly into concrete forms.

12.66



上班	shàng bān	go to work	上代	shàng dài	former generations
上輩	shàng dài	one's elders	上当	shàng dàng	cheated
上賓	shàng bīn	distinguished guest, guest of honour	上等	shàng děng	first-class
上百	shàng bǎi	Heaven; God	上帝	shàng dì	God
上策	shàng cè	the best plan	上級	shàng jí	higher authority
上層	shàng céng	upper strata	上課	shàng kè	attend class
上場	shàng chǎng	appear on the stage	上空	shàng kōng	in the sky; overhead
上床	shàng chuáng	go to bed	上游	shàng yóu	upper stream

Example:

她上班去了。

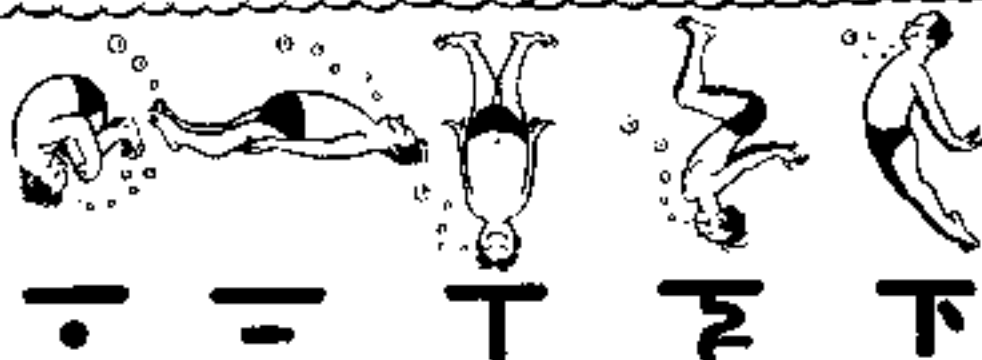
Tā shàng bān qù le.

It means, "She's gone to work."

下

xià
down;
below;
descend

The concept of down and below is clarified in relation to a horizontal line. The stroke below the fundamental line was originally a dot: 丶 which was extended to a line: 一 for ease in writing. The modified forms: 丅 and 𠂔 eventually led to the final ideograph: 下. The characters below, although literally under water, are figuratively above water.



PERC



下班	xià bān	be off duty
下辈	xià bèi	the younger generation of a family
下策	xià cè	bad plan
下层	xià céng	lower level
下场	xià chǎng	end; fate
下沉	xià chén	sink
下等	xià děng	low grade

下级	xià jí	lower level
下贱	xià jiàn	mean, degrading
下降	xià jiàng	descend
下课	xià kè	class is over
下来	xià lái	come down
下令	xià lìng	instruct; order
下流	xià liú	despicable
下落	xià luò	whereabouts

Example:

他下午要去拍戏。

tā xià wú yào qù pǎi xié。

It means, "He is going for a show in the afternoon."

中

zhōng

centre;
middle, neutral

By shooting an arrow right into the center of a square target, a man scored a bull's-eye and secured a mark for "centre": 中. He added a decoration of four stripes: 中, rearranged them: 中, stripped them off: 中, and finally hit his mark for simplicity: 中. The symbol also means standing in the middle or neutrality (中立). Unfortunately, in the application of neutrality, man has completely missed his mark.



2216

1 7 口 中

中部	zhōng bù	central section	中华	Zhōng Huá	China
中餐	zhōng cān	Chinese meal	中司	zhōng sī	middle
中层	zhōng cēng	middle-level	中立	zhōng lì	neutral
中程	zhōng chéng	intermediate range	中年	zhōng nián	middle-aged
中等	zhōng rēng	middle-class	中途	zhōng tú	midway
中东	Zhōng Dōng	the Middle East	中文	zhōng wén	Chinese language
中断	zhōng duàn	break off	中学	zhōng xué	secondary school
中国	Zhōng Guó	China			

Example:

他出身中等家庭。

Tā chū shēn zhōng děng jiā tíng

It means, "He comes from a middle-class family."

奴

nú

slave;
servant

A woman 女 under the hand 又 of a master signifies slave 女奴. The components 又 and 女 put together literally mean "handmaid" — a female who slaves with her hands. 奴 includes slaves of both sexes who serve their masters' mind and foot.



FWWC

人	女	奴	奴										
---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

奴婢
奴才
奴化
奴隶
奴仆

nú hī
nú cái
nú huà
nú lì
nú pú

female slave
flunkie; lackey
enslave
slave
male slave

奴性
奴役
奴隶制度

nú xíng
nú yì
nú lì zhì dù

servile
disposition
slavery
slave system

Example:

奴隶制度已废除。
nú lì zhì dù yǐ fēi chú

It means, "Slavery has already been abolished."

友

yǒu

friend

The character for "friend" originated with two right hands acting co-operatively in the same direction 攴 and later reaching out to grasp each other in friendship 攴攴. By placing the hands, one upon the other: 攴 and, with a little straightening out, man derived the modern reinforced form: 友.



FAND



友爱
友邦
友好
友情

yǒu ài
yǒu bāng
yǒu hǎo
yǒu qíng

friendly affection
friendly nation
friendly
friendship

友人
友善
友谊
友好协定

yǒu rén
yǒu shàn
yǒu yì
yǒu hǎo xié dìng

friend
friendly
friendship
friendship pact

Example:

他是我的好朋友。

Tā shì wǒ de hǎo péng yǒu

It means, "He is my good friend."



shǒu

hand

THE earliest pictograph for hand placed undue emphasis on the palm lines as hands 𠂇. Practical experience, however, put man on the right lines - the fingers 𠂇. Finally, reinforced with straight lines 𠂇 the character assumed the modern form 手 with fingers of unequal length. For, as the proverb goes, "Of the ten fingers, some are long and some are short." 手 proved handy as radical for numerous characters with its variants 扌 and 扌.



手臂
手笔

shǒu bì
shǒu bǐ

arm
somebody's own
handwriting or
painting

手表
手册
手段
手法
手工

shǒu biǎo
shǒu cè
shǒu duàn
shǒu fǎ
shǒu gōng

wrist-watch
handbook
means; measure
skill; tricks
handwork

手山
手铐
手枪
手术
手书
手套
手电筒
手榴弹

shǒu shān
shǒu kǎo
shǒu qiāng
shǒu shù
shǒu shū
shǒu tào
shǒu diàn tǒng
shǒu liú dàn

towel
handcuffs
pistol
surgical operation
handwritten letter
gloves
torch
hand-grenade

Example:

我有一双手。

Wǒ yǒu yī shuāng shǒu

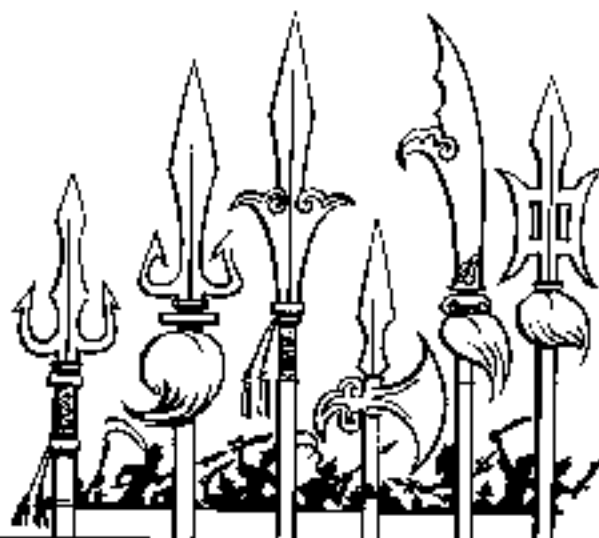
It means, "I have a pair of hands."

戈

gē

spear; lance

戈 is a pictographic representation of an ancient weapon of war - a spearlike lance equipped with hook and crescent. Although this and other ancient weapons are now obsolete, man has not even begun to beat his swords into plowshares or his spears into pruning hooks.



戈

Fahé



戈壁

gēbì

the Gobi Desert

干戈

gān gō

weapons; war

倒戈相向

dǎo gē xiāng
xiàngbetray one's own
party

Example:

化干戈为和平。

Huà gān gō wéi hé píng。

It means, "Stop war and make peace."

我

wǒ

I; me

THE earliest forms show two spears against each other in direct confrontation: 𠄎, presumably symbolizing two rights being asserted and, by extension, my right, that is, I, me. A later transcription projected a new image: 𠄎, a pictograph of a hand 手 grasping a spear 戈, denoting that when man wields in his hand 手 a spear 戈 his ego, the big "I", emerges. Hence 我: I.



一 手 手 我 我 我

我们	wǒ men	we
我要你	wǒ ài nǐ	I love you
我们的	wǒ men de	our; ours
我行我素	wǒ xíng wǒ sù	persist in one's old ways

Example:

大家你帮我、我帮你很快就把活儿干完了。

dà jiā nǐ bāng wǒ, wǒ bāng nǐ hěn kuài jiù bǎ huó er gān wán le.

It means, "With each one giving the other a helping hand, they soon got the job done."

你

nǐ

you

THE classical character for "you", as equal, was 爾, a pictograph of a balance 尔 loaded with 22 equally on both sides and topped by a phonetic 尔. 爾 was eventually contrasted to 尔. By adding 人 (person) to 尔, man introduced the human element and came up with 你 - a person who carries the same weight: you.



©CHU

ノ	イ	イ	尔	你	你	你										
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

你好

nǐ hǎo

how do you do

你们

nǐ men

you (plural)

你们的

nǐ men de

your, yours (plural)

你死我活

nǐ sǐ wǒ huó

life and death
struggle

你追我赶

nǐ zhuī wǒ gǎn

try to overtake
each other in
friendly
emulation

Example:

你好吗？

Nǐ hǎo ma?

It means, "How do you do?", "how are you?", "hello".

也

yě

also;
in addition to

也 也 也 也

ORIGINALLY the character 也 was a representation of an ancient drinking horn, shaped like a tunnel. In addition to his rightful belongings, man also appropriated this drinking vessel. To this day it has remained in his possession - a pictograph specially borrowed for the conjunction "also", joining man to his drinking horn.



PENG

一 也 也

也 罢
也 好
也 行
也 许
也 有yě ba
yě hǎo
yě xíng
yě xǔ
yě yǒulet it be
may as well
all right
perhaps
also have

Example:

他 也 许 会 来 。

tā yě xǔ huì lái

It means, "Perhaps he may come."

他

tā
he; she

THE character (他) is drawn from 人 (person) and 也 (also). By extension it means "that person also" and refers to the other person: he or she.



Picture



他处	tā chù	elsewhere
他的	tā de	his
他们	tā men	they
他人	tā rén	the other person

他日	tā rì	some other day
他乡	tā xiāng	place far away
他自己	tā zì jǐ	from home
		himself

Example:

他 是 一 个 渔 夫。

Tā shì yí ge yú fū

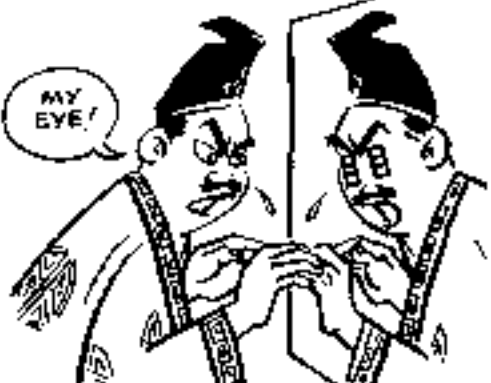
It means, "He is a fisherman."



mù

eye

IN ITS primitive form the eye was pictured naturally with eyelids and pupil 𠂔. When stylized: 𠂔 its similarity to 𠂔 (four) deceived man's eye; so it was closed on end: 𠂔 and finally squared off: 目. It would seem that even with his very own eyes man could not see eye to eye.



1246



目标

mù biāo

aim

目的

mù dì

purpose; aim, goal

目睹

mù dǔ

witness; see for oneself

目光

mù guāng

sight; vision; view

目见

mù jiàn

see for myself

目力

mù lì

eyesight

目录

mù lù

contents page or index of book; catalogue

目前

mù qián

at present

目送

mù sòng

watch somebody go

目下

mù xià

now; at present

目不转睛

mù bù zhuǎn jīng

stare

目瞪口呆

mù tēng kǒu dāi

stunned

目空一切

mù kōng yī qiè

supercilious

目中无人

mù zhōng wú rén

look down on others; be overweening

Example:

我目前还不想结婚。

Wǒ mù qián hái bù xiǎng jié hūn.

It means, 'I don't intend to get married now.'

见

(見)

jiàn

see

FOR the verb "to see" the eye 目 was not atop man 人. As the eye grew, man started to produce the regular form 見, now simplified to 见.



P. 110



见报

jiàn bào

appear in the newspaper

见见

jiàn guī

preposterous

见解

jiàn jiě

opinions

见谅

jiàn liàng

excuse me; forgive me

见面

jiàn miàn

meet

见识

jiàn shì

widen one's knowledge; enrich one's experience

见闻

jiàn wén

knowledge

见习

jiàn xí

learn on the job

见效

jiàn xiào

effective

见笑

jiàn xiào

laugh at (me or us)

见证

jiàn zhèng

witness; testimony

见异思迁

jiàn yì sī qiān

fickle; inconstant

见义勇为

jiàn yì yǒng wǒ

ready to take up the cudgels for a just cause

不见

bù jiàn

lost; disappeared

Example:

我不见了一本书。

Wǒ bù jiàn le yī běn shū.

It means, "I lost a book."

看

kàn

see

IN THIS ideograph man raised his hand 手 above his eye 目 to cut off the sun's rays in order to see clearly 见. From this experience he also saw clearly the point of the Chinese proverb: "You cannot cut off the sunlight with one hand."



PC-143

一	二	三	手	看	看	看	看	看						
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

看病
看穿
看符

kàn bìng
cān chuān
kàn fú

consult a doctor
see through
look upon; regard;
treat

看到
看法
看见
看来
看破

kàn dào
kàn fa
kàn jiàn
kàn lái
kàn pò

catch sight of; see
view; opinion
see
it looks as if
see through

看戏
看到
看中
看重
看不惯

kàn qǐ
kàn qíng
kàn zhōng
kàn zhòng
kàn bù guān

keep abreast of
underestimate
take a fancy to
think highly of
cannot bear the
sight of

看得起
另眼相看

kàn de qǐ
lìng yǎn xiāng
kàn

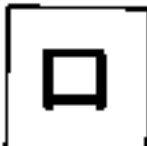
think highly of
treated favourably

Example:

他是来看病的。

Tā shì lái kàn bìng de.

It means, "He comes to consult a doctor."



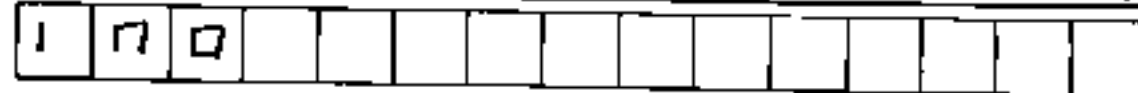
kǒu

mouth;
opening

THE character for mouth was originally a photograph of an open mouth: 𠂔 broadening into a smile: ㄣ and eventually widening: 冂 and contracting to a square: 口. 口 also means an opening. Wise old sayings always caution one about those with a big mouth.



P-114



口才	kǒu cái	eloquence
口吃	kǒu chī	stutter
口臭	kǒu chǒu	bad breath
口袋	kǒu dai	pocket
口福	kǒu fú	gourmet's luck
口供	kǒu gòng	testimony
口号	kǒu hào	slogan
口红	kǒu hóng	lipstick
口角	kǒu jué	quarrel

口渴	kǒu kě	thirsty
人口	rén kǒu	population
口气	kǒu qì	tone
口试	kǒu shì	oral examination
口水	kǒu shuǐ	saliva
口是心非	kǒu shì xīn fēi	says yes when one means no
夸口	kuā kǒu	boasting

Example.

他的口才很好。

Tā de kǒu cái hěn hǎo.

It means, "He is very eloquent."



yán

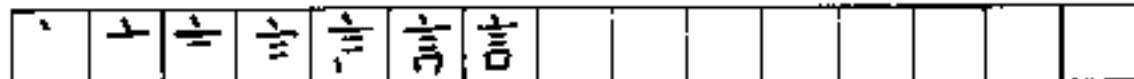
words;
speak

"In a multitude of words," the Chinese saying goes, "there will certainly be a mistake." This is evident from the character for words (言): 言. Originally written 言, it represented a mouth 口 from which issued a mistake 訛 (an old form of 訛). Apparently, to correct this error, man changed 言 to 言. So today, with great care, his mouth 口 speaks the truth 言, transforming contradictions into words: 言.

