
Chinese Language Flashcards

Information used in creating these flashcards was retrieved from WinFlash Flashcard Library: (<http://www.openwindow.com/pages/wfusers.htm>). The information was developed and contributed by Richard Harding Gardner. Additional symbols, definitions and tones taken from the Mandarin Tools Online Chinese-English Dictionary (<http://www.mandarintools.com/worddict.html>). There are 215 basic characters for beginning Chinese language students. The flashcards are color-coded, the simplified characters in pink and the traditional characters in yellow. These Chinese Language Flashcards are copyright protected. You may view, download, and print this material only for your personal, noncommercial use.

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Notes from Richard Harding Gardner

Credits:

I used TwinBridge Chinese system to insert the characters into Microsoft Windows 95 Paint to create the bmp graphic files. The mnemonics and etymology of the characters are taken from Volume 1 of FUN WITH CHINESE CHARACTERS (Federal Publications 1980 - ISBN# 981 01 3004 X). These three volumes published from a series of cartoons first published in the Singapore Strait Times, are a wonderfully light-hearted and charming introduction to Chinese characters and traditions. I recommend them as study aides or gifts.

nǚ

woman; girl;
daughter

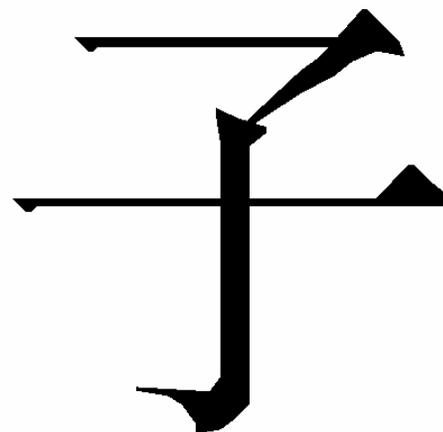
woman kneeling
or striding
forward

The character 女 (nǚ) is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It features a horizontal stroke at the top, followed by a vertical stroke that curves to the right, and a long, sweeping tail stroke that extends downwards and to the left.

zǐ

infant, child,
son

pictography of
arms out-
stretched
in swaddling
clothes

The character 子 (zǐ) is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It consists of a horizontal stroke at the top, a vertical stroke in the middle, and a horizontal stroke at the bottom. The vertical stroke has a small hook at the top and a small hook at the bottom.

hǎo

good, excel-
lent, right

woman + child

The character 好 (hǎo) is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It is a combination of the character 女 (nǚ) on the left and the character 子 (zǐ) on the right. The 女 part has a horizontal stroke at the top, and the 子 part has a horizontal stroke at the top and a horizontal stroke at the bottom.

ān

peace, con-
tentment

woman under
your roof

The character 安 (ān) is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It is a combination of the character 宀 (mián) on the left and the character 女 (nǚ) on the right. The 宀 part has a horizontal stroke at the top and a vertical stroke in the middle, and the 女 part has a horizontal stroke at the top and a horizontal stroke at the bottom.

zì

Letter, symbol,
character,
written word

books cherished like a
child in under
your roof

The character 字 is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It consists of a horizontal top bar with a small hook on the left and a small tail on the right. Below this bar is a vertical stem that curves slightly to the right at the bottom. A diagonal stroke crosses the stem from the upper left to the lower right, ending in a small hook.

shǐ

Pig, hog
swine

pictography of
belly, paws,
back and tail

The character 豕 is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It features a horizontal top bar with a small hook on the left and a small tail on the right. Below the bar is a vertical stem that curves to the right at the bottom. A diagonal stroke crosses the stem from the upper left to the lower right, ending in a small hook.

jiā

house, family

a pig under
your roof gave
prosperity

The character 家 is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It consists of a horizontal top bar with a small hook on the left and a small tail on the right. Below this bar is a vertical stem that curves slightly to the right at the bottom. A diagonal stroke crosses the stem from the upper left to the lower right, ending in a small hook.

jià

to marry a
man

adds home to
woman

an incentive
for a woman
to marry

The character 嫁 is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It consists of a horizontal top bar with a small hook on the left and a small tail on the right. Below this bar is a vertical stem that curves slightly to the right at the bottom. A diagonal stroke crosses the stem from the upper left to the lower right, ending in a small hook.

qī

Wife

women gets
broom on
marriage

wields it, tak-
ing care of
house and
home

The character 妻 is composed of the top part of the character 妻 (three horizontal strokes) and the bottom part of the character 女 (a vertical stroke with a hook and two diagonal strokes).

mù

tree / wood

The character 木 is composed of a vertical stroke with a hook at the bottom, a horizontal stroke across the middle, and two diagonal strokes extending downwards from the middle.

lǐ

plum / plum
tree

tree children
are fond of
also a Chi-
nese surname

The character 李 is composed of the top part of the character 木 (a vertical stroke with a hook and two diagonal strokes) and the bottom part of the character 子 (a vertical stroke with a hook and a horizontal stroke).

qī

to roost /
perch / nest

to live in pov-
erty

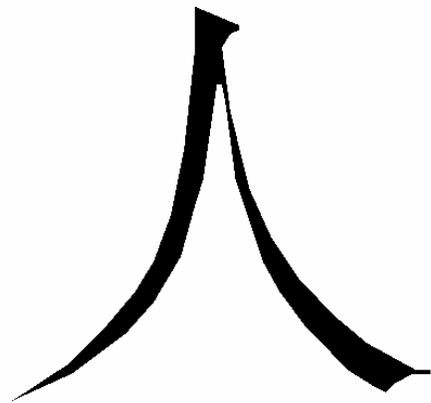
to seek refuge
tree + west

The character 栖 is composed of the left part of the character 栖 (a vertical stroke with a hook and two diagonal strokes) and the right part of the character 西 (a vertical stroke with a hook and a horizontal stroke).

rén

man; person;
human

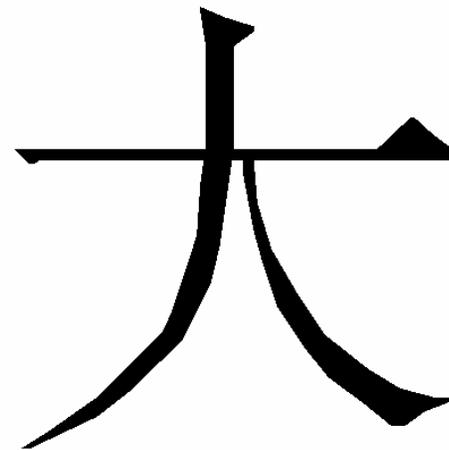
pictograph of
man astride
the world



dà

big; great

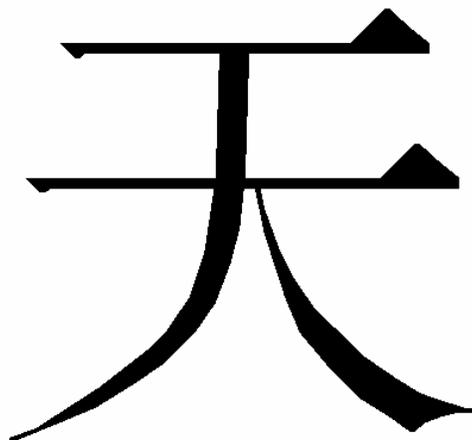
man with
arms out-
stretched



tiān

heaven; sky;
day

big man with
head touching
the sky, where
the dawn
comes from...



fū

husband; dis-
tinguished
person

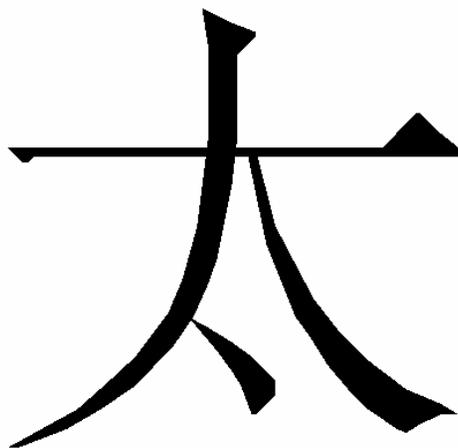
big man with
hairpin quali-
fied as pro-
spective hus-
band and dis-
tinguished
man



tài

too; over; excessive

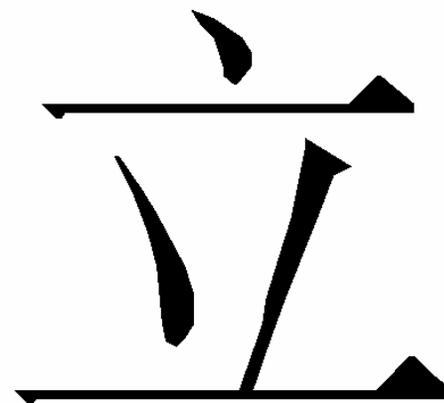
big man underscored



lì

stand / rise up

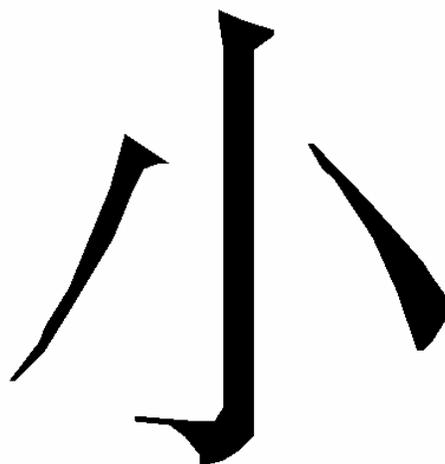
legs standing on firm ground



xiǎo

small / petty / young

from division (/ \) of an object (J) making smaller



shǎo

less / few / lack

small cut smaller



jiān

point (of needle); sharp;
shrewd;
pointed
(ideograph)
small of top of
big

The character 尖 is a cursive-style ideograph. It features a sharp, pointed top with two curved strokes extending downwards and outwards, and a horizontal stroke across the middle.

tián

rice field /
grain field/
farm

pictograph of
ploughed field

The character 田 is a pictograph of a ploughed field. It consists of a square frame divided into four smaller squares by a vertical and a horizontal line.