言 = 口 + 訛
言 = 口 + 訛



P. 112



言辭

yán cí

one's words

言和

yán hé

make peace

言論

yán lùn

speech

言談

yán tán

the way one speaks
or the words one
says

言行

yán xíng

words and deeds

言語

yán yǔ

spoken language

言不由衷

yán bù yóu zhōng

speak insincerely

言而失信

yán ér wú xìn

fail to keep faith

言过其实

yán guò qí shí

exaggerate

言听计从

yán tīng jì cóng

readily accept
one's advice

言外之意

yán wài zhī yì

implications

Example:

他言行不一致。

tā yán xíng bù yí zhì

It means, "His words do not correspond with his actions."

信

xìn

believe;
trust;
letter

This character pictures a man standing by his word. A fitting symbol for faith and trust. 信 - radical forms show a man and mouth; also a heart and words, i.e., words from the heart - sincere and honest. An early man can transmit his word by writing. 信 (man and word) also came to mean the written letter or epistle.



信



PM 16

ノ イ 亻 亻 亻 信 信 信 信

信封
信奉
信服
信号
信件
信笺
信教
信赖
信任

xìn fēng
xìn fèng
xìn fú
xìn hào
xìn jiàn
xìn jiǎn
xìn jiào
xìn lài
xìn rèn

envelope
believe in
be convinced
signal
letter
letter pad
believe in a religion
trust
have confidence in

信徒
信托
信箱
信心
信仰
信用
写信

xìn tiào
xìn tú
xìn tuǒ
xìn xiāng
xìn xīn
xìn yǎng
xìn yòng
xiě xìn

creed
disciple
trust
post box
confidence; faith
belief
trustworthiness
write letters

Example:

请给我一个信封。

Qǐng gěi wǒ yí gè xìn fēng.

It means, "Please give me an envelope."

I

gāng

work;
labour;
skill

I is a pictograph of the ancient workman's square or carpenter's ruler. By extension, it means work, labour or skill. An early form of I included three parallel lines traced with the square. Man has always had problems with work and remuneration. Instead of striving for prosperity through work, he works for prosperity through strife, as our picture of master and servant shows.

MORE PAY
+ LESS WORK
= PROSPERITY



Part C

一

丁

工

工厂
工党
工地
工夫
工具
工会
工匠
工农

gōng chǎng
Gōng Dǎng
gōng dì
gōng fu
gōng jù
gōng huì
gōng jiàng
gōng nóng

factory
the Labour Party
construction site
time; effort
tools
trade union
craftsman
workers and
peasants

工钱
工人
工业
工艺
工资
工作
工程师
工业化
工艺品

gōng qián
gōng rén
gōng yè
gōng yì
gōng zī
gōng zuò
gōng chéng shī
gōng yè huà
gōng yì pǐn

service charges
worker
industry
technology
wages
job
engineer
industrialize
crafts

Example:

他是个工人。

Tā shì ge gōng rén

It means, "He is a worker."

左

zuǒ

left;
also a Chinese
surname

左

The character for left: 左 depicts the hand 扌 that holds the carpenter's square 工—the left. The left hand 扌 is meant to help the more skilled operative member in manual work 工 as, for example, holding the ruler while the right hand draws the line. 左 stands for the direction left.



PE-MO

一 十 左 右 左

左边	zuǒ bian	left side
左面	zuǒ miàn	left side
左派	zuǒ pài	leftist
左倾	zuǒ qīng	left-leaning
左手	zuǒ shǒu	left hand
左翼	zuǒ yì	left wing

左右	zuǒ yòu	left and right
左右手	zuǒ yòu shǒu	the right-hand man
左右逢源	zuǒ yòu féng yuán	win advantages from both sides
左右为难	zuǒ yòu wéi nán	in a dilemma

Example.

他用左手写字。

Tā yòng zuǒ shǒu xiě zì.

It means, "He writes with his left hand."

右

yòu

right

The character for right: 右 is simply a hand 扌 and a mouth 口, signifying the hand you eat with — the right. 右 stands for the direction right.

司



PPH16

一 十 才 右 右

右边
右面
右派
右倾

yòu bian
yòu miàn
yòu pài
yòu qīng

right side
right side
rightist
right deviation

右手
右翼
向右

yòu shǒu
yòu yì
xiàng yòu

right hand
right wing
turn right

Example:

他 向 右 转
tā xiàng yòu zhuǎn

It means, "He turns right."

舌

shé

tongue

舌 舌 舌 舌

"The tongue is like a sharp knife; it kills without drawing blood," so warns the Chinese proverb. Exemplifying this, early forms of the character show a forked tongue thrust violently out of the mouth: 𠂔. It gradually straightens itself: 𠂔 and finally straightens: 舌 into the new form: 舌.



Peking

'	一	千	千	舌	舌										
---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

舌尖

shé jiān

tip of the tongue

舌头

shé tou

tongue

舌音

shé yīn

lingual sounds

舌战

shé zhàn

heated discussion

Example:

辩论会中，双方展开舌战。

Biàn lùn huì zhōng, shuāng fāng zhān kāi shé zhàn

It means, "Both sides are having a heated discussion at the debate."

话 (話)

how

talk; speech, language

Man explained words 2 and 3 and taught 5 to produce 2's, meaning speech or language. To emphasize the importance of weighing words before delivery and to caution against their indiscriminate proliferation, the Chinese proverb warns: "Water and words are easy to pour out but impossible to recover."



परिचय

'	i	í	ǐ	ì	话	话						
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

活別

hiā bu̍

say goodbye

活柄

ကျွန်ုပ်တို့သည်

subject for ridicule

送下

huà jiù

talk about old
times

话剧

ကျွန်ုပ်တို့

नाट्य प्रलय

活虱

huà 1i

subject of a talk

活里有话

huyền lý ngũ hành

there's more to it
than what is
merely said

笑话

သို့သော်

joke

Example:

他讲话很大声。

TS. QUOC NGUYEN HUU QUANG

It means, "He talks very loudly."

耳

ěr

ear

From time immemorial man discerned the wisdom of listening. He proclaimed from ear to ear the proverbial saying: "A good talker is inferior to a good listener." The pictograph he created for the listening ear began with a natural condition: ㄣ and ended with a stylized form: 耳. His talking about the listening ear began also with a natural condition, but it doesn't seem like ever ending in any form.



ㄣ



ㄣ



ㄣ



ㄣ



耳

58

PING



耳朵

ěr duo

ear

耳光

ěr guāng

a box on the ear

耳环

ěr huán

earrings

耳机

ěr jī

earphones

耳孔

ěr kǒng

earhole

耳鸣

ěr míng

tinnitus

耳目

ěr mù

informer

耳塞

ěr sāi

earplug

耳屎

ěr shǐ

earwax

耳语

ěr yǔ

whisper

耳边风

ěr biān fēng

turn a deaf ear to

耳目一新

ěr mù yī xīn

pleasant change

耳闻目睹

ěr wén mù dǔ

what one hears

and sees

Example:

他的耳朵很灵。

Tā de ěr duo hěn lín.

It means, "He has sharp ears."

取

qǔ

take; select; seize

To secure a firm hold on a person the hand 又 is laid on the ear 耳. A hand on the ear, then, means to take hold of, to select or seize: 耳又. Pictured here are various characters extending a helping hand to demonstrate what 耳又 means.



PEMC

一	丁	下	下	目	耳	取	取												
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

取材	qǔ cái	acquire material (for writing)
取代	qǔ dài	replace
取道	qǔ dào	by way of, via
取得	qǔ dé	obtain
取缔	qǔ dì	ban; suppress
取決	qǔ jué	be decided by
取巧	qǔ qiǎo	resort to trickery

取舍	qǔ shě	make one's choice
取胜	qǔ shèng	score a success
取消	qǔ xiāo	cancel
取笑	qǔ xiào	make fun of
取长补短	qǔ cháng bǔ duǎn	learn from other's strong points to remedy one's weaknesses

Example:

他取消一个宴会。

Tā qǔ xiāo yí gè yǎn huì

It means, "He has cancelled a dinner."

娶

qǔ

marry

娶 means to select or obtain, i.e., figuratively taking hold of a person by the ear 耳 in his hand 又. To select a woman 女 therefore means to marry: 娶. Today, however, it is never wise for a man to select a wife in this way, for a hand on her ear definitely means a fist on his ear.



娶



Floral

一	丁	下	下	耳	耳	耳	耳	耳	娶				
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--

娶亲

qǔ qīn

marry (a woman):
take a wife

Example:

他娶了亲以后,日子过得很幸福。

tā qǔ le qīn yǐ hòu, rì zi guò de hěn xìng fú.

It means, "He leads a happy life after marriage."

兄

XIONG

elder brother

The concept of "older brother" is suggested by the ideograph 兄, which combines person 人 with mouth 口. Ideally, 兄 represents a person characterized by a large mouth 口, i.e., one who speaks with authority to exhort or correct a younger brother. Our picture shows what could happen in reality if his mouth of "older brother" went into action.



P. 110

兄弟
兄长xiōng dì
xiōng zhǎng

brothers
respectful form
of address for an
elder brother or
a main friend

兄弟之兄
长兄xiōng dì zhī xiōng
zhǎng xiōng

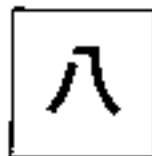
fraternal states
elder brother

Example:

我有很多兄弟姐妹。

Wǒ yǒu hěn duō xiōng dì jiě mèi

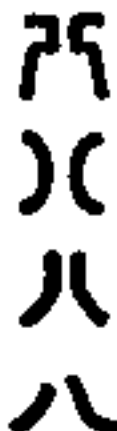
It means, "I have many brothers and sisters."



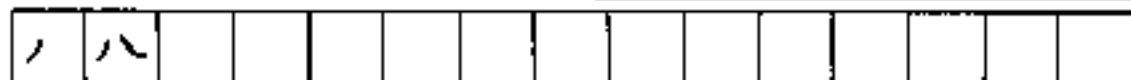
Bā

eight

In the etymological sense, 八 means to divide or separate. It is made up of two separate strokes, forming a symmetrical symbol 八. Probably because the number 8 can be easily divided and subdivided, 八 (to divide) came to stand for 8, the much-divisible number. The original seal form: 𠄎, coincidentally, has 8 lines.



Photo



八仙
八月

Bā Xiān
bā yuè

The Eight Immortals
August

八字

bā zì

Eight Characters (in four pairs, indicating the year, month, day and hour of a person's birth, each pair consisting of one Heavenly Stem and one Earthly Branch, used in fortune telling).

Example:

这个月是八月。

zhè ge yuè shì bā yuè.

It means, "This month is August."

兌

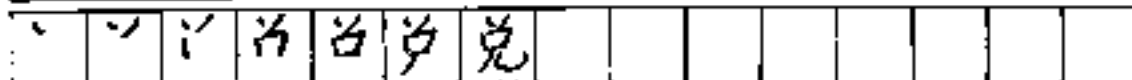
DUÌ

exchange;
barter

The character 兌 originally meant to speak, bless or rejoice. It was derived from older brother's 兄 dissipation of effluent breath 乚 into words of encouragement; 兌 involving the exchange of words. With money talking louder than words in man's affluent society, there arose the need to exchange the old meaning for a new one. Today, 兌 means to exchange money or to barter.



Peng



兌付	duì fù	cash (a cheque, etc.)
兌換	duì huàn	exchange
兌現	duì xiàn	pay cash
兌換表	duì huàn biǎo	exchange table

Example:

他去銀行兌現支票。

Tā qù yínháng duì xiàn zhī pào

It means, "He went to the bank to cash a cheque."

古

Gǔ

old; ancient;
also a Chinese
surname

This character 古 is applicable to that which has passed through ten + months 口 — a tradition dating back ten generations. It includes anything very old, ancient, of antiquity — whether valuable, invaluable or valueless. Our picture illustrates the process of passing through ten mouths something of questionable value.



PENG

一	十	古	古																
---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

古巴	Gǔ Bā	Cuba	古老	gǔ lǎo	ancient
古代	gǔ dài	ancient times	古人	gǔ rén	our forefathers
古典	gǔ diǎn	classical	古玩	gǔ wǎn	ancient book
古董	gǔ dǒng	antique	古玩	gǔ wǎn	curio
古怪	gǔ guài	peculiar; strange	古裝	gǔ zhuāng	ancient costume
古国	gǔ guó	ancient state	古色古香	gǔ sè gǔ xiāng	quaint
古迹	gǔ jì	historic monuments	古为今用	gǔ wéi jīn yòng	make the past serve the present
古田	gǔ tián	archaic			

Example

罗马有许多古迹。

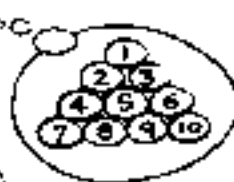
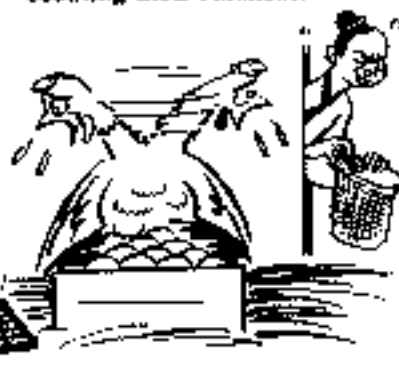
Ró mǎ yǒu xǔ duō gǔ jì

It means, "There are many historical monuments in Rome."

计 (計)

jì
 calculate;
 plan;
 scheme

Sayings 言 In ten 十 implies the ability to calculate 算 - to know how to enumerate 算 the ten numbers 十 of the decimal system. By extension, 算 means to reckon, to plan, to scheme. Below we show a pair of scheming, calculating characters, counting their chickens.



計

PEHP

' jì jì - 计

计策
 计划
 计较
 计谋
 计时
 计算

jì cè
 jì huà
 jì jiào
 jì móu
 jì shí
 jì suàn

stratagem
 plan
 haggle over
 scheme
 reckon by time
 calculate

计议

jì yì

deliberate: talk over

计算机

jì suàn jī

calculator

生计

shēng jì

livelihood

家庭计划

jia tīng jì huà

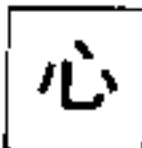
family planning

Example:

这个计算机多少钱?

Zhè ge jì suàn jī duō shǎo qián?

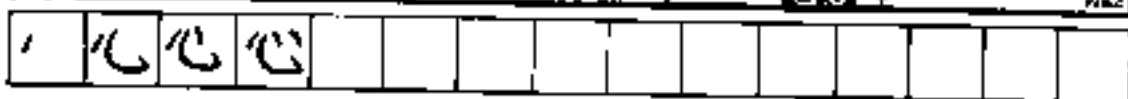
It means, "How much does this calculator cost?"



XIN

heart

The original pictograph was a representation of the physical heart. Its membranous sac was ripped open, exposing it: 𠄎 and a delineation of the aorta appended below: 𠄎. A stylization: 𠄎 provided the basis for the modern form: 心. Recognition of this vital organ's role as seat of motivation for both good and evil prompted man to take to heart the ancient saying: "Honey mouth, dagger heart."



心愛
心得
心煩
心腹
心埋
心事

xīn ài
xīn dé
xīn fán
xīn fù
xīn lǐ
xīn shì

dear
personal insight
vexed
trusted subordinate
psychology
things that weigh
on one's mind

心目
心緒

xīn mù
xīn xù

frame of mind
state of mind

心思
心甘情願
心花怒放
心神不定
心心相印

xīn sī
xīn gān qíng
yuàn
xīn huā nù fàng
xīn shén bù dìng
xīn xīn xiāng yìn

thought; idea
willingly
elated
restless mind
have mutual
affinity
disheartened

灰心

huī xīn

Example:

不要因失敗而灰心。

Bú yào yīn shī bài ér huī xīn

It means, "Do not be disheartened by failures."

怒

NÌ

anger; rage;
passion

The very sinister structure of 怒, meaning anger or passion, constitutes a warning to man, for 怒 was secured by bonding slave 女 to heart 心. It cautions against giving way to anger or passion and becoming slave and handmaid 奴 to the dictates of the heart 心.