lì

strength /
force / power

pictograph of
a clenched
forearm

The character 力 is a pictograph of a clenched forearm. It shows a horizontal line at the top, with a curved stroke extending downwards and to the left, and another curved stroke extending downwards and to the right.

nán

man / male /
masculine

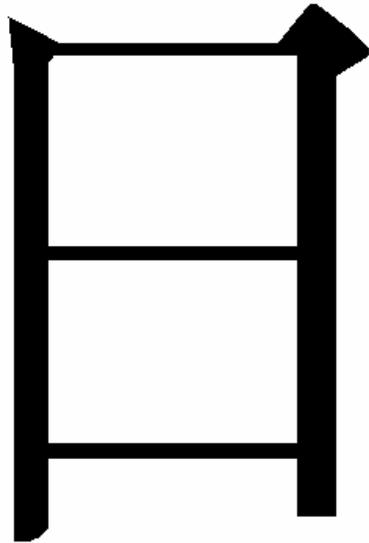
a field where
strength is
exerted

The character 男 is a compound character. It combines the top part of the character 田 (field) with the bottom part of the character 力 (strength). The top part is a square frame divided into four smaller squares, and the bottom part is a curved stroke extending downwards and to the right.

rì

sun / day

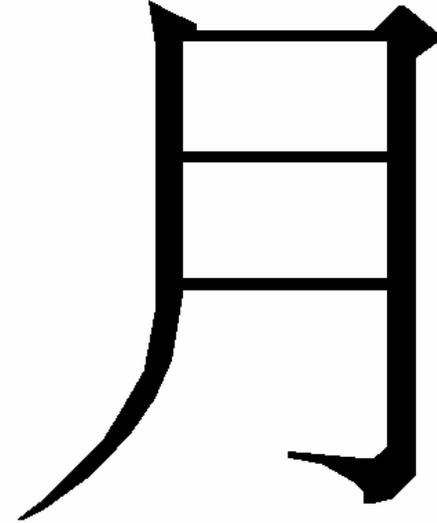
formerly circle
with rays, now
squared off



yuè

moon / month

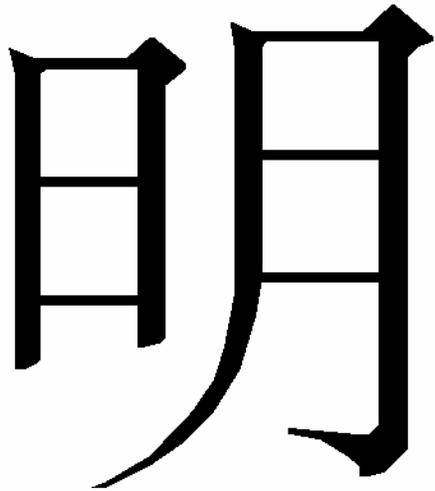
pictograph of
old moon
waning



míng

brilliant /
bright /
enlightened

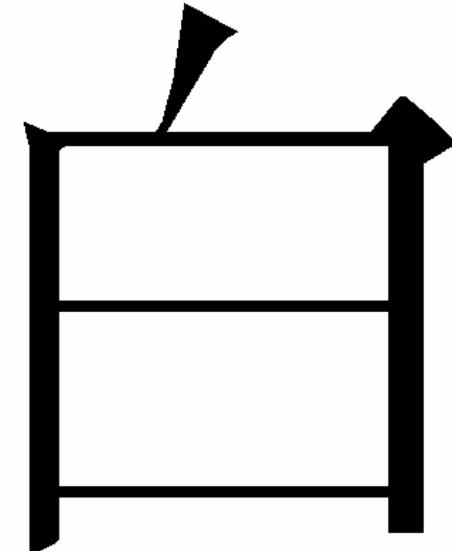
the sun and
the moon! =
brilliant Ming
Dynasty



bái

white; snowy;
empty; blank;
bright; clear;
plain; pure;
gratuitous

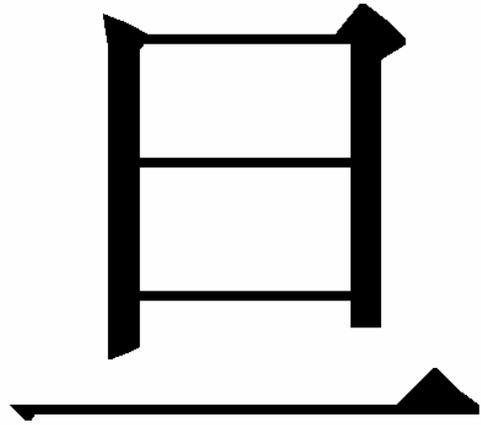
first ray of sun
over the
horizon



dàn

dawn / day-break / day

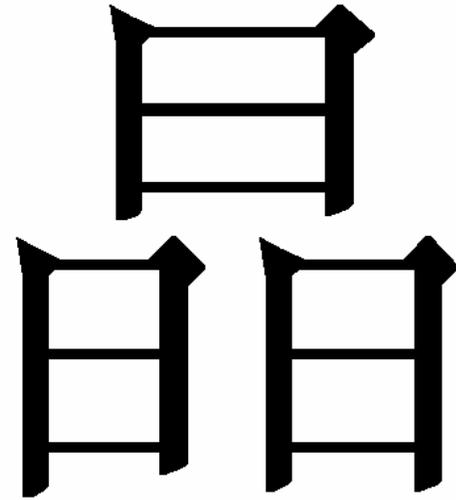
appearance of sun over the horizon



jīng

crystal / brilliant / sparkling

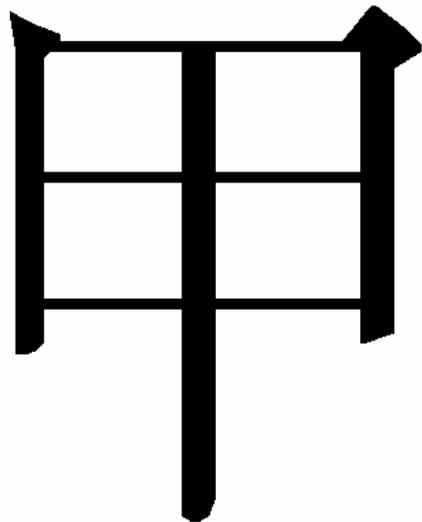
three suns into crystalized pattern



jiǎ

1st heavenly stem; 1st in order; armor;

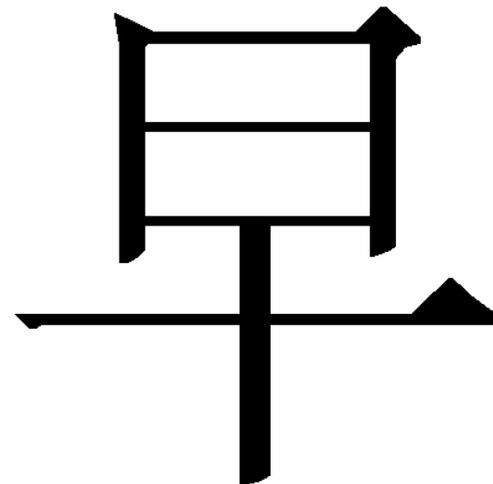
from + (ten) in square, clarified by line extended, similar to "helmet" thus any kind of protective cover



zǎo

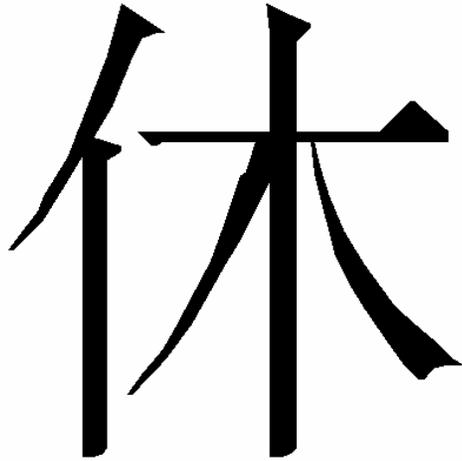
early / morning

sun at height of man's helmet also "first" thus first sun or early morning



xiū

rest / cease
man resting
against a tree



dōng

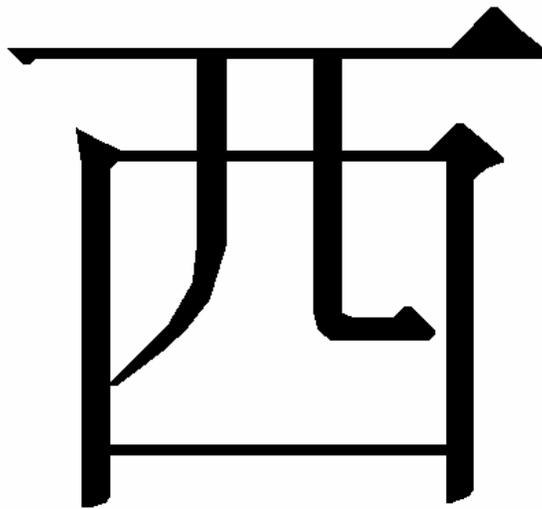
East
sun peeping
thru tree



xī

West
bird roosting
in nest

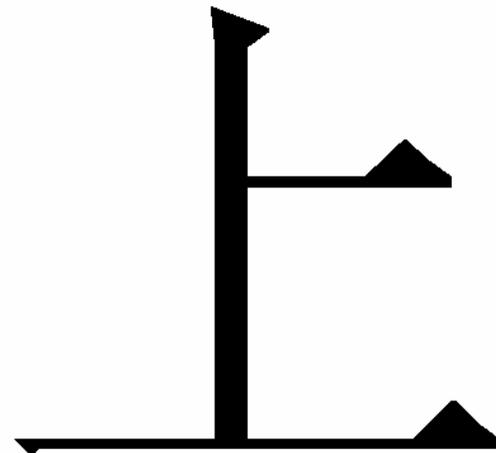
(combination
east+west =
all things)