人 女 女 奴 奴 奴 怒 怒 怒

怒斥	nù chì	rebuke angrily
怒吼	nù hǒu	howl
怒火	nù huǒ	fury
怒气	nù qì	rage; fury
怒容	nù róng	angry look
怒色	nù sè	angry look

怒视	nù shì	stare at someone or something in anger
怒冲冲	nù chōng chōng	angrily
怒发冲冠	nù fà chōng guān	in utmost anger
怒目而视	nù mù ér shì	stare angrily
愤怒	fèn nù	angry

Example:

他们两人怒目而视。

Tā men liǎng rén nù mù ér shì.

It means, "They stare angrily at each other."

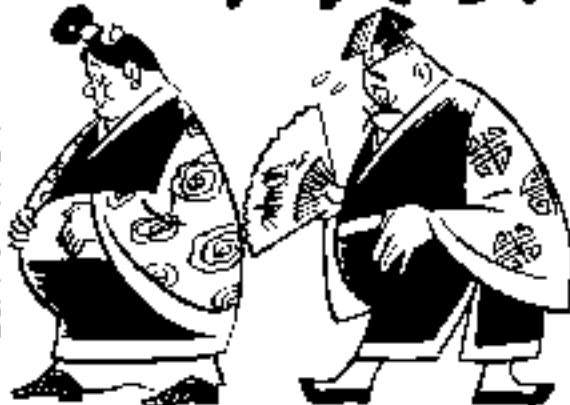
身

SHEN

body

身 身 身 身 身

This character originally meant "pregnant"; it pictured a human figure with prominent belly and one leg thrust forward to support and balance the body: 𠂔. The modern form: 身 also means "the human body" - either male or female, ordinary or outstanding. We show a couple of outstanding ones - outstanding in "body", not in form or figure.



P. 216

丿	丨	勹	月	月	身	身								
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

身边	shēn biān	at (or by) one's side
身材	shēn cāi	figure (body)
身分	shēn fēn	social status
身价	shēn jià	social status
身躯	shēn qū	body; stature
身世	shēn shì	one's lot

身体	shēn tǐ	body
身心	shēn xīn	body and mind
身孕	shēn yùn	pregnancy
身份证	shēn fēn zhèng	identity card
身临其境	shēn lín qí jìng	be present on the spot

Example:

他的身体很弱。

Tā de shēn tǐ hěn ruò

It means, "He is very weak."

齿

(齒)

CHI

teeth

𪚩 𪚪 𪚫 𪚬 𪚭

The evolutionary struggle of this character sees man fighting a losing battle. Earliest forms show the mouth filled with teeth: 𪚩 and later only the front teeth: 𪚪. The regular form: 𪚫 has the teeth sharpened and capped by the phonetic: 止. The simplified version: 齿 drastically reduces the remaining teeth to one. But, with all that loss, man can still console himself that many a true word is spoken through false teeth.



PERO

丨	卜	止	止	𪚫	𪚫	𪚬	𪚭							
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

齿轮
齿腔
齿痛

chǐ lún
chǐ qiāng
chǐ tòng

gear-wheel
dental cavity
toothache

牙龈
牙齿

chǐ yá
yá cái

the gums
tooth

Example:

他的牙齿痛。

tā de yá chǐ tòng

It means, "He has a toothache."

止

zhǐ

halt, stop

𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 止

Although this character is a crude representation of the motionless foot, with the five toes reduced to three, it does not stand for "foot". Its meanings are derived by extension and include: to halt, stop or stand still. Our illustration shows how, in an emergency, the foot can come in handy to express the idea of "Stop."



Peng



止沙

zhǐ shā

halt; stop

止境

zhǐ jìng

limit; end

止渴

zhǐ kě

quench thirst

止咳

zhǐ kě

relieve a cough

止痛

zhǐ tòng

allay pains

止血

zhǐ xuè

stop bleeding

止咳药

zhǐ kě yào

cough mixture

停止

tíng zhǐ

halt; stop

终止

zhōng zhǐ

put an end to;
cease

望梅止渴

wàng méi zhǐ kě

gaze at plums
to quench one's
thirst, vain hopes

Example:

酸梅可以止渴。

Suan méi kě yǐ zhǐ kě

It means, "Sour plums can quench your thirst."

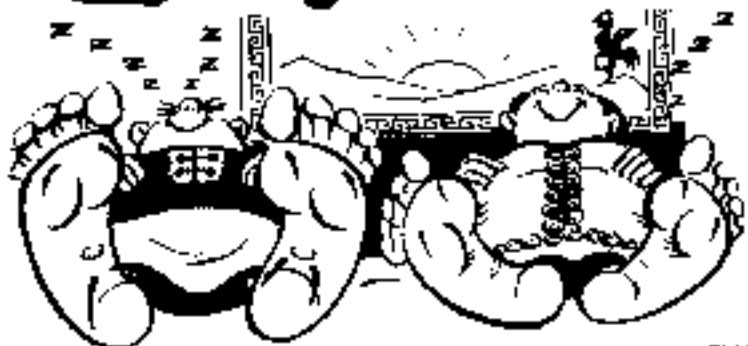
足

zú

foot



The character: 足 apparently pictures the knee-cap: 𠂔 resting on the foot 𠂔. The full circle: 〇 suggests completion and rest, as opposed to motion. The modern form: 足, signifying foot at rest, is applicable to feet in general. And feet are generally at rest, as our example shows.



P. 40

1	口	口	口	口	足	足								
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

足够

zú gòu

enough

足迹

zú jī

footprint

足金

zú jīn

pure gold

足球

zú qiú

soccer; football

足下

zú xià

polite form of
address between
friends

足球队

zú qiú duì

soccer team

足球迷

zú qiú mí

soccer fan

满足

mǎn zú

satisfied; satisfy

手足情义

shǒu zú qíng yì

brotherly affection

Example:

他喜欢看足球赛。

Tā xǐ huān kàn zú qiú sài

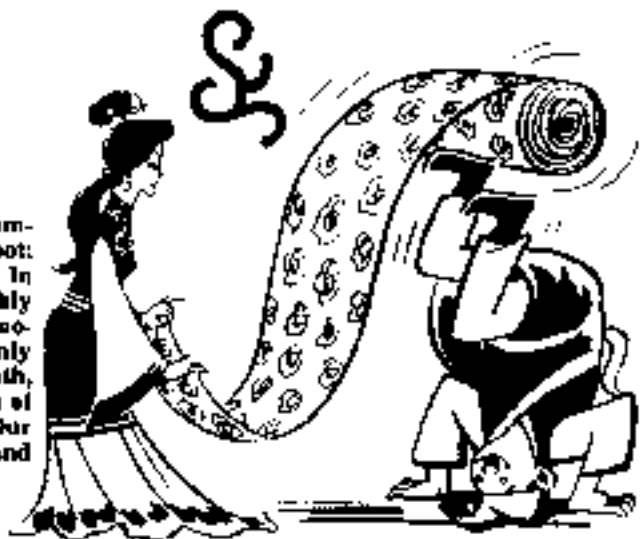
It means, "He likes to watch football matches."

疋

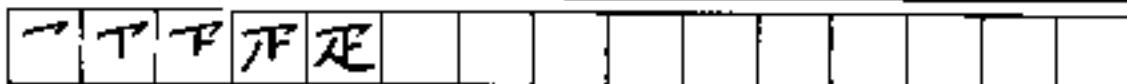
pǐ

piece of cloth;
bale or roll

This character: 疋 has an uncompleted circle: ㄥ flowing into a foot: 止, signifying the foot in motion. In this sense, it is now obsolete - probably because feet today are seldom in motion. The character is now mainly applied to a bale, ball or roll of cloth, which is undone by a regular motion of turning it over and over again. Our picture illustrates both obsolete and modern meanings of 疋.



1916



疋六

pí tóu

piece goods

疋布

yī pǐ bù

one piece of cloth

Example:

她买了一疋布。

Tā mǎi le yī pǐ bù.

It means, "She bought a piece of cloth."

步

BİÇİM

step;
pace



This character for "step" or "pace" is an ideograph of a right foot and a left foot, one following the other in close succession, graphically conveying the idea of walking or taking steps. Such steps, however, could be in the wrong direction; our picture presents a good example of this.



PMJ

一	卜	止	牛	步
---	---	---	---	---

步兵	bù bīng	infantry
步步	bù bù	step by step
步调	bù diào	pace or speed (in walking or running)
步伐	bù fá	pace
步法	bù fǎ	footwork
步枪	bù qiāng	rifle

步行	bù xíng	go on foot
步骤	bù zhòu	move; measure
步步高升	bù bù gāo shēng	rise step by step (promotions)
进步	jìn bù	progress, improve
跑步	pǎo bù	jog
散步	sàn bù	take a stroll

Exampel:

他的功课进步得很快。

Tā de gōng kǎi jīa bǔ de hěn kuài.

It means, "His lessons have improved rapidly."

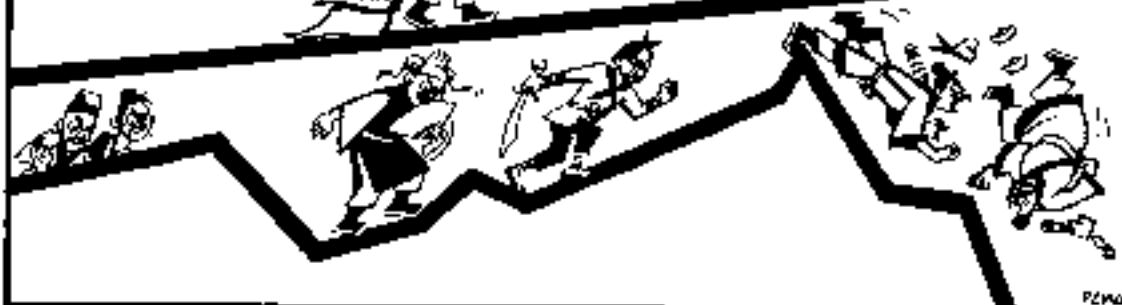
正

ZHÈNG

straight;
upright;
correct;
exact



The character: 正 shows a foot: 止 (meaning "stop") with a straight line above it. It signifies arrival and stopping (止) at the line or proper limit (—) without going astray. It is also an ideograph of a foot walking in a straight line: 正. Hence the extended meanings: straight, upright, proper, correct, exact.



PENG



正常
正当
正派
正确
正式
正统
止义

zhèng cháng
zhèng táng
zhèng pài
zhèng què
zhèng shì
zhèng tǒng
zhèng yì

normal
proper; rightful
upright; decent
correct; right
official
orthodox
justice

正月
正常化
正规军
改正
纠正
改邪归正

zhèng yuè
zhèng cháng huà
zhèng guī jūn
gǎi zhèng
jiū zhèng
gǎi xié guī zhèng

January
normalize
regular army
correct
amend, correct
turn over a new leaf

Example:

那 犯 人 已 改 邪 归 正 。
nà fàn rén yǐ gǎi xié guī zhèng

It means, "That convict has turned over a new leaf."

是

shì

right; yes;
am, are, is

是

This ideograph locates the sun: 日 over the character for right or correct: 正 (modified to 𠂔). It depicts the sun: 日 exactly on the meridian: 是. The sun is here taken as the standard for correctness. Hence the idea of "right; yes; am, are, is."



2216

一	口	月	日	旦	早	早	昇	是								
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

是的
是非
是否
是故
不是

shì de
shì fēi
shì fǒu
shì gù
bì shì

yes; right
right and wrong
whether or not?
for this reason
not so

Example:

这把雨伞不是我的。

zhè bǎ yǔ sǎn bú shì wǒ de

It means, "This umbrella is not mine."

走

žŏli
walk;
run;
hasten;
depart

In the original seal form: 𠂔 the upper part: 大 (or 土) represents a man: 大 bending his head: 𠂔 forward to walk rapidly. The lower part: 止 (or 止) means "to stop." This combination of bending and stopping indicates walking. The movement is also suggested by the bending: 大 (土) of the toes or foot: 止 (止) in swift walking. Pictured here are a host of characters - walking, running, skating - all bending forward but not stopping.



一	十	土	寺	丰	赤	走
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

走动	zǒu dòng	move around
走访	zǒu fǎng	have an interview with
走狗	zǒu gǒu	running dog; lackey
走廊	zǒu láng	corridor
走漏	zǒu lòu	leak out (secret)
走路	zǒu lù	walk
走私	zǒu sī	smuggling

走失	zǒu shī	be lost
走兽	zǒu shòu	beast
走向	zǒu xiàng	walk towards
走样	zǒu yàng	change in shape
走卒	zǒu zú	lackey
走漏风声	zǒu lòu fēng shēng	leak out a secret
走马看花	zǒu mǎ kàn huā	taking a hurried glance

Experiments

地走路去学校。

THE END OF THE WORLD

It means, "He walks to school."

土

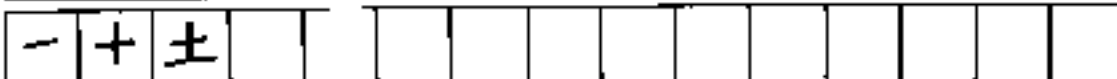
Tǔ

earth;
soil;
ground

Man has always been dependent on the ground for subsistence. To him, earth (土) is represented by its two layers (二) - the topsoil and subsoil - from which growing plants sprout (|). Hence 土: the good earth that produces all things for man. Pictured here are some such "earthy" provisions.



Peng



土产	tǔ chǎn	local commodities (natural products)	土人	tǔ rén	native
土地	tǔ dì	land	土质	tǔ zhì	property of soil
土匪	tǔ fěi	bandit	土包子	tǔ bāo zi	country bumpkin
土话	tǔ huà	local dialect	土耳其	Tǔ ěr Qí	Turkey
土壤	tǔ rǎng	soil	土木工程	Tǔ mō gōng chéng	civil engineering
			泥土	ní tǔ	soil, earth

Example:

这是一块肥沃的土地。

Zhè shì yí kuài féi wò de tǔ dì

It means, "This piece of land is fertile."

坐

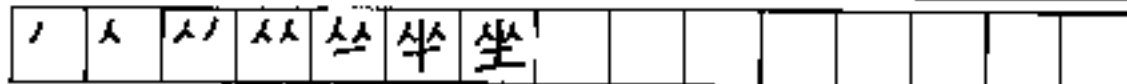
ZUO

to sit;
a seat

坐, the ideograph for "sit", depicts two men talking face-to-face (人), sitting on the ground (土) but not quite down-to-earth. Although the radical 土 (earth) provides the base for the men (人) to "sit" (坐) on, it can prove to be the root of unproductive activity, as illustrated.



PENG



坐半

zuò bàn

be imprisoned

坐落

zuò luò

locate; situate

坐视

zuò shì

sit by and watch

坐位

zuò wèi

seat

坐下

zuò xià

sit down

坐立不安

zuò lì bù ān

be fidgety

坐井观天

zuò jǐng guān
tiān

(literally) see the sky from the bottom of a well—take a narrow view of
please sit down

请坐

qǐng zuò

Example:

他请客人坐下。

Tā qǐng kè rén zuò xià

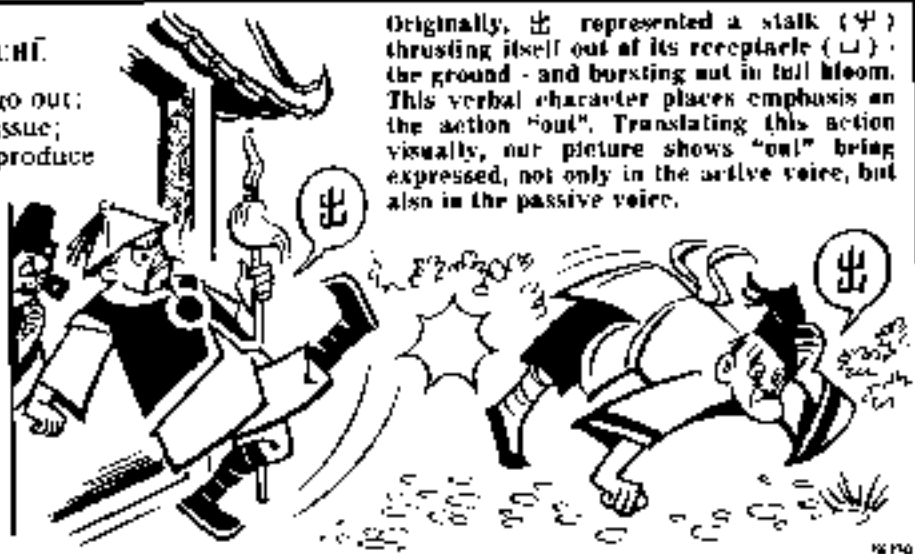
It means, "He invited the guest to sit down."

出

出

 CH_3^-

go out;
issue;
produce



Originally, 出 represented a stalk (艸) thrusting itself out of its receptacle (口) the ground - and bursting out in full bloom. This verbal character places emphasis on the action "out". Translating this action visually, our picture shows "out" being expressed, not only in the active voice, but also in the passive voice.

140

L

U

4

4

4

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[illegible]

7

出版
出產
出丑

chū bàn
chū chán
chū chóu

publish
produce
make a fool of
oneself

出因
出境
出口
出来
出卖

chū guò
chū jīng
chū kǒu
chū lái
chū mài

go ahead
leave a country
export
come out
betray

出门
出仕

chū quán
chū qín

be away from
home
go out
family background
appear: emerge
unexpected
stand above others
go through thick
and thin

Example

他出版了一本书。

Tā chū bān le yī běn shū

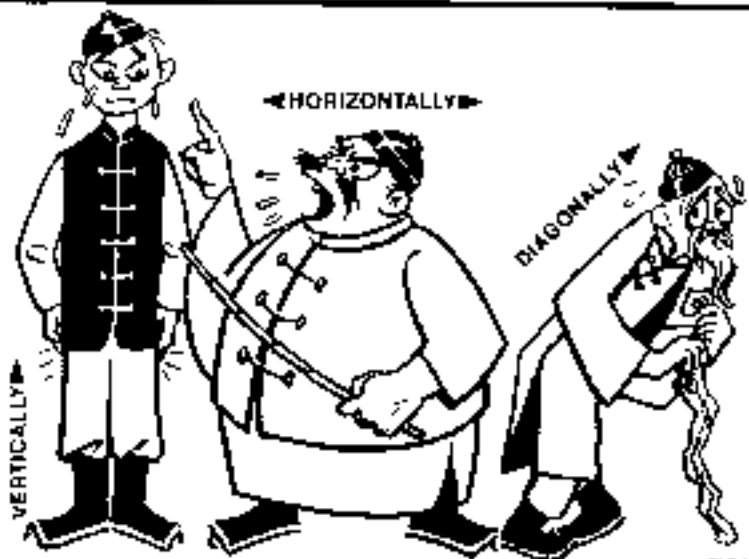
It means, "He has published a book."

生

SHÈNG

produce;
bear;
grow

The earth (土), producing a plant (艹), lays the groundwork for growth (生). Hence the modified form: 生, meaning to produce, bear or grow. Man, both imperfect, grows in different ways and directions. Pictured here are examples from three generations.



ノ	乚	乚	牛	生											
---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

生病
生存
生动
生活
生理
生命
牛气
生日

shēng bìng
shēng cún
shēng dòng
shēng huó
shēng lǐ
shēng mìng
shēng qì
shēng rì

fall ill
survive
vivid
livelihood
physiology
life
angry
birthday

生疏
生物
生效
生意
生硬
生长
生气勃勃

shēng shū
shēng wù
shēng xiào
shēng yì
shēng yìng
shēng zhǎng
shēng qì bó bó

unfamiliar
biology
become effective
business
rigid
grow up
full of vigor and vitality

Example:

明天是她的生日。

Míng tiān shì tā de shēng rì.

It means, "Tomorrow is her birthday."

姓

XÌNG

surname

The character 姓, comprising 女 (woman) and 生 (born), literally means: "born of woman". It suggests that in some remote, forgotten era man, born of woman, got his name from the mother. Hence 姓: "surname". We introduce here Mama Li's (李) family from the remote past, but we've forgotten Papa's insignificant surname.



PEHO

姓	女	女	如	如	如	姓	姓								
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

姓名

xìng míng

surname and name

百姓

bǎi xìng

common people

姓谱

xìng pǔ

genealogical record;

贵姓

guì xìng

what is your

family register

surname?

姓氏

xìng shì

surname

Example:

请问您姓什么。

Qǐng wèn nín xìng shén me?

It means, "What is your surname, please?"

贝

(貝)

Rì
shells;
valuables

𧈧 𧈨 貝 貝 貝

This character is a pictograph of the precious cowrie shell. Used in early feudal times as money, it came to mean also "valuables". The regular form (貝) shows a live shell with feelers; but today, like the money it once represented, the shell reveals its hollowness in the simplified form (贝).



FENG

1	贝	贝																		
---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

贝雕
贝壳
贝类
贝卡

bèi diāo
bèi ké
bèi lèi
bèi kǎ

shell carving
shell
shellfish
valuables; gems

贝子
宝贝

bèi zǐ
bǎo bèi

cowries used as
currency in
ancient times
precious; darling

Example:

这贝壳很美。

zhè bèi ké hěn měi

It means, "This shell is very beautiful."

贱 (賤)

Jiàn cheap; mean; worthless

Two spears: 戔 shattering and destroying the value of shells: 貝, once used as money, conveys the idea of cheap, worthless, mean or humble. Man applied this word to anything of little value, uttering the proverbial saying: "Cheap things are of little value; valuable things are not cheap". In mock humility, he applied it also to himself.



Feng

丨	冂	冂	貝	貝	賤	賤	賤								
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

贱价 jiàn jià
贱卖 jiàn mài
贱物 (货) jiàn wù (huò)

cheap, low-priced
cheap-sale
cheap and common
things; inferior
quality goods

贫贱 pín jiàn
贱骨头 jiàn gú tóu

poor and humble
miserable (or contemptible) wretch

Example:

她出生贫贱。

Tā chū shēng pín jiàn

It means, "She comes from a poor and humble family."

贵 (貴)

GUÌ
expensive,
dear;
honourable

A basket or container: 甕 (or 甕) filled with precious cowries: 貝 (once used as money) means dear or expensive. By extension, it also means high-class or honourable. In this connection, humble self (賤) thanks honourable readers (貴) for their appreciation and interest in the Bilingual Page.



一 冂 口 中 虫 丰 貴 貴

贵宾	guì bīn	guest of honour	贵人	guì rén	distinguished person
贵妇	guì fù	noblewoman	贵姓	guì xìng	your name, please
贵国	guì guó	your nation (a polite expression)	贵玉	guì yù	valuable; precious
贵贱	guì jiàn	the eminent and the humble	贵族	guì zú	aristocrat; noble
			宝贵	bǎo guì	precious

Example:

英国有许多贵族人家。

Yīng Guó yǒu xǔ duō guì zú rén jiā

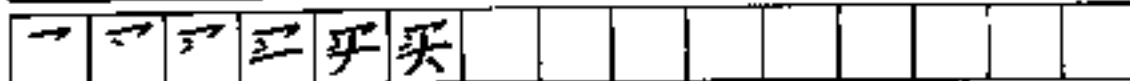
It means, "There are many aristocratic families in England."

买 (買) Mǎi buy

This ideograph is made up of a net: 罾 (modified from 罾) and shells: 貝 (money-cowrie). 買 means to buy, i.e., net of (罾) goods, paying the price in cowries (貝). This is often done with bargain offers. The simplified form: 买 affected in place of the regular form: 買 may not seem quite a bargain, but we'll buy it.



20116



买方	mǎi fāng	buyer
买好	mǎi hǎo	try to win some- body's favour
买价	mǎi jià	buying price
买卖	mǎi mài	buying and selling

买通	mǎi tōng	bribe; buy over
买主	mǎi zhǔ	buyer
买空卖空	mǎi kōng mài kōng	speculate (in stocks, etc.)

Example:

他是这辆新车的买主。

Tā shì zhè liǎng lǚ chē de mǎi zhǔ

It means, "He is the buyer of this new car."

水

SHUǐ
water

Water (水), a natural source of power, is represented by a pictograph of surging waters with a central mainstream and four whirls: 氺. A variant form, using only three drops (冫), operates as radical to induce a flood of "watery" characters. To this day, the proverbial saying is alive: "Water can support a ship, and water can upset it."



水彩	shuǐ cǎi	water colour
水池	shuǐ chí	pond; pool
水沟	shuǐ gōu	drain; ditch
水管	shuǐ guǎn	water pipe
水果	shuǐ guǒ	fruit
水库	shuǐ kù	reservoir; dam
水泥	shuǐ ní	cement
水手	shuǐ shǒu	sailor; seaman
水塔	shuǐ tǎ	water tower

水星	shuǐ xīng	Mercury
水银	shuǐ yín	mercury
水灾	shuǐ zāi	flood
水龙头	shuǐ lóng tóu	tap; faucet
水深火热	shuǐ shēn huǒ rè	(figuratively) an abyss of suffering
水蒸气	shuǐ zhēng qì	steam
水泄不通	shuǐ xiè bù tōng	(figuratively) very crowded
喝水	hē shuǐ	drink water

Example:

吃水果对身体有益。

Chī shuǐ guǒ duì shēn tǐ yǒu yì.

It means, "Eating fruits is good for our health."

永

YǒNG

everlasting;
perpetual;
forever

One generation comes and another goes, but water flows on incessantly in a continuous cycle. From this unceasing flow of water came the ideograph for "everlasting" 永 - a variation of water (水), with fumes and ripples added: 永. 永 will long be remembered as the "everlasting" character that embodies the eight fundamental strokes used in calligraphy.



永生	yǒng shēng	eternal life
永远	yǒng yuǎn	forever; everlasting
永不分离	yǒng bù fēn lí	inseparable
永垂不朽	yǒng chuí bù xiǔ	eternal glory

永别	yǒng bié	part forever
永不	yǒng bù	never
永固	yǒng gù	permanently fixed
永恒	yǒng héng	eternal, everlasting
永久	yǒng jiǔ	permanent

Example:

他们的爱情是永恒的。
tā men de ài qíng shì yǒng héng de
It means, "Their love is everlasting."

冰 (冰) BĪNG

Ice

The character for ice was originally: 𣎵, representing cracks or crystals on the surface of ice. The radical 冫 depicts water dripping and freezing into an icicle. 冫 was added to 水 (water) to freeze and crystallize it into "frozen water" or ice: 冰. Our illustration applies 冰 figuratively, contrasting icy coldness with fiery passion.



丶	冫	冫	冫	冰	冰														
---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

冰雹	bīng báo	hailstones
冰川	bīng chuān	glacier
冰岛	bīng dǎo	Iceland
冰冻	bīng dòng	freeze
冰块	bīng kuài	ice-cube
冰冷	bīng lěng	ice-cold
冰原	bīng yuán	ice-cold

冰山	bīng shān	iceberg
冰水	bīng shuǐ	ice-water
冰箱	bīng xiāng	refrigerator
冰淇淋	bīng qí lín	ice-cream
冰上运动	bīng shàng yùn dòng	ice-sports
冰天雪地	bīng tiān xuě dì	a world of ice and snow

Example:

她喜欢吃冰淇淋。

Tā xǐ huān chī bīng qí lín.

It means, "She likes ice-cream."

泉

QUÁN

spring;
fountain

The early forms: 𩺰 and 𩺱 show water gushing out from a mountain spring. The modern form: 泉, distilled from 白 (pure) and 水 (water), symbolizes the fountain or spring - source of pure, wholesome drinking water and the inspired expression: "When you drink water, think of the mountain spring (or source)."



'	丿	𠂇	白	白	𣶒	𣶒	泉	泉						
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

泉水

quán shuǐ

spring water

泉源

quán yuán

source of spring;
source

喷泉

pēn quán

fountain

Example:

这个喷泉很美。

zhè ge pēn quán hěn měi

It means, "This is a very beautiful fountain."

雨

Yǔ

rain

雨, the character for rain, is a picture of raindrops (==) falling vertically down (|) from a cloud (雨) in the heavens (一). Not all welcome the rain as showers of blessing from heaven for, as the saying goes, "The farmer hopes for rain, the traveller for fine weather."



ZENG

一	厂	巾	巾	雨	雨	雨	雨						
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

雨点
雨季
雨量
雨伞
雨水
雨天
雨衣

yǔ diǎn
yǔ jì
yǔ liàng
yǔ sǎn
yǔ shuǐ
yǔ tiān
yǔ yī

raindrop
rainy season
rainfall
umbrella
rain water
rainy day
raincoat

雨过天晴

yǔ guò tiān qíng

the sun shines
again after the
rain

雨后春笋

yǔ hòu chūn sǎn

(spring up like)
bamboo shoots
after a spring rain

下雨

xià yǔ

raining

Example:

下雨了，快进来吧！

kà yǔ le. kuài jìn lái ba!

It means, "It's raining, come in quickly!"

漏

lòu

leak

The original character 漏 places rain (雨) under roof 尸 (abbreviation of 屋, house), enforcing the idea of "leak" - rain seeping through the roof into the house. The modern form reinforces the concept by adding more water in the form of the radical: 氵 (water): 漏.



丶 丶 丶 丶 尸 尸 尸 尸 漏 漏 漏 漏 漏 漏 漏

漏电	lòu diàn	leakage of electricity
漏洞	lòu dòng	flaw; loophole
漏斗	lòu dòu	funnel for liquids
漏风	lòu fēng	air leak
漏光	lòu guāng	light leak

漏税	lòu shuì	evade taxation
漏雨	lòu yǔ	rain leaking through
漏风声	lòu fēng shēng	leak out a secret
漏洞百出	lòu dòng bǎi chū	full of loopholes
失漏	shī lòu	lose track of

Example:

他漏了一条重要新闻。

Tā lòu le yì tiáo zhòng yào xīn wén.

It means, "He missed an important piece of news."

云

(雲)

YÚN

cloud

云 云 雲 云

When the humid and warm vapours (气 or 水) rise (上 or 二) and reach the colder regions, they condense and form clouds: 云. Loading the clouds (云) with rain (雨) produces the regular form: 雲. The simplified version relieves the clouds (雲) of their load, reverting the character to its original form: 云.



一

二

云

云

云彩

yún cǎi

cloud

云层

yún céng

layers of cloud

云集

yún jí

gather together in crowds

云外

yún wài

beyond the clouds

云雾

yún wù

mist, fog

云霞

yún xiá

rosy clouds

云霄

yún xiāo

the skies

云烟

yún yān

cloud and mist

云消雾散

yún xiāo wù sǎn

the clouds have cleared and the mist dispersed — (figuratively) troubles have been cleared up

白云

bái yún

white clouds

浮云

fú yún

passing cloud

乌云密布

wū yún mǎn bù

black clouds gather in the sky

Example:

天上有朵朵白云。

tiān shàng yǒu duǒ duǒ bái yún

It means, "Billows of white clouds float in the sky."

雪

XUĚ

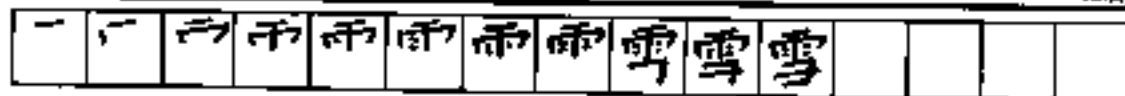
Snow

雪

The seal character 雪 associates rain 雨 with broom 雪. The modern character 雪 relates rain 雨 to hand 手 (a contraction of 手, broom). Both versions fittingly symbolize snow, i.e., rain 雨 which can be taken up in the hand (手) or swept away by a broom (雪).



FAH4



雪白
雪崩
雪恨
雪花
雪崩
雪景
雪亮

xuě bái
xuě bēng
xuě hèn
xuě huā
xuě bōng
xuě jǐng
xuě liàng

snow-white
snowslide
avenge
snowflake
cigar
snow scenery
bright as snow

雪球
雪人
雪山

xuě qiú
xuě rén
xuě shān

snowball
snowman
snow-covered
mountain

雪花膏
雪中送炭

xuě huā gāo
xuě zhōng sòng
tàn

vanishing cream
(figuratively) timely
assistance

下雪

xià xuě

to snow

Example:

冬天，小孩子喜欢造雪人。

Dōng tiān, xiǎo hái zǐ xǐ huān zào xuě rén.

It means, "In winter, children like to make snowmen."

电 (電)

DIÀN lightning, electricity

A streak of lightning (电) amidst the falling rain (雨) forged the character for lightning: 电. Lightning being a visible discharge of electricity, 电 came to mean also electricity. 电 takes the path of least resistance, discharging eight of its thirteen strokes in transform itself into the simplified form: 电.