shàng

up / above /
ascend

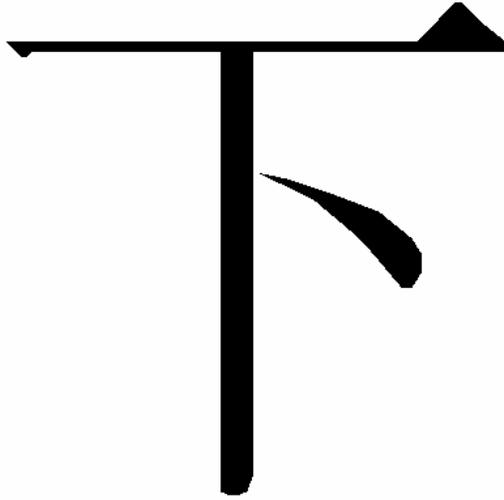
pictograph



xià

down / below /
descend

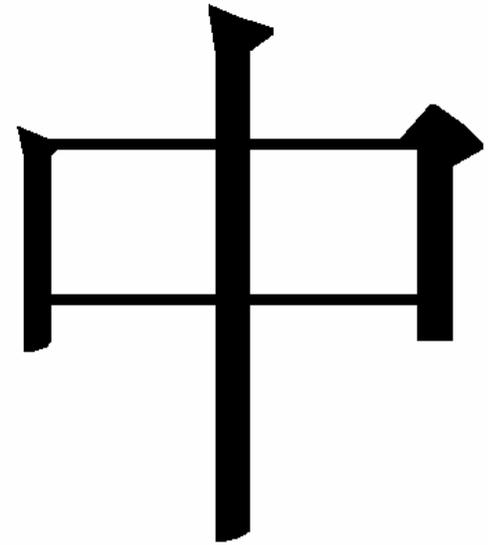
pictograph
(below hori-
zon)



zhōng

center /
middle /
neutral

arrow thru
center of tar-
get



nú

slave / servant
woman under
the hand



yǒu

friend

derived from
two hands
shaking



cōng

haste; hurry;
alarm

originally:
heart peering
thru the lattice
of a window

now heart lost
in the haste!

The character '匆' is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It features a prominent horizontal crossbar at the top, with a vertical stroke on the right side that curves downwards. The left side consists of several sweeping, curved strokes that suggest a sense of rapid movement or urgency.

gē

spear / lance

pictograph of
ancient
weapon w/
hook and
crossbar

The character '戈' is a pictograph of an ancient weapon. It is rendered in a bold, black, calligraphic style. The character consists of a horizontal crossbar at the top, a vertical stem on the left, and a curved hook on the right that points downwards and to the right.

wǒ

I / me

hand grasping
spear assert-
ing my-ness

The character '我' is a complex character formed by combining the 'hand grasping' radical (扌) on the left and the 'spear' radical (戈) on the right. It is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style, with a prominent horizontal crossbar and a vertical stem on the left.

nǐ

you

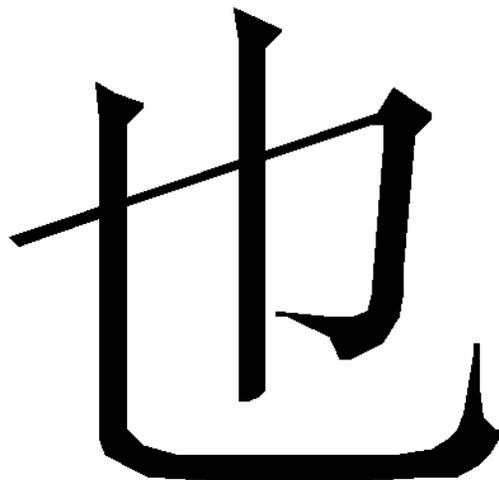
person +
same weight =
(male) you

The character '你' is a complex character formed by combining the 'person' radical (亻) on the left and the 'same weight' radical (尔) on the right. It is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style, with a prominent horizontal crossbar and a vertical stem on the left.

yě

also / in addition to

(joining man to his) drinking horn



tā

he / she

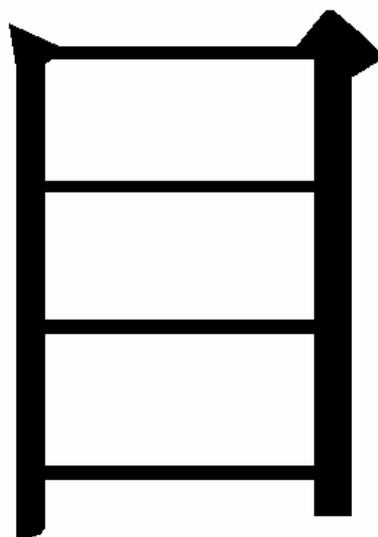
(that) person
+ also



mù

Eye

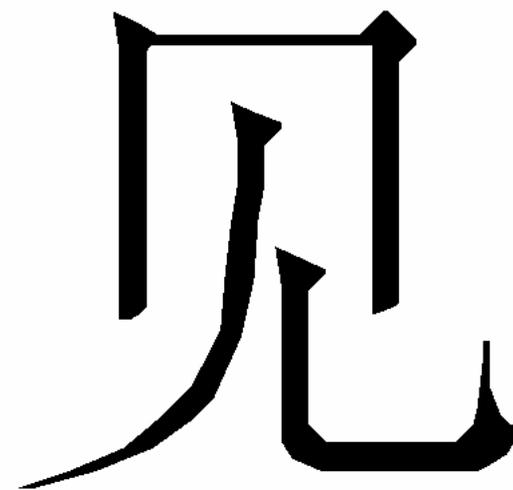
squared off pictograph -
two eyelids and a pupil



jiàn

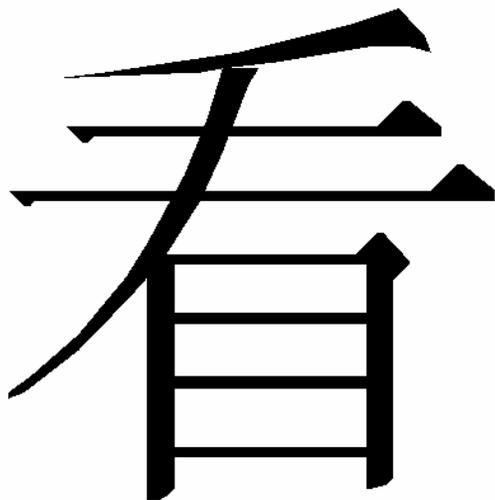
to see

originally eye
on top of legs



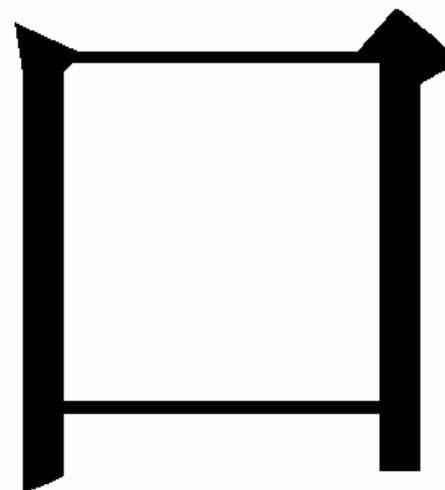
kàn

it depends;
think; to see;
to look at;
hand held up
to shield from
sun



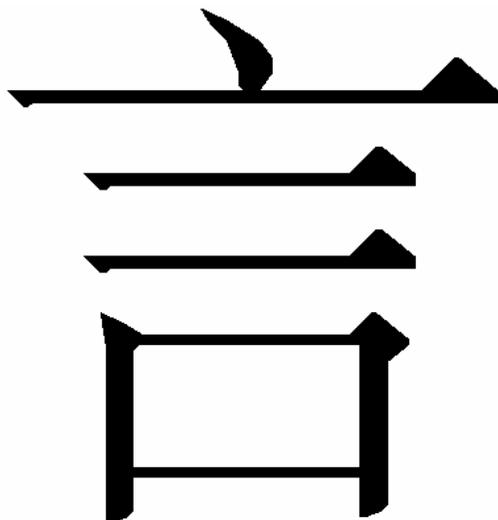
kǒu

mouth /
opening
pictograph



yán

to speak; to
say; talk;
word;
many "lines"
above mouth



xìn

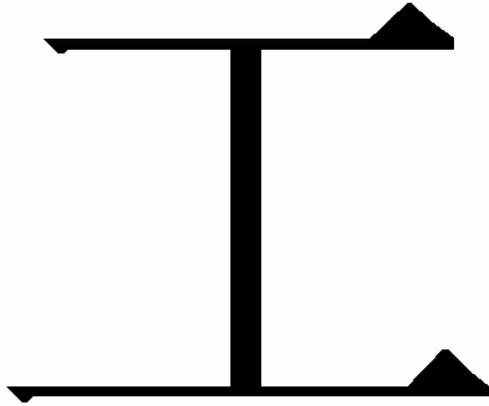
letter; true; to
believe; sign;
evidence;

man standing
by his words
man transmit-



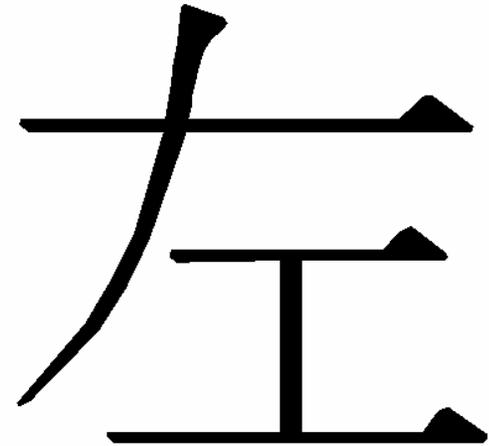
gōng

work; worker;
skill; profes-
sion; trade;
craft; labor;
pictograph of
carpenter's
square