電電電電電



PCW4

一 冂 冂 日 电

电报	diàn bào	telegram; cable
电池	diàn chí	battery
电工	diàn gōng	electrician
电话	diàn huà	telephone
电流	diàn liú	electric current
电脑	diàn nǎo	computer
电视	diàn shì	television
电梯	diàn tī	elevator
电线	diàn xiàn	wire; cable

电讯	diàn xùn	telegraphic message
电影	diàn yǐng	movie-show; film
电唱机	diàn chàng jī	record player
电单车	diàn dān chē	motorcycle
电子计算机	diàn zǐ jì suàn jī	electronic calculator
手电筒	shǒu diǎn tǒng	torch
无线电	wú xiàn diàn	wireless

Example:

他喜欢骑电单车。

Tā xǐ huān qí diàn dān chē.

It means, "He likes riding motorcycle."

雷

LÉI

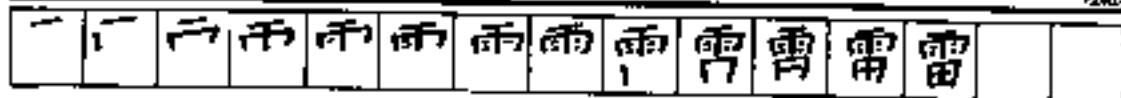
thunder

From experience, man knows that rain clouds (雨) over his fields (田) means thunder: 雷, the voice of lightning. The original version of 雷 has three or four fields (田) incorporated in a graphic pattern to express the reverberation of thunder. To man, thunder is impressive, but it is lightning that does the work.



"The thunder roars loudly, but little rain falls."

FANG



雷达
雷击

lái dá
lái jī

radar
be struck by
lightning

雷鸣

léi míng

thunderous

雷声

léi shēng

thunderclap

雷雨

lái yǔ

thunderstorm

雷达网

lái dá wǎng

radar service
network

雷同前人

léi tóng qián rén

mere follower
of predecessors

打雷

dǎ léi

to thunder

地雷

dì léi

land-mine

水雷

shuǐ léi

sea-mine

鱼雷

yú léi

torpedo

鱼雷艇

yú léi tǐng

torpedo boat

大发雷霆

dà fā léi tíng

fly into a rage

Example:

督工对工人大发雷霆。

Dū gōng duì gōng rén dà fā léi tíng

It means, "The supervisor flies into a rage at the workers."

伞

(伞)

Sǎn

umbrella

伞伞伞伞

伞 is a pictograph of an umbrella. Its radical: 人 (man) has nothing to do with the original character: 傘. Nevertheless, the regular form: 傘 seems to be harbouring four persons (人人) not included in the simplified version: 伞. Under cover of the umbrella, man counsels for the rainy day: "When the sky is clear, carry an umbrella; though your stomach is full, carry provisions."



ノ	人	伞	伞	伞	伞										
---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

伞兵

sǎn bīng

paratroop;
parachuter

雨伞

yǔ sǎn

umbrella

降落伞

jiàng luò sǎn

parachute

Example:

快要下雨了，记得带一把雨伞。

Kuài yào xià yǔ le, jì de dài yì bǎ yǔ sǎn

It means, "It's going to rain. Don't forget to bring an umbrella."

川

CHUĀN

river,
stream

川

"The great river does not reject little stream." As the river meanders through arid land, infusing life into the fields, it is continually fed by little streams. Fittingly, the river is portrayed as flowing water formed by the union of little streams, upon which it vitally depends: 川. The modern independent form: 川 uses a variant: 川 to serve as source for other related characters.



川資	chuān zī	travelling expenses
川流不息	chuān liú bù xī	uninterrupted flow continuous flow
四川	Sì Chuān	Sichuan, China

Example:

路上車輛川流不息。

Lù shàng chē liàng chuān liú bù xī.

It means, "There is a continuous flow of traffic on the road."

山

SHAN

mountain.
hill

A mountain range, with three towering peaks, provides the structure for this pictograph of mountain or hill: 山. From a high vantage point, man is able to oversee what is easily overlooked on a lower plane. Hence the proverb: "If you don't climb the high mountain, you can't view the plain."



山川	shān chuān	mountains and rivers	山西	Shān Xī	Shanxi, China
山顶	shān tǒng	summit of a mountain	山岸	shān yá	cliff
山东	Shān Dōng	Shandong, China	山盟海誓	shān néng hǎi shì	solemn oath
山顶	shān dǐng	mountain top	山明水秀	shān míng shuǐ xiù	beautiful scenery
山歌	shān gē	folk song	山穷水尽	shān qióng shuǐ jìn	circumstances of extreme need
山谷	shān gǔ	valley	山珍海味	shān zhēn hǎi wèi	delicacies
山脉	shān mài	mountain range			
山坡	shān pō	hill slope			
山头	shān tóu	hilltop			

Example:

他被山明水秀的西湖迷住了。

Tā bèi shān míng shuǐ xiù de Xī Hú mí zhù le.

It means, "He was enchanted by the beautiful scenery of the West Lake."

鸟

(鳥)

NIǎO

bird

鳥 鳥 鳥 鳥

The regular form: 鳥 is a representation of a long-tailed bird, flaunting its beauty and revelling in its freedom. Unfortunately, beauty has not always been an asset to the bird for, as the saying goes, "It's the beautiful bird that we put in the cage." Tragically, the simplified form sees the poor bird stripped of its plumage: 鸟.



鸟 鸟 鸟 鸟

鸟巢
鸟瞰
鸟美
鸟笼
鸟兽
鸟爪

niǎo cháo
niǎo kàn
niǎo měi
niǎo lóng
niǎo shòu
niǎo zhǎo

bird's nest
bird's eye view
birds
bird cage
birds and animals
bird's claws

鸟语花香

niǎo yǔ huā
xiāng

birds sing and
flowers give forth
their fragrance
characterizing a
fine spring day

小鸟

xiǎo niǎo

small bird

Example:

你家里有养鸟吗?

nǐ jiā lǐ yǒu yǎng niǎo ma?

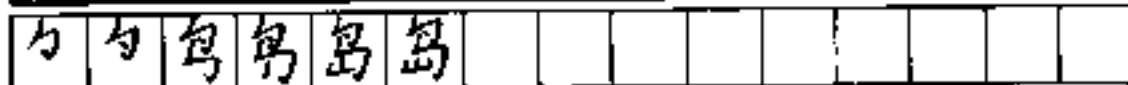
It means, "Do you rear birds at home?"

岛 (島)

Dǎo

Island

Sea birds often nest on mountainous rocks that emerge from the sea. Hence a bird (鳥) over a mountain (山) gave the concept for island: 島. The ancient form shows a bird hovering over a mountain, with feet visible: 𪚩. The modern version has the bird settling on it, with feet hidden: 島, probably hatching the simplified character: 岛.



岛国

dǎo guó

island state

岛屿

dǎo yǔ

islands

半岛

bàn dǎo

peninsula

群岛

qún dǎo

archipelago

Example.

新加坡是一个岛国。

Xī jiā pō shì yí ge dǎo guó

It means, "Singapore is an island state."

烏 (鳥)

WÜ ERMW

The saying: "The crow does not roost with the phoenix" sums up man's attitude towards the lowly carrion crow, regarded as a bird of ill omen. The character for crow: 烏 is similar to that for bird: 鳥, with the stroke for the eyes omitted, probably because black eyes are not readily visible against black feathers. Even the unflattering simplified version: 乌 cannot blacken the image of this miserable bird, for crows are already black all over the world.



万	鸟	鸟
---	---	---

烏龜
烏黑
烏鴉
烏有
烏云
烏賊

၁၀၀၀
 ၁၀၀၀
 ၁၀၀၀
 ၁၀၀၀
 ၁၀၀၀
 ၁၀၀၀

tortoise
jet black
crew
naught
dark clumsy
cuttlefish

烏干達
烏拉士
烏托邦
烏合之
烏烟瘴

WU Gēn Dì
WU Lǚ Gāi
WU Fú Bāng
WU Hé Zhāi Zhōng
WU Xiǎo Zhàn gǔ

Uganda (Africa)
Uruguay (Latin
America)
Utopia
disorderly band
foul atmosphere

Example:

乌龟是两栖动物

Wú guā shì lǎng qī dìng wèi

It means, "The tortoise is an amphibian."

飞

(飛)

Fēi fly

This character draws its inspiration from the migratory flight of the crane - with the long neck of the bird folded on itself: 飛. The flight is speeded up by simplifying the regular form: 飛, lightening its load of strokes from nine to three: 飞.



飛

飛

飞

FLYING

飞 飞 飞

飞机师 fēi jī shī pilot
飞禽走兽 fēi qín zǒu shòu birds and beasts

Example:

他要做个飞机师
tā yào zuò ge fēi jī shī

It means, "He wants to be a pilot."

羽

yǔ

feathers;
wings

Feathers - the showy plumage of birds - are represented by a pair of wings. Like human nature, feathers have changed little in character through the ages. From the original 羽 to 羽 and finally 羽, all look alike at a glance. To confirm this, our illustration takes a closer look at some birds of a feather.



羽毛

yǔ máo

feather

羽毛球

yǔ máo qiú

badminton

羽毛球拍

yǔ máo qiú pāi

badminton racket

羽毛未丰

yǔ máo wèi fēng

still young and
immature

Example:

我 喜 欢 打 羽 毛 球。

Wǒ xǐ huān dǎ yǔ máo qiú

It means, "I like to play badminton."

习 (習)

xí
practise

This ideograph combines wings (習) with self (白, contraction of 白), suggesting a young bird learning to fly by itself; by extension, to practise: 習. Copying the bird, man also tries to fly by speeding up the simplification of the original intricate character: 習, using only one wing for "practise"; 习. Wee heide the bird that copies man!



习 习 习

习惯	xí guān	habit
习气	xí qì	bad habit
习俗	xí sú	custom, tradition
习题	xí tí	exercise (of school work)
习性	xí xìng	habits and characteristics
习用	xí yòng	use habitually
习语	xí yǔ	idiom

习作	xí zuò	exercises in composition, drawing, etc.
习以为常	xí yǐ wéi cháng	he used (or accustomed) to
习惯成自然	xí guān chéng zì rán	habit becomes second nature
练习	liàn xí	practise, exercise
学习	xué xí	learning

Example.

我们应该向伟人学习。

Wǒ men yīng gāi xiàng wēi rén xué xí

It means, "We should learn from great men."

扇

SHÀN

fān



In this ideograph, a wing (羽) is likened to the leaf of a door (户) in that its attachment is at the end, and both are capable of vibrating and spreading out like a fan: 扇. The combination of these two related components enforces the idea of "fan" (扇), a useful and decorative device often made of feathers (羽).



Fig. 116



扇动

shàn dòng

fan: flap

扇惑

shàn huò

mentis; agitate

扇形

shàn xíng

fan-shaped

扇子

shàn zi

fan

扇门

yí shàn mén

a door

Example:

这扇子真美啊。

Zhè shàn zi zhēn měi a.

It means, "This is a beautiful fan."

鱼

(魚)

yú fish

𩺰 𩺱 𩺲 𩺳 𩺴 𩺵



𩺰 is a pictograph of the fish, whose predatory habits prompt man to snap at his own fishy way of life: "Big fish eat small fish; small fish eat water insects; water insects eat weeds and mud." The tail of the fish ... proves to be its fiery end, being a form of fire (火), presumably kindled as man prepares to eat big fish.



1946

丿	㇏	㇏	𠂆	𠂆	𠂆	𩺰	𩺱								
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

鱼翅

yú chì

shark's fin (a delicacy)

鱼饵

yú ěr

fish-bait

鱼钩

yú gōu

fish-hook

鱼雷

yú léi

torpedo

鱼鳞

yú lín

fish-scales

鱼群

yú qún

shoal of fish

鱼网

yú wǎng

fishing net

鱼肝油

yú gān yóu

cod-liver oil

鱼米之乡

yú mǐ zhī xiāng

district where fish and rice are abundant

Example:

鱼翅是珍贵的食品，

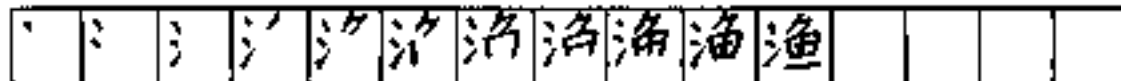
yú chì shì zhēn guì de shí pǐn

It means, "Shark's fin is an expensive delicacy."

渔 (漁) 漁 漁

Yú fishing

Fish (魚) and water (水) are requisites for fishing (漁). The ancient form for fishing reveals water teeming with fishes 漁. The modified form sees the number reduced to one, probably due to success in fishing 漁. Disclosed here is yet another form of fishing - without fish or water - but it doesn't look too successful.



渔村	yú cūn	fishing-village	渔利	yú lì	reap unfair gains
渔夫	yú fū	fisherman	渔民	yú mín	fisherman
渔港	yú gǎng	fishing port	渔业	yú yè	fishery
渔歌	yú gē	fisherman's song	渔舟	yú zhōu	fishing boat

Example

他是一个勤劳的渔夫。

Tā shì yí gè qín láo de yú fū.

It means, "He is a hardworking fisherman."

羊

YANG

sheep,
goat

羊 羊 羊 羊 羊

Because of its mild and gentle nature, the sheep (羊) is a fitting symbol for meekness. Its pictographic representations take on well-balanced forms. Early versions show frontal views of the head; later modifications fill in the horns, ears, legs and tail. When combined with other components, the tail is often left out: 𦍋.



羊角

yáng jiǎo

ram's horn

羊毛

yáng máo

sheep's wool

羊排

yáng pái

mutton chop

羊皮

yáng pí

sheep skin

羊群

yáng qún

flock of sheep

羊肉

yáng ròu

mutton

羊毛衫

yáng máo shān

knitted sweater

羊肠小道

yáng cháng xiǎo
dào

winding path

羊毛出在
羊身上

yáng máo chū
zài yáng shēn
shàng

in the long run,
you pay for
whatever you
are given

羔羊

gāo yáng

lamb; kid

Example:

他不吃羊肉

tā bù chī yáng ròu

It means, "He does not eat mutton."

羔

GĀO

lamb;
kid

A lamb (羔) is represented by a sheep (羊) ready to stand on its feet (𠂔). As the four strokes (𠂔) stand for fire, the lamb is also a sheep (羊) ready for roasting on the fire (𠂔).



美



羔皮
羔羊
羔子

gāo pí
gāo yáng
gāo zǐ

lamb skin
kid; lamb
lamb; fawn

Example:

母羊不见了羔羊。

mǔ yáng bú jiàn le gāo yáng

It means, "The ewe has lost her lamb."

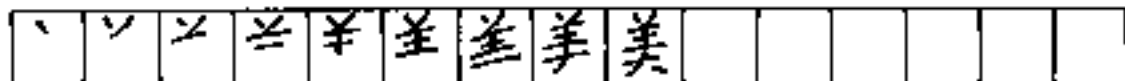
美

Měi

beautiful,
admirable

美

This beautifully proportioned character is shaped from 羊 (sheep) and 大 (big). 大 originally represented a person grown big; 羊 is an animal admired for its peace-loving virtue. Ideographically, a mature person (大) who has the mild and gentle disposition of a sheep (羊) is regarded as beautiful, admirable: 美.



美观
美国
美好
美化
美景
美丽
美梦
美妙

měi guān
Měi Guó
měi hǎo
měi huà
měi jǐng
měi lì
měi mèng
měi miào

nice looking
America
fine; glorious
beautify
beautiful scenery
beautiful
fond dream
splendid

美满
美术
美味
美元
美联社
美容院
美学家

měi mǎn
měi shù
měi wèi
měi yuán
Měi Lián Shè
měi róng yuàn
měi shù jiā

happy
fine arts
delicious
U.S. dollar
Associated Press
beauty-parlour
artist

Example:

她的脸型很美。

Tā de liǎn xíng hěn měi.

It means, "She has a pretty face."

洋

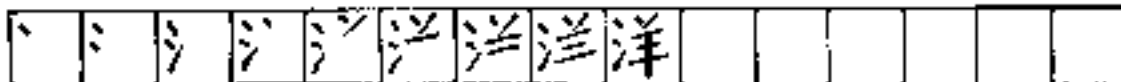
YANG

ocean;
foreign

Although 羊 is a phonetic, it also serves to emphasize the meaning of this character for ocean: 洋. Sheep, being inland animals, graze on land away from the ocean; so water (氵) far away from the sheep (羊) came to mean ocean: 洋. By extension, 洋 also means "foreign", i.e., far away beyond the ocean.



PEIM



洋葱
洋服

yáng cōng

yáng fú

onion

Western-style
clothes

洋行
洋化
洋灰
洋货

yáng háng

yáng huà

yáng huī

yáng huò

foreign firm

westernized

cement

imported goods;
foreign goods

洋人
洋溢
洋洋得意

yáng rén

yáng yì

yáng yáng dé yì

foreigner

fill with

be very pleased
with oneself

海洋
大西洋
太平洋

hǎi yáng

Dà Xī Yáng

Tài Píng Yáng

ocean

Atlantic Ocean

Pacific Ocean

Example:

他的女朋友很洋化。

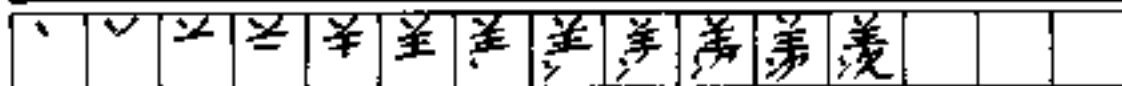
Tā de nǚ péng yǒu hěn yáng huà.

It means, "His girlfriend is very westernized."

羨 (羨)

XIÀN covet; desire

This ideograph: 羨, expressive of intense desire, combines 羊 (sheep) with 羨 (an old form of 涎, meaning saliva). 涎, therefore, signifies the mouth watering (涎) at the sight or smell of mutton, the flesh of sheep (羊). Hence, the extended meaning: to covet or desire.



羡慕 xiàn mù admire; envy

Example:

他很羡慕我有这么一个好教师。

Tā hěn xiàn mù wǒ yǒu zhè yàng yí gè hǎo jiāoshī.

It means, "He envied me for having such a good teacher."

火

HUǒ

fire

火 is a pictograph of fire, produced by rubbing stones together. A terrifying force of nature, it brings both calamity and comfort to man. Like burning houses that often flare up in life, fire is easy to kindle, but difficult to handle, as the proverb warns: "You can't use paper to wrap up fire."



火柴
火车
火光
大海
火花
火化
火箭
火警

huǒ chái
huǒ chē
huǒ guāng
huǒ hǎi
huǒ huā
huǒ huà
huǒ jiàn
huǒ jīng

match
train
flame, blaze
sea of fire
sparks
cremate
rocket
fire alarm

火力
火炉
火气
火山
火星
火药
火灾

huǒ lì
huǒ lú
huǒ qì
huǒ shān
huǒ xīng
huǒ yào
huǒ zāi

fire-power
furnace
temper
volcano
Mars
gun-powder
fire (as a calamity)

Example:

火车上人山人海。

Huǒ chē shàng rén shān rén hǎi.

It means, "The train is crowded with people."

炎

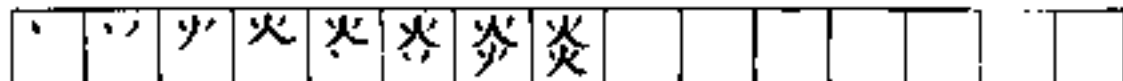
YÁN

blaze; flame

The character for flame (炎) itself was formed from two fires (火), one atop the other. Because of its inflammatory nature, it may well spread like wildfire and the people around it would suffer from the burning heat.



PENG



炎凉

yán liáng

cold-shoulder

炎热

yán rè

burning (or
scorching) hot

炎夏

yán xià

hot summer

炎炎

yán yán

sweltering

炎往

yán wǎng

inflammation

Example:

今天天气很炎热

Jīn tiān tiān qì hěn yán rè

It means, "The weather is scorching hot today."

谈 (談)

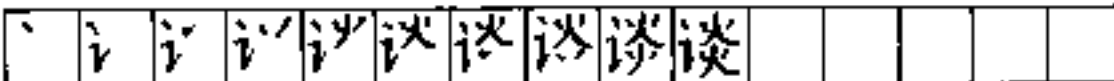
谈, or words (言) beside flame (火), aptly signifies an informal chat by the fire — idle talk in which much is spoken but little is said. Mischief arising from aimless opening of the mouth and thoughtless wagging of the tongue sparks the old saying: "Much talk brings on trouble; much food brings on indigestion."

TÁN

chat;
talk



PEW



谈到
谈话
谈论
谈判
谈天

tán dào
tán huà
tán lùn
tán pàn
tán tiān

speak of
talk; converse
discuss
negotiate
chit-chat

谈心
谈何容易

tán xīn
tán hé róng yì

heart-to-heart talk
easier said than
done; by no
means easy

谈笑风生

tán xiào fēng
shēng

light-hearted and
interesting talk

Example.

我们在树荫下谈天。

Wǒ men zài shù yīn xià tán tiān

It means, "We chit-chat under the shady tree."

灰 (灰)

HUI ashes; dust; lime

Fire (火) in hand (扌) stands for ashes or dust: 灰 — the product of fire (火) that can be handled or taken in the hand (扌). 灰 also includes lime (obtained by burning limestone) which, though easily handled (扌), apparently contains fire (火), generating heat when mixed with water.



一 厂 尸 尸 尸 灰

灰暗	huī àn	dim; obscure
灰尘	hūi chén	dust
灰色	hūi sè	grey
灰心	hūi xīn	disheartened
灰心丧气	hūi xīn sàng qì	downhearted

Example:

橱上有一层灰尘。

Chú shàng yǒu yì céng hūi chén

It means, "There is a layer of dust on top of the cupboard."

灾 (災)

ZĀI calamity

Man, plagued by floods (水, streams) and fire (火), once regarded these unforeseen calamities as divine judgement: 災. The modern simplified character for calamity: 灾, however, sets matters straight by locating fire (火) under roof (宀) – pinning the responsibility onto man himself.



灾害	zāi wài	calamity; disaster	灾民	zāi mīn	victims of natural calamity
灾患	zāi huàn	calamity	灾难	zāi nǎn	misfortune
灾荒	zāi huāng	famine	灾殃	zāi yāng	calastrophe
灾祸	zāi huò	disaster	天灾	tiān zāi	natural disaster
灾情	zāi qíng	condition of a disaster	水灾	shuǐ zāi	flood
灾区	zāi qū	disaster area			

Example:

新加坡很少发生水灾。

Xīn jiā pō hěn shǎo fā shēng shuǐ zāi

It means, "Floods seldom occur in Singapore."

煽

SHĀN

incite; instigate; stir up

This ideograph literally implies fanning (扇) a fire (火). Figuratively, it means to excite or incite, to instigate or stir up: 煽. Our picture shows a fire-brand demonstrating her own interpretation of the proverb: "Fuel alone will not ignite a fire."

煽



PANG

一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十 十一 十二 十三 十四 十五 十六 十七 十八 十九 二十 二十一 二十二 二十三 二十四 二十五 二十六 二十七 二十八 二十九 三十 三十一 三十二 三十三 三十四 三十五 三十六 三十七 三十八 三十九 四十 四十一 四十二 四十三 四十四 四十五 四十六 四十七 四十八 四十九 五十 五十一 五十二 五十三 五十四 五十五 五十六 五十七 五十八 五十九 六十 六十一 六十二 六十三 六十四 六十五 六十六 六十七 六十八 六十九 七十 七十一 七十二 七十三 七十四 七十五 七十六 七十七 七十八 七十九 八十 八十一 八十二 八十三 八十四 八十五 八十六 八十七 八十八 八十九 九十 九十一 九十二 九十三 九十四 九十五 九十六 九十七 九十八 九十九 一百

煽动

shān dòng

instigate; incite

煽乱

shān luàn

stir up; revolt

煽动者

shān dòng zhě

agitator

煽风点火

shān fēng diǎn

create trouble

huǒ

Example:

他煽动旧同学欺侮新同学。

He shān dòng jiù tóngxué qī wǔ xīn tóngxué.

It means, "He instigated his classmates to bully the new student."

烧 (燒)

SHĀO burn; bake; roast

烧 probably originated from the firing (火) of earthenware (土) stacked upon a support (元) in a kiln. The phonetic: 尧, showing earth (土) piled up high on a pedestal (元) denotes high or great. Combination with the radical: 火 (fire) generates the character: 烧 which stands for the great heat required in baking, roasting or burning: 烧.



丶 丿 灬 火 灶 炆 炆 炆 炆 炆 烧

烧毁	shāo huǐ	destroy by fire
烧火	shāo huǒ	make a fire
烧焦	shāo jiāo	scorch
烧肉	shāo ròu	roast meat
烧伤	shāo shāng	injury from burns

烧死	shāo sǐ	be burnt to death
烧香	shāo xiāng	incense-offering
烧窑	shāo yáo	kiln
发烧	fā shāo	fever

Example:

她常去寺庙烧香

tā cháng qù sì nà shāo xiāng

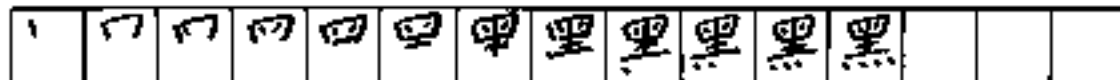
It means, "She often goes to the temple to offer incense."

Hēi

black

The original seal form depicted a flame (炎) under a smoke vent or window (囧), blackening it (熏) with soot. Squaring the window, or modifying the flame, produced the modern character: 黑, meaning black.

Original seal script form of 黑 (black): 炎 (flame) under 囧 (smoke vent/window), blackening it (熏) with soot. Squaring the window, or modifying the flame, produced the modern character: 黑, meaning black.



黑暗

hēi'àn

dark

黑白

hēi bái

black and white

黑板

hēi bǎn

blackboard

黑人

hēi rén

Black people

黑色

hēi sè

black

黑市

hēi shì

black market

黑心

hēi xīn

black-hearted; evil-minded

黑夜

hēi yè

dark night

黑名单

hēi míng dān

blacklist

黑啤酒

hēi pí jiǔ

stout

乌黑

wū hēi

jet black

Example:

她怕黑暗。

tā pà hēi'àn

It means, "She is afraid of the dark."

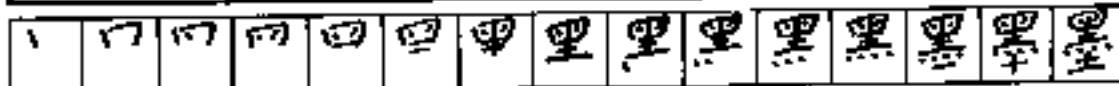
墨

MÒ

ink;

Chinese ink

Chinese ink: 墨 was first made by mixing smokes-soot (烟) with gum to produce an earthy (土) substance. The mixture was then moulded and hardened into a solid stick, ready to be ground with water to form live ink. Even though a little ink is better than a good memory, man apparently prefers to heed the proverb: "He who is near ink gets black," committing it to memory.



墨迹
墨水
墨戏
墨鱼

mò jì

mò shuǐ

mò yàn

mò yú

ink mark

ink

inkstone

inkfish; cuttlefish

墨汁

墨水笔

mò zhī

mò shuǐ bǐ

prepared Chinese
ink

fountain pen

Example.

我喜欢用墨水笔写字。

Wǒ xǐ huān yòng mò shuǐ bǐ xiě zì.

It means, "I like to write with a fountain pen."

点

(點)

DIÀN point; spot; dot

The phonetic component: 占 means to divine, to ask about or interpret orally (口) the cracks (卜) of a heated tortoise shell — to point out the unknown. Adding the radical component: 黑 (black) emphasizes the point with black. Hence: 點, a black point, a spot or dot. The simplified version comes even more to the point: 点 by setting divination (卜) on fire (灬).



丨	卜	𠂇	占	占	占	点	点						
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

点菜

diǎn cài

choose dishes from
a menu

点燃

qiān rán

kindle

点滴

diǎn dī

droplet

点头

niǎn tóu

nod one's head

点火

diǎn huǒ

light a fire

点心

xiǎo xīn

light refreshments

点名

diǎn míng

call the roll

点缀

diǎn zhuì

decorate

Example:

他把蜡烛点燃了

tā bǎ lì zhú diǎn rán le

It means, "He lighted the candle."

叶

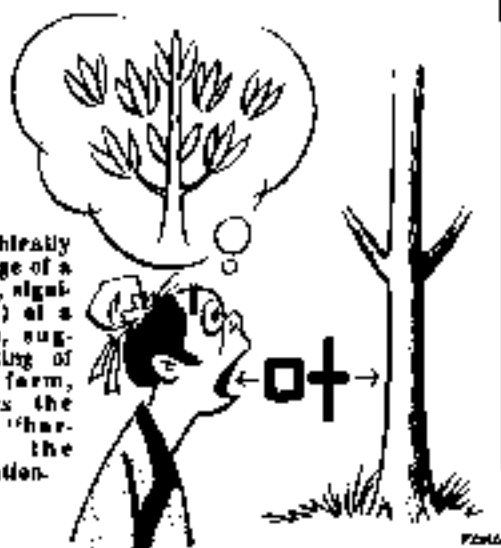
(葉)

yè

leaves



THE seal form: 葉 graphically portrays the luxuriant foliage of a tree. The regular form: 葉, signifying the generations (叶) of a tree-like (木) plant (艹), suggests the seasonal sprouting of leaves. The simplified form, however, simply borrows the character: 叶 (originally "harmony") and leaves the harmonizing to the imagination.



F2266



叶柄

yè bǐng

leafstalk

叶子

yè zi

leaf

叶落归根

yè luò guī gēn

falling leaves settle
on their roots—a
person residing
elsewhere finally
returns to his
ancestral home

枫叶

fēng yè

maple leaf

Example:

这片叶子好大啊！

Zhè piàn yè zi hǎo dà ā!

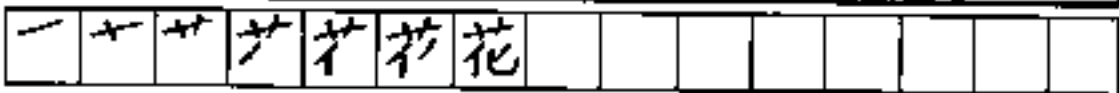
It means, "What a big leaf!"

花

HUA

flowers

ORIGINALLY, 化 pictured a man tumbling heels over head, indicating a complete change — a metamorphosis. With the plant radical (艹) grafted on, 花 assumed a different character and blossomed into a flower: 花 = that part of a plant (艹) which is strikingly transformed (化) or changed from the other parts.



花瓣
花边
花丛
花丛
花篮
花瓶
花圈
花生
花园

huā bàn
huā biān
huā cōng
huā cōng
huā lán
huā píng
huā quān
huā shēng
huā yuán

petal
lace
flowers and plants
flower
flower basket
vase
wreath
peanut
garden

花生米
花花公子
花花绿绿
花花世界

huā shēng mǐ
huā huā gōng zǐ
huā huā lǜ lǜ
huā huā shì jiè

shelled peanut
dandy; duxcomb;
top
colourful
the dazzling
human world
with its myriad
temptations; this
mortal world

Example:

这朵花很漂亮。

zhè duǒ huā ér hěn yěi lǚ

It means, "This flower is very beautiful."

茶

chá

tea

茶



THE tea herb, picked from a tree-like (木) plant (茶), is fermented and dried under cover (人) before being brewed as tea: 茶. A beverage originally used as medicine, 茶 refreshes and soothes. Even when trouble brews, an amiable settlement can be effected over a cup of tea, as the proverb hints: "When you have tea and wine, you have many friends."



PANG

一 十 廿 卅 肆 伍 陆 柒 茶

茶杯
茶匙
茶点
茶巾
茶具
茶壶
茶会

chá bēi
chá chí
chá diǎn
chá jīn
chá jù
chá hú
chá huì

teacup
teaspoon
refreshments
tea cloth
tea-set
teapot
tea-party

茶钱
茶水
茶巾
茶座
茶园
喝茶

chá qián
chá shuǐ
chá jīn
chá zuò
chá yuán
hē chá

tip
tea or boiled water
tea-leaves
tea-house
tea plantation
drink tea

Example.

我 喜 欢 喝 茶。

Wǒ xǐ huān hē chá

It means, "I like to drink tea."

竹

zhú

bamboo



ORIGINALLY written: 𥵹, the character for bamboo is a pictograph of two whorls of bamboo leaves. Unlike a wayward man, the bamboo grows straight and upright into a useful and decorative plant. "The bamboo stick makes a good child," so says the proverb. Our picture demonstrates how - starting right from the bottom.