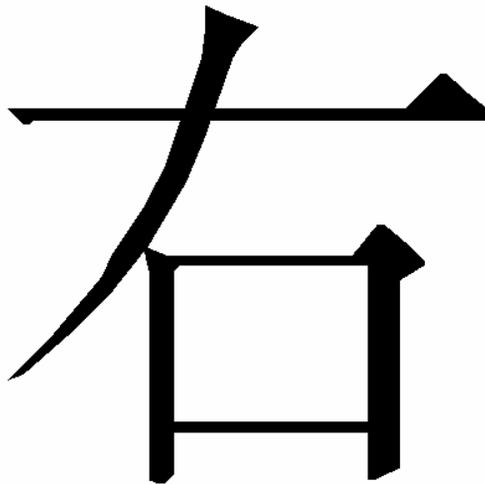
zuǒ

Left
Chinese sur-
name
hand which
holds the car-
penter's
square



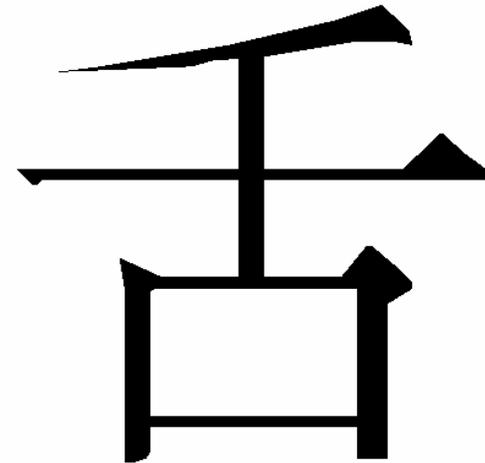
yòu

Right
hand which
feeds mouth



shé

Tongue
tongue stick-
ing out of the
mouth



huà

dialect; language; spoken words; speech; talk; words; conversation; what someone said; words (variant sign) + tongue

ěr

Ear
squared off pictograph (with earlobe)

qǔ

to take; to get; to choose; to fetch;
hand on ear

qǔ

Take a wife
hand on ear over woman

xiōng

elder brother

mouth with
legs

The character 兄 is composed of the top part of the character 兄 (mouth) and the bottom part of the character 兄 (legs). It is a large, bold, black character.

bā

Eight (8)

divide / sepa-
rate - symmet-
rical symbol -
very divisible

The character 八 is a large, bold, black character consisting of two curved strokes that meet at the top and curve downwards and outwards.

duì

exchange or
barter, to
cash;

originally: de-
rived from
elder brother's
“breath into
words of en-
couragement”
- elder brother
dividing things
up

The character 兑 is composed of the top part of the character 兑 (breath) and the bottom part of the character 兑 (legs). It is a large, bold, black character.

shuō

speak; theory;
story

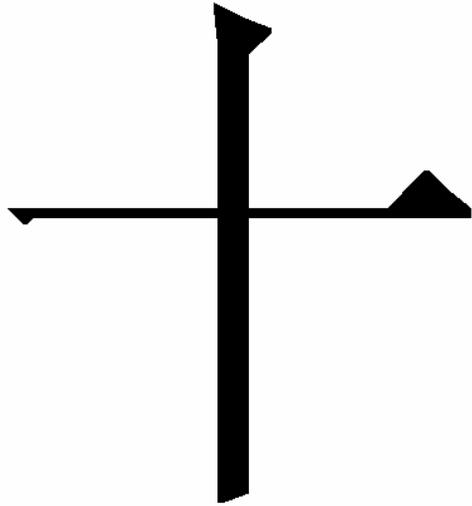
words being
exchanged
(pontificating)
“by elder
brother”

The character 说 is composed of the top part of the character 说 (speak) and the bottom part of the character 说 (legs). It is a large, bold, black character.

shí

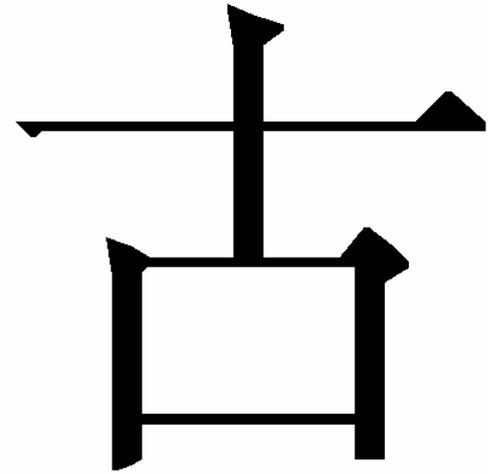
Ten (10)

symbol of
completeness
- extent in two
dimensions -
joins E,W,N,S
and center



gǔ

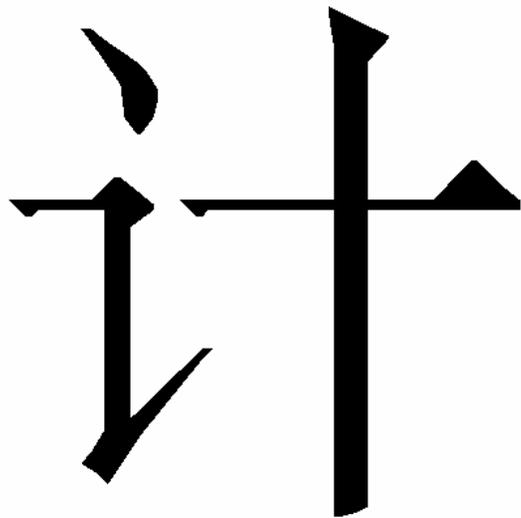
old; ancient
also Chinese
surname
ten mouths =
tradition



jì

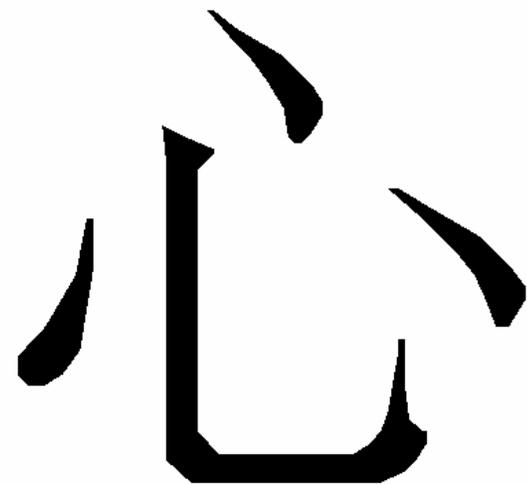
reckon; calcu-
late; plan;
scheme

sayings + ten
implies ability
to calculate



xīn

Heart, mind
pictograph



nù

indignant;
anger; pas-
sion; rage
slave (hand+
woman)
bonded to
heart



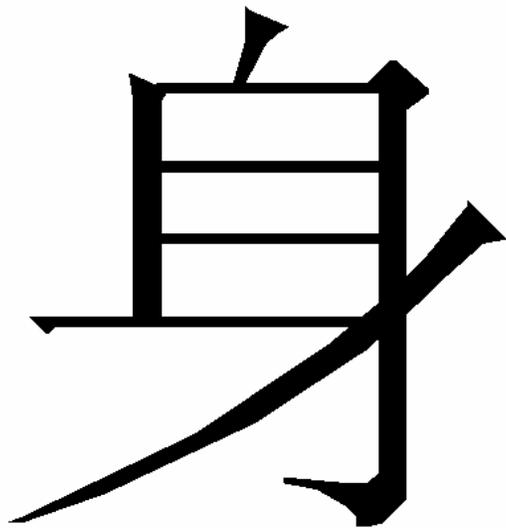
pà

to be afraid; to
fear;
(white heart)
variant of
heart + white



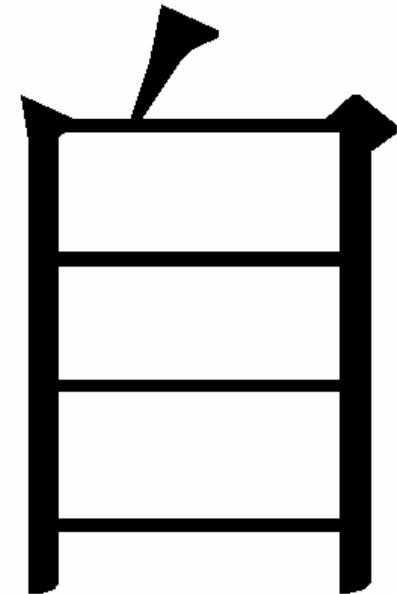
shēn

body; torso;
person; life;
status; preg-
nancy;
originally:
pregnant
(pictograph)



zì

from; self;
oneself; since;
nose sticking
out of body



chǐ

Teeth

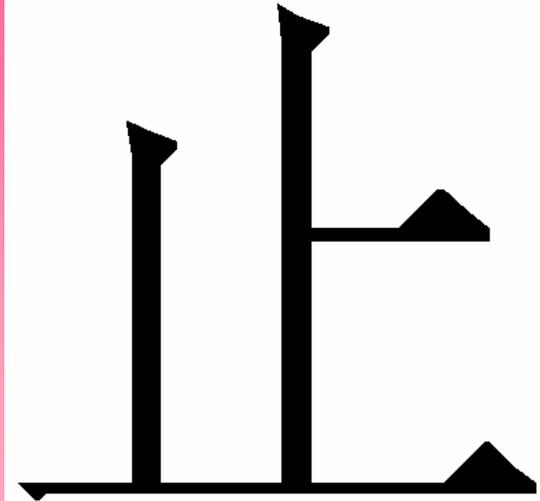
stops (foot) in
a man's
mouth = teeth



zhǐ

to halt; stop;
stand still

bottom of out-
stretched foot
(5 toes re-
duced to 3)

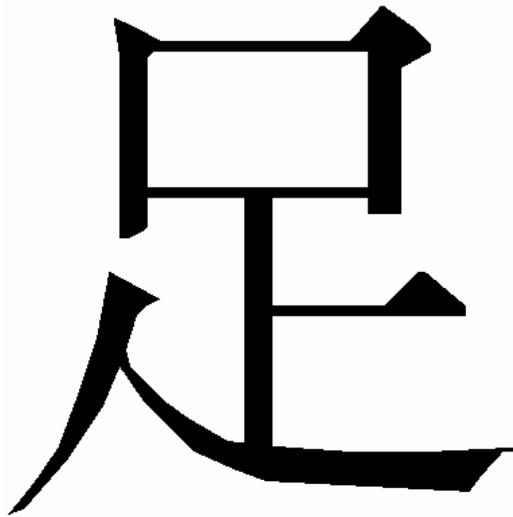


zú

foot; to be suf-
ficient;

man being
stood on by
foot

(originally cir-
cle signifying
foot at rest)



pǐ

piece of cloth;
a bolt (of
cloth);

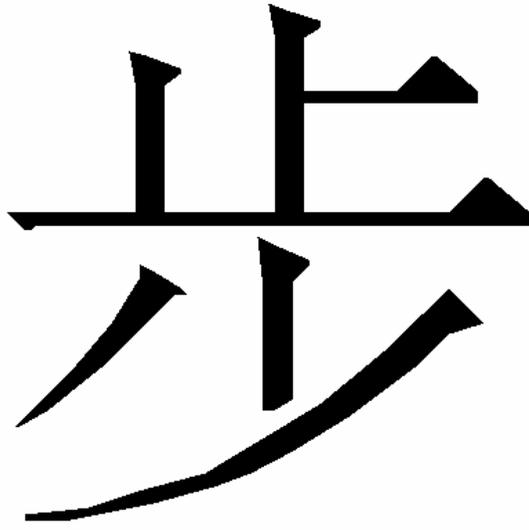
uncompleted
circle flowing
into a circle



bù

a step; a
pace; walk;
march;
stages in a
process

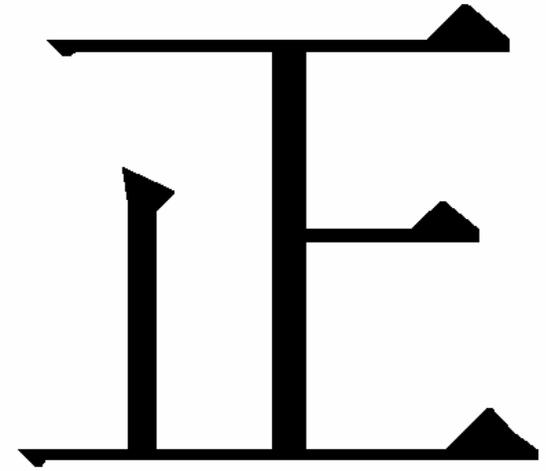
ideograph of
right foot fol-
lowing left
foot



zhēng

straight; up-
right; correct;
exact

Chinese 1st
month of year



shì

right; yes; am;
are; is; to be

ideography
locates sun
over modified
character



zǒu

walk; run;
hasten; depart

upper part
"bending"
lower part "to
stop"

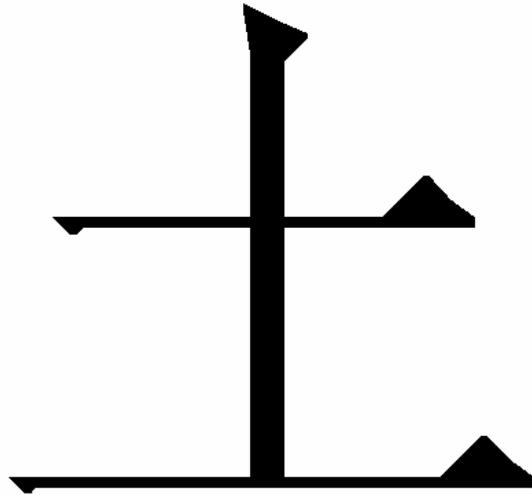
thus bending
and stopping
= walking



tǔ

earth; soil;
ground, dust

earth = two
layers from
which plants
sprout



zuò

to sit; seat

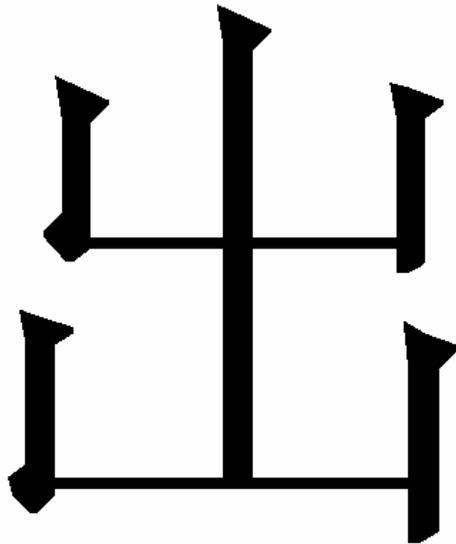
two men talk-
ing face to
face on the
earth



chū

go out; issue;
produce

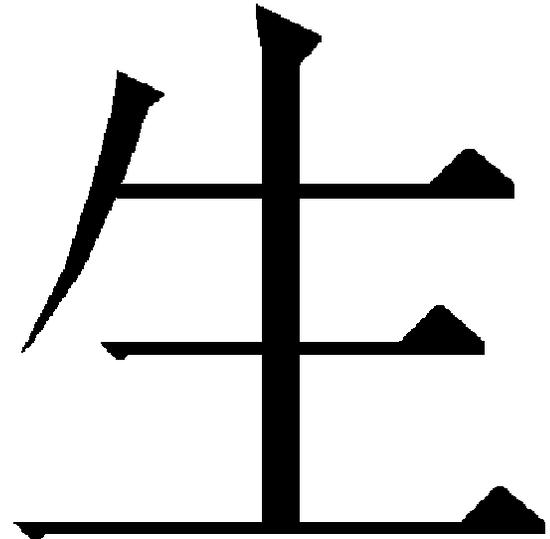
stalk thrusting
out of pot



shēng

to be born; to
give birth; life;
to grow;

earth produc-
ing a plant
lays ground-
work for
growth



xìng

surname; fam-
ily name;
name
of woman
born

The character 姓 is a regular script (kǎishu) character. It is composed of the radical 女 (woman) on the left and 生 (born) on the right. The strokes are thick and black, with clear directional arrows indicating the writing path.

bèi

shells; valu-
ables
pictograph of
cowrie shell

The character 贝 is a regular script (kǎishu) character. It is a pictograph of a cowrie shell, showing the shell's shape with a curved bottom and a flat top. The strokes are thick and black, with clear directional arrows indicating the writing path.

jiàn

cheap; inex-
pensive; lowly
two spears
shattering the
value of cow-
rie shells

The character 贱 is a regular script (kǎishu) character. It is composed of the radical 贝 (cowrie shell) on the left and 戔 (two spears shattering) on the right. The strokes are thick and black, with clear directional arrows indicating the writing path.

guì

expensive;
dear; honor-
able; noble;
precious;
basket filled
with precious
cowrie shells

The character 贵 is a regular script (kǎishu) character. It is composed of the radical 贝 (cowrie shell) on the left and 貴 (basket filled with precious cowrie shells) on the right. The strokes are thick and black, with clear directional arrows indicating the writing path.

mǎi

Buy

modified net
and cowrie
shells

(traditional
form used for
bargain buys,
etc.)

The character 买 (mǎi) is written in a traditional calligraphic style. It features a horizontal top bar, a vertical stroke with a hook on the right, and a curved bottom stroke. The character is composed of the radical 'net' (罒) and 'cowrie shells' (貝).

mài

Sell

loading "buy"
with simplified
"out"

The character 卖 (mài) is written in a traditional calligraphic style. It features a horizontal top bar, a vertical stroke with a hook on the right, and a curved bottom stroke. The character is composed of the radical 'net' (罒) and 'out' (出).

shuǐ

water/ river

surging wa-
ters with a
central main-
stream and 4
surging wa-
ters

variant form
uses only 3
drops of water

The character 水 (shuǐ) is written in a traditional calligraphic style. It features a central vertical stroke with a hook on the right, and two curved side strokes. The character is composed of three drops of water.

yǒng

everlasting;
perpetual; for-
ever

but come and
go, but water
flows forever

water + added
foams and rip-
ples

The character 永 (yǒng) is written in a traditional calligraphic style. It features a horizontal top bar, a vertical stroke with a hook on the right, and a curved bottom stroke. The character is composed of the radical 'water' (水) and 'foams and ripples' (冫).

bīng

Ice

radical water
dripping and
freezing into
icicle

quán

spring;
fountain

pure + water

yǔ

Rain

raindrops fall-
ing down

from cloud in
the heavens

lòu

funnel; to
leak; to let
out; to divulge

rain under a
roof + more
water as radi-
cal

yún

cloud; (abbr.)
for Yunnan;
surname;
humid vapors
rise, con-
dense, and
form clouds

The character '云' (yún) is composed of a top horizontal stroke, a middle horizontal stroke, and a bottom radical '厶' (sī) which consists of two curved strokes meeting at a point.

xuě

Snow
rain + hand
rain you can
hold in your
hand

The character '雪' (xuě) is composed of the top radical '雨' (yǔ, rain) and the bottom radical '手' (shǒu, hand). The '雨' radical has a top horizontal stroke, a middle vertical stroke, and two horizontal strokes on either side. The '手' radical has a top horizontal stroke, a middle horizontal stroke, and a bottom horizontal stroke.

diàn

lightning; elec-
tric; electricity;
electrical;
(crop of) field
+ motion

The character '电' (diàn) is composed of the top radical '雨' (yǔ, rain) and the bottom radical '田' (tián, field). The '雨' radical has a top horizontal stroke, a middle vertical stroke, and two horizontal strokes on either side. The '田' radical has a top horizontal stroke, a middle vertical stroke, and a bottom horizontal stroke.

léi

(surname);
thunder;
rain clouds
over his fields
means thun-
der

The character '雷' (léi) is composed of the top radical '雨' (yǔ, rain) and the bottom radical '田' (tián, field). The '雨' radical has a top horizontal stroke, a middle vertical stroke, and two horizontal strokes on either side. The '田' radical has a top horizontal stroke, a middle vertical stroke, and a bottom horizontal stroke.

sǎn

umbrella;
parasol;
the traditional
form has four
persons under
cover



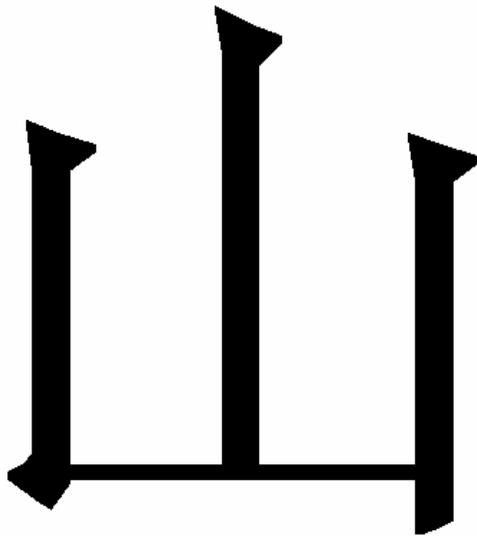
chuān

river, stream
the main
stream is
joined by
smaller
streams on
either side on
which it de-
pends