竹竿
竹林
竹笋
竹子

zhú gān
zhú lín
zhú sǔn
zhú zǐ

bamboo pole
bamboo grove
bamboo shoot
bamboo

竹叶青
山竹

zhú yè qīng
shān zhú

bamboo-leaf-green
liqueur
mangosteen

Example:

这椅子是竹做的。

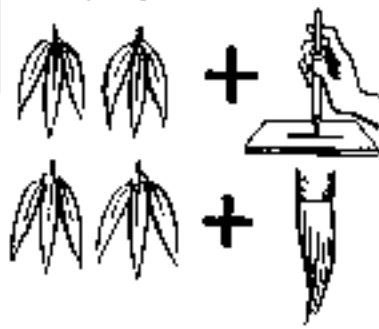
zhè yǐ zi shì zhú zuò de

It means, "This chair is made of bamboo."

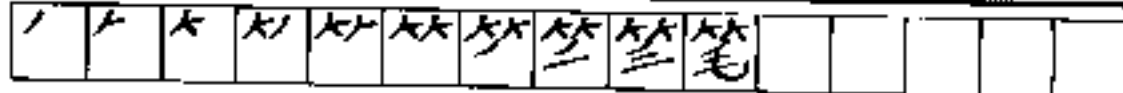
笔 (筆)

bǐ pen; pencil

A hand (手) holding a stylus (丨), scratching lines (一) on a tablet (一), symbolizes a writing stylus: 筆. Bamboo (木) added to stylus (丨) produces "pen": 笔. Bamboo (木) combined with hair (毛) also makes "pen": 笔. Although both the regular 筆 and simplified 笔 can be used to write "pen", the saying goes: "A pen cannot write two words at the same time."



= 筆
= 笔



笔调	bǐ diào	tone of writing
笔法	bǐ fǎ	technique of writing
笔画	bǐ huà	strokes of a Chinese character
笔记	bǐ jì	notes
笔迹	bǐ jì	writing
笔尖	bǐ jiān	pen nib

笔名	bǐ míng	pseudonym
笔墨	bǐ mò	pen and ink
笔试	bǐ shì	written examination
笔误	bǐ wù	slip of the pen
笔战	bǐ zhàn	written polemics
钢笔	gāng bǐ	fountain pen
铅笔	qiān bǐ	pencil

Example:

他的笔迹很美。

Tā de bǐ jì hěn měi.

It means, "He has beautiful handwriting."

笑

xiào

laugh, smile

笑 has an amusing origin. The phonetic element 笑 depicts a man (人) inclining his head (亠) to laugh more easily, suggesting rocking or shaking. The radical component 艹 likes such laughter to the swaying of bamboo (竹) in the breeze. But laughing or smiling is serious business, as implied in the proverb: "A man without a smiling face should not open a shop."



FA 100



笑纳

xiào nà

laughing-stock

笑话

xiào huà

joke

笑剧

xiào jù

farce

笑脸

xiào liǎn

smiling face

笑料

xiào liào

laughing-stock

笑当

xiào dāng

deride and taunt

笑容

xiào róng

smiling expression

笑哈哈

xiào hā hā

laughingly

笑面虎

xiào miàn hǔ

smiling tiger

笑嘻嘻

xiào xī xī

grinning

笑里藏刀

xiào lǐ cáng dāo

hide a dagger in a smile; (figuratively) with murderous intent behind one's smile

笑脸常开

xiào liǎn cháng kāi

put on a smiling face always

笑逐颜开

xiào zhú yán kāi

beam with smiles

Example:

他喜欢讲笑话，

tā xǐ huān jiǎng xiào huà

It means, "He likes to joke."

禾

HÉ

grain

禾, the radical for "grain", is a tree (木) with the top bent over to represent the head of a ripened grain. The grain-stalk provides, not only food for the body, but also food for thought: the more grain it bears in the head, the more it bends in humility.

禾禾禾



P. 100



禾义

hé chā

pitchfork

禾虫

hé chóng

harvest grub

禾苗

hé miáo

grain seedling

禾黍

hè shǔ

millet

禾穗

hé suì

a ear (of rice grain)

Example:

禾苗已经长大了。

hé miáo yǐ jīng zhǎng dà le

It means, "The grain seedlings have fully grown."

秃

tū bald; bare

This ideograph likens the top or head of man (人) to a field of grain (禾) after the harvest. Hence: 秃, meaning bare or bald. We show here man in the autumn of his life — after his very last harvest.



●●●●●

丿	乚	𠂇	𠂇	𠂇	𠂇						
---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

不答

tū bǐ

bald writing brush -
(figuratively) poor
writing ability

无头

tū hóu

bald head

秃子

બી ઝં

baldhead

光秃秃

၎င်းတို့သည် နေရာအနှံ့တွင် နေထိုင်ကြသည်။

bare; bald

走四

လှိုင်

bald

秀山

tū shān

barren hill

உதாரணம்:

他的头光秃秃，

Tū de lǚ jīng bā zì

It means, "His head is bald."

苏 (蘇)

sū

revive



The original character: 蘇 suggests reviving by means of a wholesome meal of fish (魚) and grain (禾). This was reclassified with the radical for grass (艹) — the weed that revives easily: 艹. The simplified form completes the revival with an injection of "strength" (力), equally balanced on both sides: 苏.



P286

一 十 艹 苏 苏 苏 苏

苏打

sū dǎ

soda

苏丹

Sū dān

Sultan; Sudan (in Africa)

苏联

Sū lián

Soviet Union

苏息

sū xī

rest

苏醒

sū xǐng

revive, regain consciousness

苏州

Sū zhōu

Suzhou (Szechow), China

苏格兰

Sū gé lán

Scotland

Example:

她苏醒了。

Tā sū xǐng gué lái le

It means, "She has regained consciousness."

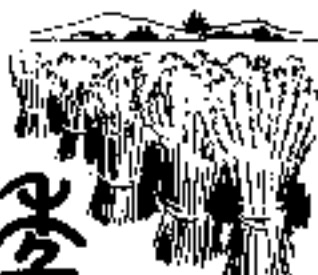
年

Nián
year

"Flowers bloom year by year with the same beauty, but man changes from year to year." Man's fickleness is evident in his quest for a suitable character for "year".



The original pictograph 𠂔 showed a man bearing a sheaf of grain — the job of the year.



This was replaced by an ideograph: 秊, combining 千 (thousand) and 禾 (grain), i.e., the thousand stalks — the harvest of a year.



Then came 年, based on the radical: 干 (shield), followed by the contraction: 年. Figuring these out would be quite a task — the work of a year.

PM 11.11



年报	nián bào	annual report
年初	nián chū	beginning of a year
年代	nián dài	age, years, era
年底	nián dǐ	end of a year
年度	nián dù	year
年份	nián fèn	particular year
年糕	nián gāo	New Year cake made of glutinous rice flour

年关	nián guān	end of a year
年龄	nián líng	age
年边	nián biān	aged
年年	nián nián	every year
年轻	nián qīng	young
年夜	nián yè	eve of the lunar New Year
成年	chéng nián	adult, all year round
新年	xīn nián	New Year

Example:

我很喜欢吃年糕。

wǒ hěn xǐ huān chī nián gāo

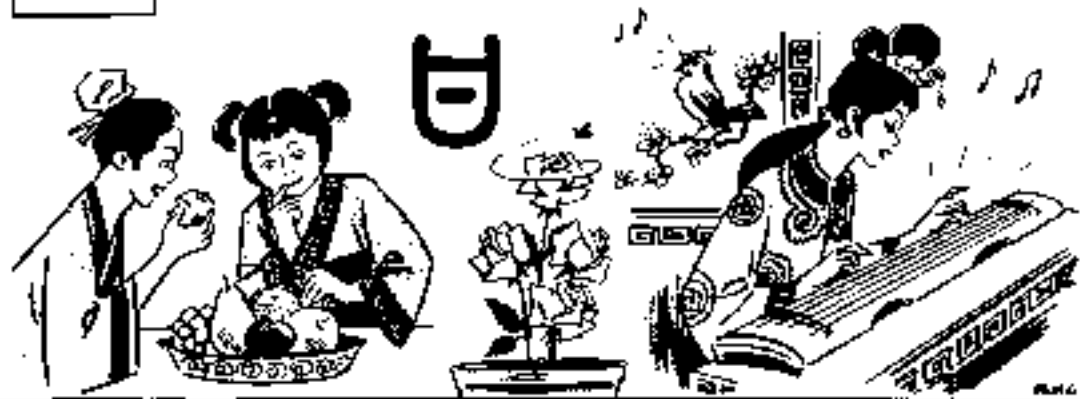
It means, "I like to eat New Year cake."

甘

GĀN

sweet

"Sweetness" is handled with taste in the proverb: "All food tastes sweet to those who are hungry." The radical for "sweet" pictures the mouth (口) with something (-) in it worth holding — something sweet: 甘. 甘 can be extended to include anything pleasing to the senses, as illustrated here.



一	十	廿	甘	甘										
---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

甘草	gān cǎo	licorice root
甘苦	gān kǔ	weal and woe
甘露	gān lù	sweet dew
甘美	gān měi	sweet and refreshing
甘心	gān xīn	willingly; readily

甘愿	gān yuàn	readily
甘蔗	gān zhē	sugarcane
甘心情愿	gān xīn qíng yuàn	willingly and gladly
苦尽甘来	kǔ jìn gān lái	after suffering comes happiness

Example:

我 喜 欢 喝 甘 蔗 汁。

Wǒ xǐ huān hē gān zhē zhī.

It means, "I like to drink sugarcane juice."

香

XIĀNG

fragrant

香 香 香



The seal form of this radical for fragrance represents the sweet (甘) odour of millet (黍) undergoing fermentation: 香. Grain (禾), the essence of millet grain (黍), was distilled for the modified version: 香, leading to the modern form: 香.



FZHS

一	二	千	禾	禾	香	香	香						
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

香肠
香菜
香粉
香姑
香花
香蕉
香料

xiāng cháng
xiāng cài
xiāng fěn
xiāng gū
xiāng huā
xiāng jiāo
xiāng liào

sausage
coriander
face powder
mushroom
fragrant flower
banana
spice

香气
香水
香味
香烟
香皂
香扶酒
香喉吻

xiāng qì
xiāng shuǐ
xiāng wèi
xiāng yān
xiāng zào
xiāng fú jiǔ
xiāng hóu wǔ

aroma
perfume
sweet smell
cigarette
soap
champagne
sweet-smelling

Example:

这朵花好香啊！

Zhè huā huā hǎo xiāng ā!

It means, "What a sweet-scented flower!"

牛

niú

ox; cow; bull

牛



THE seal form of this character is a pictograph of the ox, characterized by two prominent horns: 𠂇. Man's slave for life, the cow or ox has been exploited to the bone for labour, meat, milk, leather, glue, manure, etc. Even the modern form: 牛 does not spare the poor animal its horn.



Fano

ノ	ㄣ	ㄣ	牛																
---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

牛痘
牛角
牛劲
牛马

niú dòu
niú jiǎo
niú jìn
niú mǎ

cowpox
ox-horn
great strength
oxen and horses
beasts of burden

牛奶
牛排

niú nǎi
niú pài

milk
beef steak

牛棚
牛脾气

niú péng
niú pí qì

cowshed
stubbornness,
obstinacy

牛肉

niú ròu

beef

牛尾

niú wěi

oxtail

牛仔褲

niú zǐ kù

jeans

Example:

多喝牛奶对身体有益。

Duō hē niú nǎi duì shēn tǐ yǒu yì.

It means, "Milk is good for the health."

件

Jiàn

piece;
article;
item

LAMENTING the injustice of class distinction, man drew a parallel from animal life: "The ox ploughs the field and the horse eats the grain." When it came to picking a classifier for things in general, he favoured representatives of the two nobler classes: man himself (亻) and his restless ox (牛) and came up with 件: a classifier for anything from man (亻) to beast (牛).



丿 亻 亻 亻 亻 件

案件

àn jiàn

legal case

密件

mì jiàn

confidential
document

事件

shì jiàn

matter; event;
affair

文件

wén jiàn

document

一件行李

yī jiàn xíng lí

piece of luggage

Example:

他的抽屉里有很多机密文件。

tā de chōu ti li hǎi hǎi duō jī mì wén jiàn

It means, "There are many confidential documents in his drawer."

牢

LÁO

cattle pen;
prison

牢



THE seal form 牢 pictures a padlock (𠄎) confining an ox (牛) after the day's hard labour. The modern form 牢 successfully puts a roof (宀) over the beast (牛). By extension, 牢 represents a prison for the incarceration of "beasts" of human society who are also in for "hard labour".



FAMG

牢固
牢记
牢牢
牢骚láo gù
láo jì
láo láo
láo sāofirm; secure
remember well
firmly, safely
grumbling;
complaint牢狱; 监牢
牢不可破
坐牢láo yù; jiān láo
láo bù kě pò
zuò láoprison; jail
unbreakable
be in prison

Example:

他因犯罪而被判坐牢。

Tā yīn fǎi zuì ér bèi pàn zuò láo.

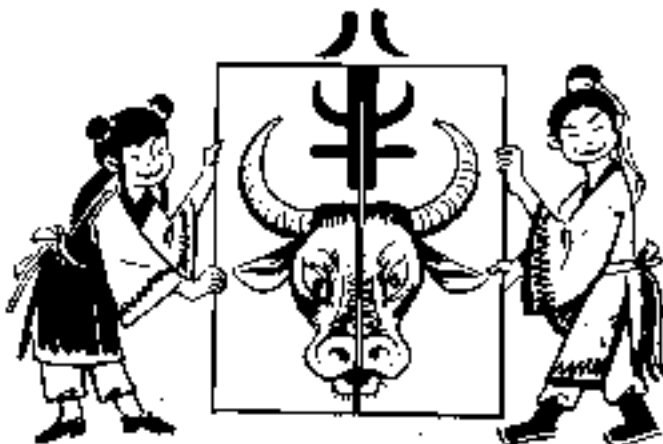
It means, "He was sentenced to jail."

半

BÀN

half

THIS character originated from the butcher's practice of dividing (半) an ox (牛) into two halves, in all its length, before cutting up. 牛 was modified to 半 to facilitate exact division. Hence: 半, meaning "half". Even though it is easy to split one ox into two halves, the saying proves true: "You cannot get two skins from one ox."



PH 6



半边

bàn biān

one side (of something)

半途

bàn tú

halfway

半岛

bàn dǎo

peninsula

半夜

bàn yè

midnight

半份

bàn fèn

half-price

半官方

bàn guān fāng

semi-official

半票

bàn piào

half-price ticket

半决赛

bàn jué sài

semi-finals

半生

bàn shēng

half a lifetime

半斤八两

bàn jīn bā liǎng

not much to choose between the two

半数

bàn shù

half the number

半途而废

bàn tú ér fèi

give up halfway

半天

bàn tiān

half of the day

Example:

他做事总是半途而废。

Tā zuò shì zǒng shì bàn tú ér fèi.

It means, "He always gives up his work halfway."

伴

BÀN

companion;
associate;
mate

TEK Ideograph: 伴 is made up of man (亻) and half (半), suggesting that the single man is but half of a pair. To attain "oneness" another half, a complement, is needed. Hence: 伴, meaning companion, associate or mate. In the choice of a better half, let man take heed: "Tiger and deer do not walk together."



René

丿 亻 亻 亻 伴 伴 伴

伴唱	bàn chàng	vocal accompaniment	伴隨	bàn suí	accompany, follow
伴侶	bàn lǚ	companion; partner	伴奏	bàn zǒu	accompany with musical instruments
伴娘	bàn niáng	bridesmaid, maid-of-honour	做伴	zuò bàn	keep somebody company

Example

她唱歌時需要有人伴奏。

Tā chàng gē shí xū yào yǒu rén bàn zǒu

It means, "Whenever she sings, she needs instrumental accompaniment."

告

GÀO

indict;
tell;
inform

ORIGINALLY 告 means to indict or accuse, i.e., do with the mouth (口) what the ox (牛) does with the horns to gore. By extension it also means to tell, inform or even to warn. So, before starting to gore like an ox, be warned: "Man knows not his own fault; the ox knows not its strength."