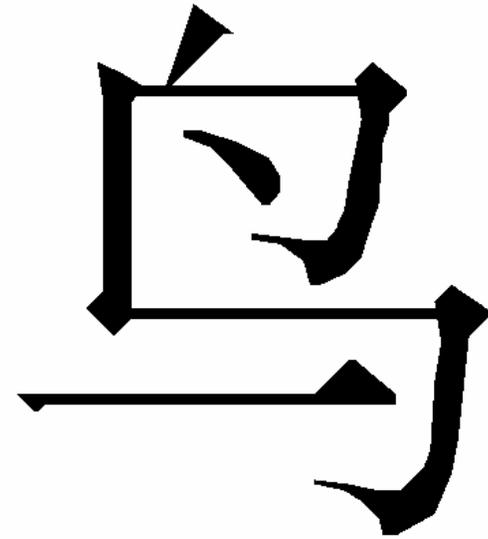
shān

mountain, hill
a range with
three towering
peaks



niǎo

Bird
bird in a cage

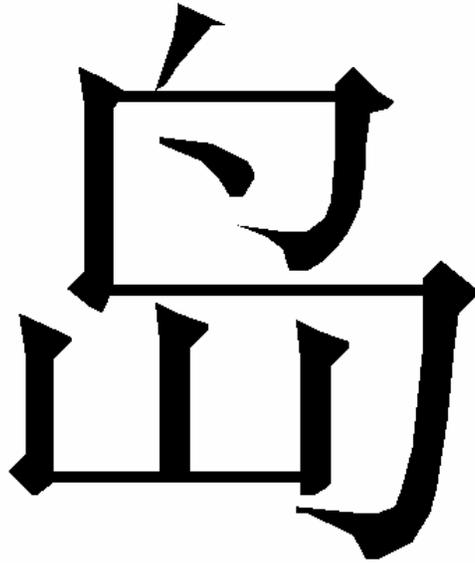


dǎo

Island

birds perch on
peak
(mountain)

sticking out of
ocean and
forming an is-
land

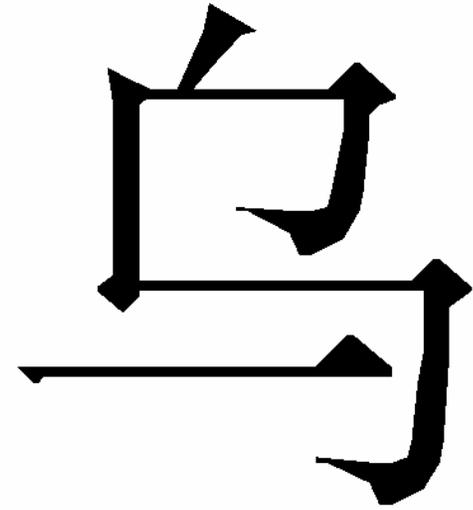


wū

Crow

same as "bird"
but with eyes
omitted

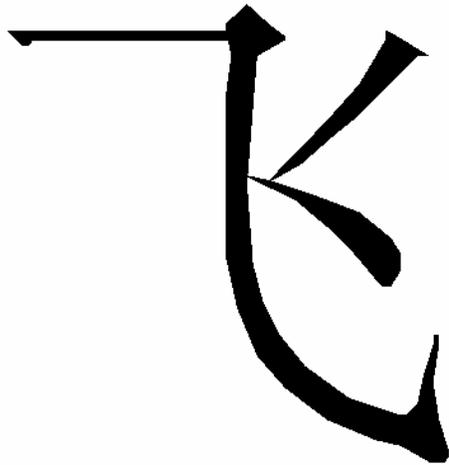
(can't see
eyes on black
birds?)



fēi

Fly

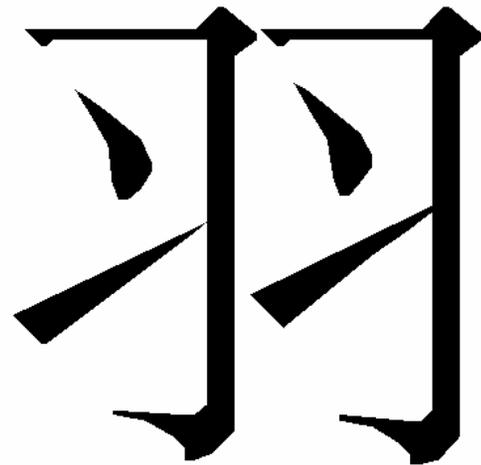
flying crane
with neck
tucked in, and
wings



yǔ

feathers,
wings

pictograph of
a pair of wings

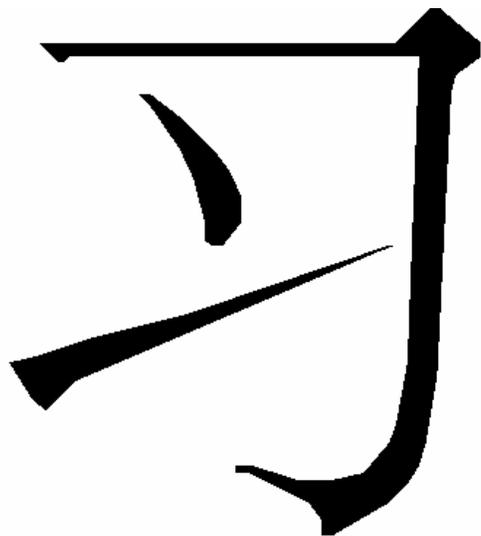


xí

to practice; to study; habit;

young bird trying to fly

trad combines "wings" + "sell"



shān

to fan

wing or feathers + one leaf of a door

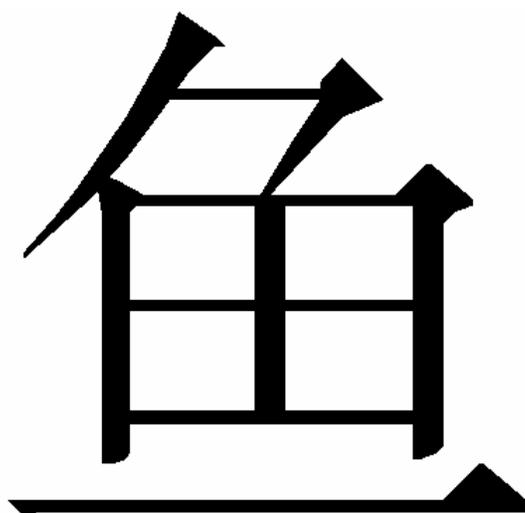


yú

fish (noun)

field suggesting harvesting food

(trad form has bottom as form of fire suggesting cooking the fish)



yú

Fishing

fish + water

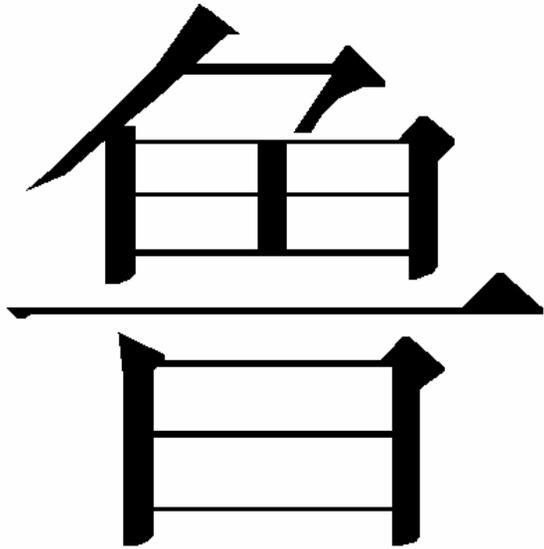


lu

stupid, simple

trad fish +
nose

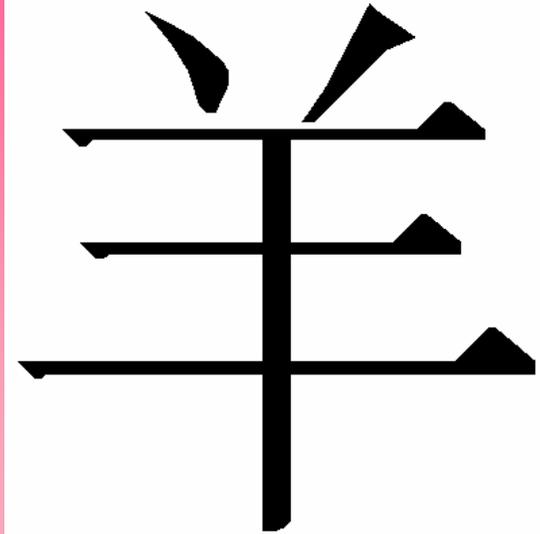
corrupted to
fish + speak



yáng

(surname);
sheep, goat

frontal picto-
graph of
horns, etc



xiān

Fresh

fish + sheep

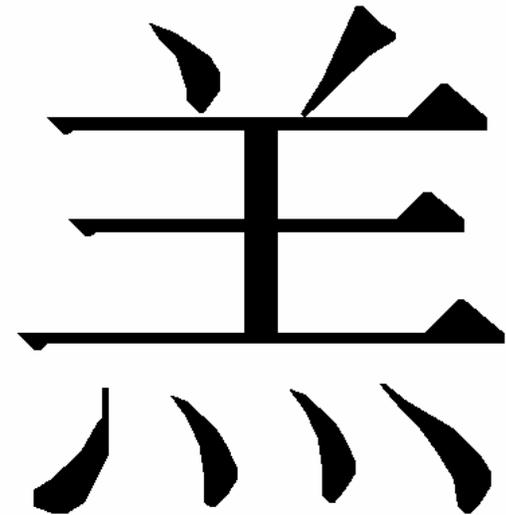
despite salt,
ancient man
preferred to
eat them fresh



gāo

lamb, kid

sheep ready
to stand on it's
four feet (or to
stand on the
fire, ready for
eating?)



měi

beautiful, admirable

sheep + big

a gentle (person)

grown big, a mature person with disposition of a sheep



yì

justice, righteousness

trad the aggressive

spear of "I"

becomes subdued like a sheep

simplified: balanced justice



yáng

ocean, foreign

sheep + water, so water far away from sheep = ocean and by extension, "foreign"



xiàng

covert, desire

sheep + saliva mouth water



huǒ

Fire

pictograph of
two sticks rub-
bing together
with flames



yán

blaze; flame;
inflammation;
-itis;

two fires



tán

chat; talk

words next to
the fire



huī

ashes; dust;
gray

(product of)
fire (things
that you can
hold) in the
hand



zāi

Calamity, disaster

fire under your roof

The character 灾 (zāi) is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It features a horizontal top bar with a small hook on the left and a small tail on the right. Below this bar, two large, sweeping strokes curve downwards and outwards, resembling flames or a roof structure.

shān

incite; instigate; stir up

fanning a flame

The character 煽 (shān) is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It consists of a large, vertical stroke on the left that curves slightly to the right at the bottom. To the right of this stroke is a complex structure of horizontal and vertical lines, with several small, curved strokes extending from the right side, suggesting the motion of fanning or stirring.

shāo

burn; bake; roast

fire + spear
piled on a pedestal (as in tempering in a kiln)

The character 烧 (shāo) is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It features a large, vertical stroke on the left that curves slightly to the right at the bottom. To the right of this stroke is a complex structure of horizontal and vertical lines, with several small, curved strokes extending from the right side, suggesting the motion of burning or roasting.

hēi

black; dark;
Heilongjiang Province
(abbrev.);

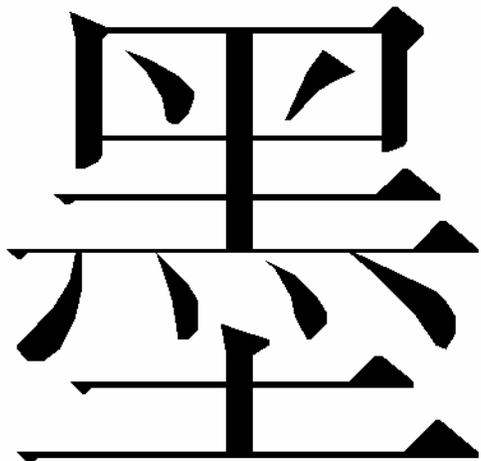
modified flame under a window
blackening it

The character 黑 (hēi) is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It consists of a large, vertical stroke on the left that curves slightly to the right at the bottom. To the right of this stroke is a complex structure of horizontal and vertical lines, with several small, curved strokes extending from the right side, suggesting the motion of blackening or darkening.

mò

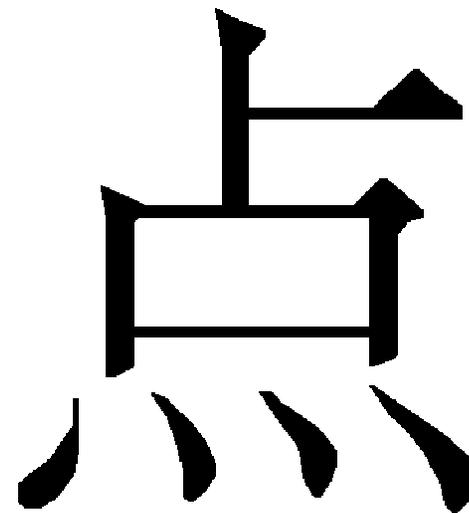
ink; Chinese ink

black + earth,
Chinese ink
blocks made
of soot mixed
with gum, an
earthy sub-
stance



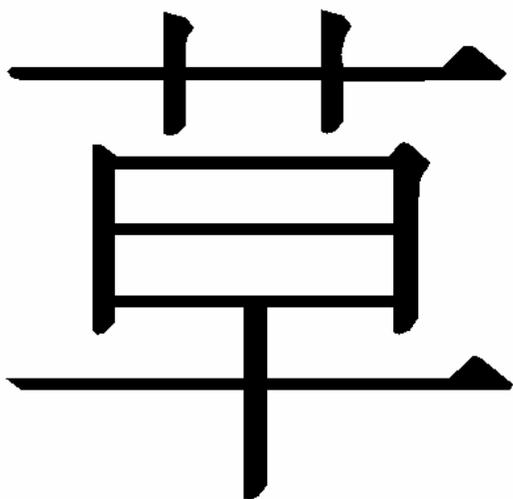
diǎn

(downwards-
right convex
character
stroke);
o'clock; (a
measure
word); point;
dot; decimal
point;



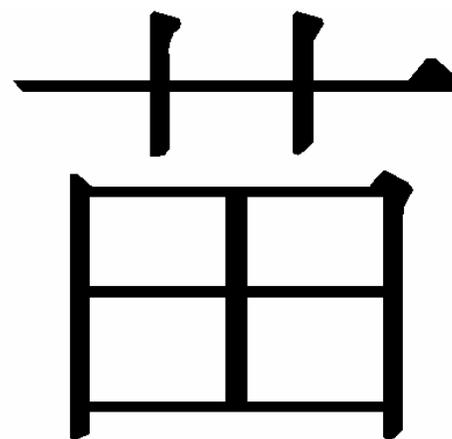
cǎo

grass; straw;
draft (of a
document);
careless;
rough; manu-
script; hasty;



miáo

(surname);
Miao tribe;
sprouts;
shoots
grain stalks
growing in a
field = shoots



yè

Leaves

simplified:
borrows character for harmony

The character '叶' (yè) is a simplified Chinese character. It consists of a vertical stroke on the right side, a horizontal stroke crossing it, and a vertical stroke on the left side that is slightly shorter than the one on the right. The top of the vertical strokes has small triangular shapes pointing upwards.

huā

Flowers

grass + man
turning head
over heels
(metamorphosis) ie: that part
of the plant
that undergoes radical
change

The character '花' (huā) is a simplified Chinese character. It features a horizontal top bar with two vertical strokes on either side, each ending in a small triangle pointing up. Below this is a large, sweeping stroke that curves from the top left down to the bottom right, and another similar stroke on the right side.

chá

Tea

grass, picked
from tree-like
plant, is dried
under cover

The character '茶' (chá) is a simplified Chinese character. It has a horizontal top bar with two vertical strokes on either side, each ending in a small triangle pointing up. Below this is a large, sweeping stroke that curves from the top left down to the bottom right, and another similar stroke on the right side.

yīng

(surname);
English;
brave; heroic

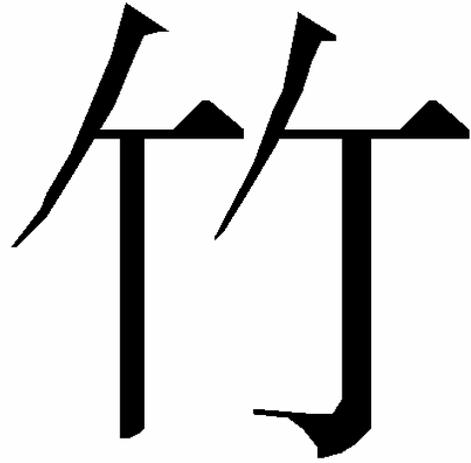
mature man,
in a large
space, thick
with vegetation = brave
man in the
jungle

The character '英' (yīng) is a simplified Chinese character. It features a horizontal top bar with two vertical strokes on either side, each ending in a small triangle pointing up. Below this is a large, sweeping stroke that curves from the top left down to the bottom right, and another similar stroke on the right side.

zhú

Bamboo

pictograph of
two whorls of
bamboo
leaves



bǐ

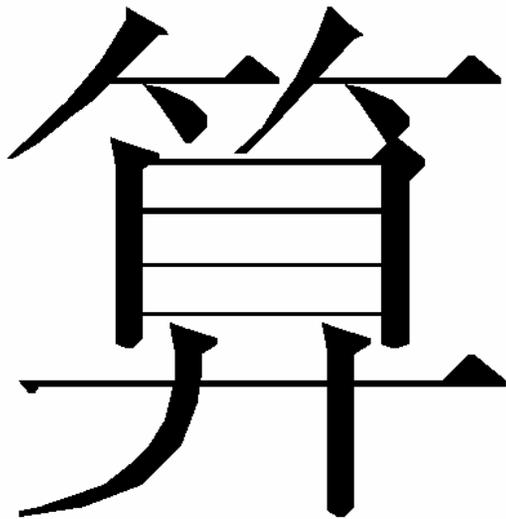
pen; pencil,
writing brush;
to write or
compose; the
strokes of Chi-
nese charac-
ters hand
holding bam-
boo