ノ	人	仁	牛	告	告														
---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

告别
告吹
告辞

gào bié
gào chuī
gào cí

bid farewell to
fizzle out; fail
take leave (of
one's host)

告退
告知
告状

gào tuì
gào zhī
gào zhuàng

ask for leave to
withdraw from a
meeting
inform

告发
告假
告示
告诉
自告奋勇

gào fā
gào jià
gào shì
gào sù
zì gào fèn yǒng

report an offence
ask for leave
official notice
tell
volunteer to do
something

警告
不吉而别

jǐng gào
bù jí ér bié

warning
leaving without
saying goodbye

Example:

请你告诉我怎样去植物园。
Qǐng nǐ gào sù wǒ zěn yàng qù Zhū Wù Yuán?

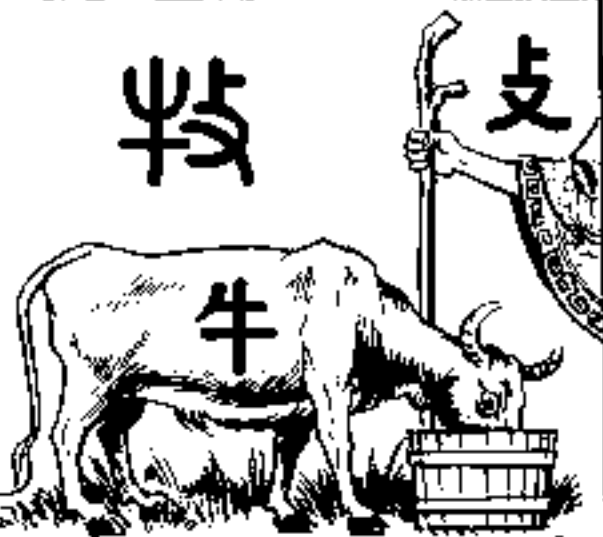
It means, "Will you please tell me the way to the Botanic Gardens?"

牧

mù

tend (cattle)

THIS phonetic: 攴 is a modified version of 攴 (oversee), depicting right hand (又) wielding a rod (卜). The radical: 牛 (cattle) added to 攴 (oversee) forms the ideograph: 牧, meaning to oversee cattle. Such oversight teaches man the futility of brute force against will power. In the words of the proverb: "If an ox won't drink, you can't make him bend his head."



FANG

ノ	一	牛	牛	牛	牧	牧	牧								
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

牧草
牧场
牧放
牧歌
牧民
牧区

mù cǎo
mù chǎng
mù fàng
mù gē
mù mín
mù qū

forage grass
grazing land
tend, herd
pastoral song
herdsman
pastoral area

牧师
牧童
牧业
牧羊人
游牧生活

mù sī
mù tóng
mù yè
mù yáng rén
yóu mù shēng huó

pastor, clergyman
shepherd boy
animal husbandry
shepherd
nomadic life

Example

牧童在草原上牧羊。

Mù tóng zài cǎo yuán shàng mù yáng.

It means, "The shepherd boy is tending sheep on the plain."

肉

RÒU

flesh; meat

THE character for meat: 肉 is composed of pieces of dried meat (𪚩) wrapped in a bundle (冂). From the ancient custom of offering such dried meat to the teacher came the term: "dried-meat money" - a teacher's pay.



F4 H4

1	冂	内	内	肉	肉														
---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

肉饼
肉搏
肉店
肉干
肉麻

ròu bǐng
ròu bó
ròu diàn
ròu gān
ròu má

meat pie
fight hand-to-hand
butcher's (shop)
barbequed meat
nauseating,
disgusting
steak
sliced meat

肉体
肉丸
肉刑
牛肉
羊肉
猪肉

ròu tǐ
ròu wán
ròu xíng
niú ròu
yáng ròu
zhū ròu

human body
meatball
corporal punish-
ment
beef
mutton
pork

Example:

马来人 不吃 猪肉。

Mǎ lái rén bù chī zhū ròu

It means, "The Malays do not eat pork."

胖

PÀNG

[21]; Peshy 9

THE original idea of 半 is "half a bull", denoting size. The radical: 月 (flesh) supplements the thought, indicating fleshiness. Hence 胖: fleshy or fat. Recklessness and other bovine characteristics are not altogether undesirable according to the proverb "You win a cat and lose a cow."²



Page 44

丨	冂	月	月	月	月	𠄎	𠄎	𠄎
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

肝火
发胖

ပံ့ပိုးမှု ၃၊
တိ ပံ့ပိုးမှု

fat person
put on weight

Example:

他胖起来了。

18 pàng qí lái lè

It means, "He is putting on weight."

有

yǒu

have



EARLY forms portrayed a hand (又) grasping a piece of meat (肉), signifying to possess or to have: 𠂔. Because of the resemblance between meat (肉) and moon (月), man soon lost sight of meat and reached for the moon, promising it to anyone he wishes to possess. Today, with hand (又) on moon (月), he classified 有 under "moon".



一 才 有 有 有

有功 yǒu gōng

have rendered
great service

有关 yǒu guān

related to; have
something to do
with

有害 yǒu hài

harmful,
detrimental

有理 yǒu lǐ

reasonable

有利 yǒu lì

advantageous,
favourable

有力

yǒu lì

strong, powerful

有效

yǒu xiào

efficacious; valid

有机可乘

yǒu jī kě chéng

there's an opportu-
nity to take
advantage of

有利可图

yǒu lì kě tú

stand to gain

有目共睹

yǒu mù gòng dǔ

be there for all to
see

有求必应

yǒu qiú bì yìng

respond to every
plea

Example:

我没有汽车。

Méi yǒu qì chē

It means, "I don't have a car."

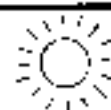
来

(來)

Lái

come

"He who sows his grain in the field puts his trust in heaven," as observed the proverb. A beautiful yield of grain was therefore gratefully acknowledged as having "come" from above. Thus 来, originally a pictograph of growing wheat or barley, came to stand for "come". The simplified form grafts rice (米) on to tree (木) to produce 来 — a character no less welcome.



Ren...



来宾

lái bīn

guest

来到

lái dào

arrive, come

来电

lái diàn

incoming telegram

来访

lái fǎng

come to visit

来回

lái huí

make a round trip

来件

lái jiàn

communication or parcel received

来客

lái kè

guest

来临

lái lín

approach; come

来年

lái nián

next year

来生

lái shēng

next life

来往

lái wǎng

come and go

来信

lái xìn

incoming letters

来源

lái yuán

source, origin

来日

lái rì

come from

来日方长

lái rì fāng cháng

there is ample time ahead

出来

chū lái

come out

Example:

这些水果是来自澳洲的。

Zhèxiē shuǐguǒ shì lái zì àu zhōu de

It means, "These fruits are from Australia."

本

BĚN

root;
origia;
source

本 本 本



本 is a pictograph of a tree (木) with the root and stump emphasized by a horizontal stroke, indicating the level of the earth (一). Although the root is the lowest part of the tree, it is at the highest value in the struggle for survival. With good reason, also, 本 is used as a classifier for books, the "root" of knowledge.

PLATO

一 十 才 木 本

本地
本分
本国
本行

běn dì
běn fèn
běn guó
běn háng

this locality
one's duty
one's own country
one's own
profession

本来 原本
本领
本能

běn lái; yuán běn
běn lǐng
běn néng

originally
skill; ability
instinct

本人
本身
本文
本性
本意
本义
本质
本子

běn rén
běn shēn
běn wén
běn xìng
běn yì
bēn yì
bēn zhì
bēn zì

I (me; myself)
inself; in itself
this text
natural instincts
original intention
original meaning
innate character
book; notebook

Example:

这件事情根本和我无关。

zhè jiàn shì qíng gēn běn wǔ wǒ wú guān

It means, "This matter has nothing to do with me at all."

果

610

from

THE earliest form was a stylized tree sporting a showy display of fruit: 實. As it grew mightier, it boasted of more fruit: 實 but these are not easily discernible in the modern form: 實. The proverb provides a clue to the missing fruit: "Though a tree grows to a thousand feet, its fruits will fall to earth again."



PCPD

1	口	月	日	旦	卑	果	果						
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

果断
果敢

quả đũa

reynolds:decisive

果眩

શાંતી સ્તંભ

revolute and
daring

果醬

quǐ jǐng

יצחק

畢茂

၅၀၀ ပဲ

skin of fruit

畢品

0000 0000

5 mi

里缺

ဝမ်းရောင်

as expected; sure
enough

果肉

Notes

North of town

果亦

गार्ड ऑफ

figure gain

果樹

ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਵੇ

1999

不同
果同

၁၀၆၆ နှစ်

asked

● 14
● 14

904 106
905 106

orchard
fruit

聚行
限有

— १ —

fruit

Example:

这果汁太甜了。

Zhāi guā zhī tài tiān lù !

It means, "This fruit juice is too sweet!"

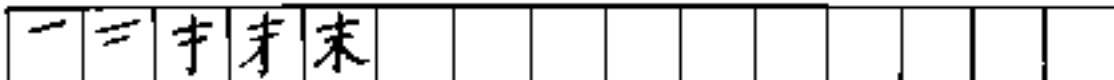
末

Mò

tip, end



JUST as the root (本) of a tree (木) is emphasized by a horizontal stroke (一) at its base, so the top of the tree (木) is indicated by a long horizontal line (一) at the top: 末, suggesting the tip or end - its limit. In growing upright like the tree, man also has his limit too, as the proverb puts it, "There are more trees upright than upright men."



末代	mò dài	last reign of a dynasty
末后	mò hòu	finally
末了	mò liǎo	last; finally
末路	mò lù	dead end
末期	mò qī	last stage; final phase

末日	mò rì	end; doomsday
周末	zhōu mò	weekend
末流	mò liú	the later and decadent stage of a school of thoughts, etc.

Example.

他喜欢在周末带孩子去玩。

Tā xǐ huān zài zhōu mò dài hái zǐ qù wán.

It means, "He likes to bring his children out during weekends."

未

wèi

not, not yet

THIS character is to be distinguished from 末 (mò) in that the horizontal stroke across the top is much shorter; 未. In 末 the top line is emphasized; in 未 it is subdued, not fully grown. Hence 未: not yet. Those who have "not yet" attained their end should exercise patience and take heart from the proverb: "A giant tree grows from a tiny bud."



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未必

wèi bì

not necessarily;
may not

未曾

wèi céng

have not; never

未定

wèi dìng

uncertain,
undecided

未婚

wèi hūn

unmarried

未来

wèi lái

future

未完

wèi wán

unfinished

未详

wèi xiáng

unknown

未知数

wèi zhī shù

unknown number

未雨绸缪

wèi yǔ chóu móu

take precautions

Example.

他对未来感到茫然。

Tā duì wèi lái gǎn dào máng rán

It means, "He is at a loss over his future."

妹

Nǚ

younger sister

妹

未, the phonetic, is a tree in full leaf and branch, but not fully mature and means "not". With the addition of the radical for girl (女), the character for "younger sister" is formed. Hence 妹: a girl (女) who has not yet (未) reached maturity.



PART 10

ㄣ	女	女	女	如	如	妹	妹								
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

妹夫

nǚ fū

younger sister's
husband

表妹

biǎo mèi

younger female
cousin

妹妹

mèi mei

younger sister

Example:

我的表妹长得很漂亮。

Wǒ de biǎo mèi zhǎng de hěn piào liang.

It means, "My cousin is very pretty."

姐

jiě

elder sister

女 is the radical for girl or woman. 且, the phonetic, is a picture of a stool (几) with two rings (二), standing on the ground (一), now borrowed for the conjunction: 且 "moreover". In our picture, the stool is not the only thing that distinguishes older sister from younger sister.



人	女	女	如	如	姐	姐	姐						
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

姐夫

jiě fu

elder sister's
husband

姐妹

jiě mèi

sisters

姐姐

jiě jie

elder sister

表姐

biǎo jiě

elder female cousin

Example:

我的姐姐喜欢吃榴莲。

wǒ de jiě jie xǐ huan chī liú lián

It means, "My elder sister likes durians."

爱

(愛)

Ài

love;
affection

THE regular form: 爱 is made up of 入 (breathe into), 心 (heart) and 友 (gracious motion), implying that what gives breath to the heart and inspires gracious motion is love — an idealistic love. The simplified form: 爱 highlights the role of friendship: 友 (hand + in hand = co-operation) — a more realistic love. But whatever form love may take, none can exact the selfless and unselfish love based on the principle extolled in the proverb: "Those who love others will themselves be loved."



爱国	ài guó	patriotic	爱情	ài qíng	love (between man and woman)
爱好	ài hào	interest; hobby	爱人	ài rén	sweetheart
爱护	ài hù	cherish; take good care of	爱惜	ài xī	treasure; cherish
爱怜	ài lián	show tender affection for	爱憎	ài zēng	love and hate
爱恋	ài liàn	be in love with	爱尔兰	Ài'ěr Lǎn	Ireland
爱慕	ài mù	adore; admire	爱不释手	ài bù shì shǒu	fondle; admiringly

Example.

小梅喜欢看爱情小说。

Xiǎo Meí xǐ hǎn kàn ài qíng xiǎo shuō

It means, "Xiao Mei likes to read romances."

忆 (憶)

yì recall; remember; reflect

THE phonetic 意 denotes sound (音) in the heart or mind (心), i.e., intention or thought. The addition of another heart (the radical 忄) to thought (意) suggests to think again — to reflect or remember 忆. As a mnemonic aid, the simplified form combines heart (忄) with second (二) producing 忆.



回忆
记忆
记忆力

huí yì
jì yì
jì yì lì

recollect
remember
memory

记忆犹新 jì yì yóu xīn

remain fresh in
one's memory

Example:

我的记忆力很差。

Wǒ de jì yì lì hěn chà.

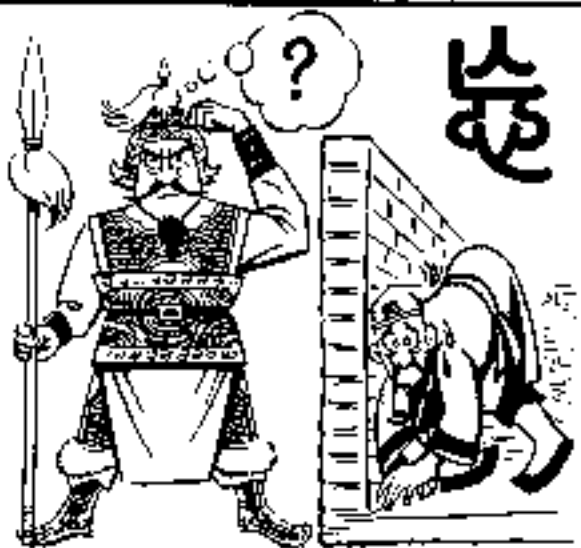
It means, "My memory is very poor."

忘

WÀNG

forget

THE old form of the phonetic 亡 represents someone entering (入) a place of concealment (宀), and means to disappear or perish (亡). The addition of the heart radical 忄 enforces the idea of "lost mind" or a mind that ceases to act; hence, to forget 忘. Minds should not be lost when it comes to the memorable proverb: "Forget favours given; remember favours received."



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亡	亡	忘	忘	忘							
---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

忘本
忘掉
忘怀
忘记
忘情
忘我

wàng běn
wàng diào
wàng huái
wàng jì
wàng qíng
wàng wǒ

forget one's origin
forget
forget
forget
be unmoved
selfless

忘形
忘年交

忘恩负义
健忘

wàng xíng
wàng nián jiāo

wàng ēn fù yì
jiàn wàng

be beside oneself
friendship between
generations
ungrateful
forgetful

Example:

别忘记替我买水果。

Bié wàng jì tì wǒ mǎi shuǐ guǒ

It means, "Don't forget to buy fruits for me."

匆 (忽)

CŪNG

haste; hurry; alarm

THE original ideograph depicted a restless heart (忄) prompting one to peep anxiously through the window (囧). Hence the meaning: haste, excitement or alarm. The haste shown even in the evolution of this exciting character — from the seal form: 𠂔 to 𠂔 and 𠂔 and, with utter disregard for the heart (忄), in the final form: 匆 — gives cause for alarm.



匆 匆 忽 忽

1942

丿 勹 勹 匆 匆

匆匆

cōng cōng

hurriedly

匆促

cōng cù

hastily

匆忙

cōng máng

hastily; hurried

Example:

他匆匆吃了早餐便上学。

Tā cōng cōng chī le zǎo cān biàn shàng xué.

It means, "After hurrying through his breakfast, he went to school."