suàn

regard as; to
figure; to cal-
culate; to
compute

two hands +
abacus made
of bamboo



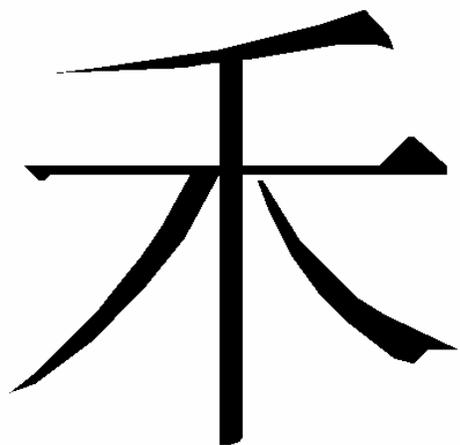
xiào

laugh; smile
man shaking
his head like a
bamboo in the
wind



hé

cereal; grain;
tree + ripened
head of grain



qiū

autumn; fall;
harvest time;
a swing;
in autumn,
grain ripens



chóu

sad; melan-
choly
autumn of the
heart



shuì

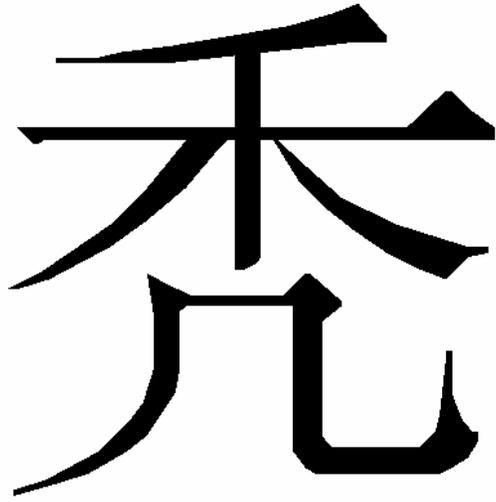
Tax
grain + ex-
change



tū

bald; blunt;
bare

top or head of
man after
grain harvest



sū

revive

traditional: fish
+ grain +
grass, the
weed that re-
vives easily

simplified:
power, equally
balanced on
both sides +
weed



hé

and; together
with; with;
peace; har-
mony; union;
grain + mouth



nián

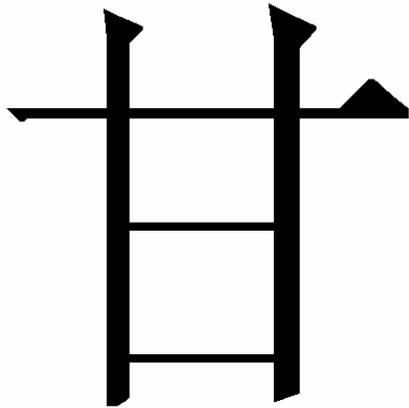
Year

man bearing
sheaf of grain
- the job of the
year



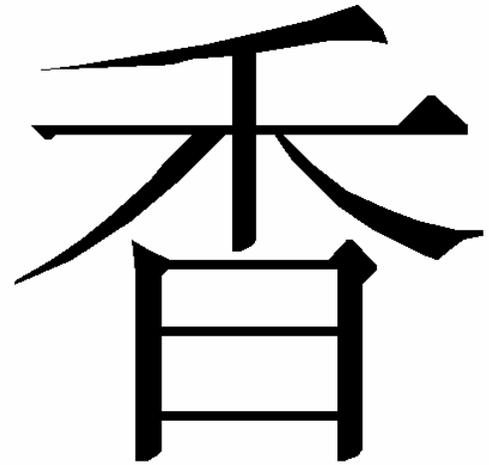
gān

(surname);
sweet; Qing-
hai province
(abbrev.);
mouth with
something
worth holding
- ie: sweet

The character 甘 is written in a bold, black calligraphic style. It consists of a vertical stroke on the left and a vertical stroke on the right, both with a hook at the top. A horizontal stroke crosses both vertical strokes. Below this horizontal stroke, there are two more horizontal strokes, one above the other, forming a rectangular base.

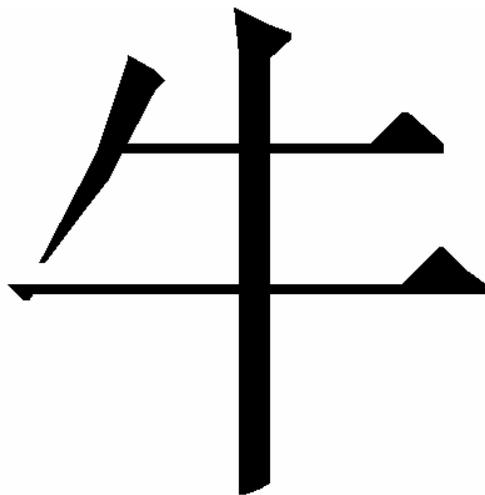
xiāng

fragrant; in-
cense; (of
food) savory;
appetizing;
sweet;
scented;
popular;

The character 香 is written in a bold, black calligraphic style. It features a horizontal stroke at the top with a hook on the left side. Below this, there is a vertical stroke that descends and then curves to the right. At the bottom, there is a horizontal stroke with a hook on the right side, and below that, two more horizontal strokes forming a rectangular base.

niú

ox; cow; bull
originally pic-
tograph with
two horns,
now only one

The character 牛 is written in a bold, black calligraphic style. It consists of a vertical stroke on the left and a vertical stroke on the right, both with a hook at the top. A horizontal stroke crosses both vertical strokes. Below this horizontal stroke, there are two more horizontal strokes, one above the other, forming a rectangular base.

jiàn

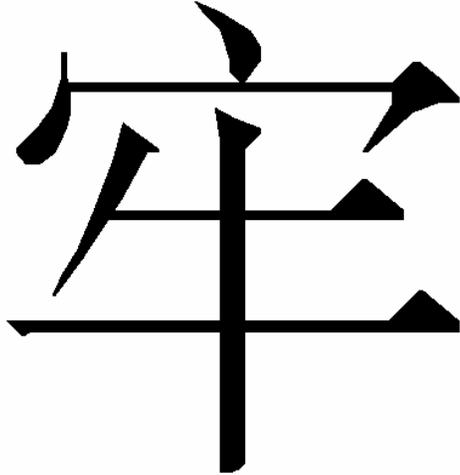
piece; article
a measure
word for thing,
clothes, item;

The character 件 is written in a bold, black calligraphic style. It consists of a vertical stroke on the left and a vertical stroke on the right, both with a hook at the top. A horizontal stroke crosses both vertical strokes. Below this horizontal stroke, there are two more horizontal strokes, one above the other, forming a rectangular base.

láo

cattle pen;
prison

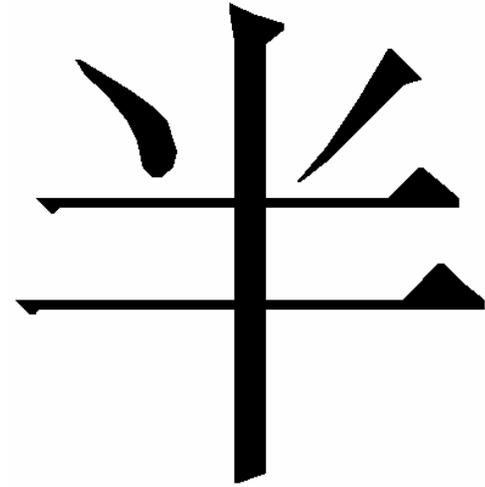
formerly cattle
inside a corral
but now under
a roof



bàn

half; semi-;
incomplete;
(after a number)
and a half;

from cutting
ox into two
halves,
lengthwise for
exact division



bàn

companion;
associate;
mate

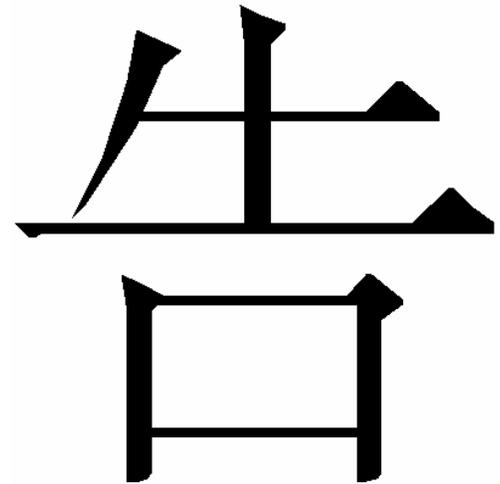
man + half
completes the
whole



gào

to tell; to in-
form; to say;

to do with the
mouth what
the ox does
with it's horns,
gore



mù

shepherd;
tend cattle,
cattle + modified "oversee"
with right hand holding
a rod

The character 牧 is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It consists of a vertical stroke on the left, a horizontal stroke across the middle, and a large, sweeping stroke on the right that curves downwards and then back up to the right.

ròu

flesh; meat
pictograph of
pieces of
dried meat
wrapped in a
bundle

The character 肉 is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It features a square frame with a vertical stroke on the left and a horizontal stroke at the top. Inside the frame, there are several curved strokes that represent pieces of meat.

pàng

fat; fleshy,
plump
flesh + half a
bull

The character 胖 is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It is composed of the radical 月 (moon) on the left and the radical 半 (half) on the right. The 月 radical is a vertical stroke with a hook at the bottom, and the 半 radical is a vertical stroke with a horizontal bar across the middle and a hook at the bottom.

yǒu

to have; there
is; there are;
to exist; to be;
hand grasping
the moon

The character 有 is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It features a horizontal stroke at the top, a vertical stroke on the left, and a vertical stroke on the right. The right vertical stroke has a hook at the bottom, and there are horizontal strokes connecting the two vertical strokes.

lái

to come

originally pictograph of growing wheat or barley

now rice + tree the harvest "comes"

The character '来' (lái) is a regular script character. It features a central vertical stroke with a horizontal crossbar. On the left side, there are two curved strokes that resemble the blades of wheat or barley. On the right side, there are two horizontal strokes, one above and one below the vertical stroke, which represent the rice radical '米'.

běn

roots or stems of plants; origin; source; this; the current; root; foundation; basis; (a measure word);

pictograph of tree with root emphasized by horizontal stroke showing the ground

The character '本' (běn) is a regular script character. It consists of a central vertical stroke with a horizontal crossbar. Below the crossbar, there are two curved strokes that resemble the branches of a tree. A horizontal stroke is positioned below the vertical stroke, representing the ground and emphasizing the root.

tǐ

body; form; style; system;

man + root = man's root

The character '体' (tǐ) is a regular script character. It features a central vertical stroke with a horizontal crossbar. On the left side, there is a curved stroke that resembles the body of a man. On the right side, there are two horizontal strokes, one above and one below the vertical stroke, which represent the root radical '本'.

guǒ

fruit; result;

field on top of tree (crop of trees)

The character '果' (guǒ) is a regular script character. It features a central vertical stroke with a horizontal crossbar. Above the crossbar, there is a square-shaped structure with horizontal lines, representing a field or a crop. Below the crossbar, there are two curved strokes that resemble the branches of a tree.

kè

subject; class;
lesson;
modified
words + fruit

The character 课 is composed of the radical 讠 (speech) on the left and 果 (fruit) on the right. The 果 radical is written in its modified form, with a shorter vertical stroke and a shorter horizontal base.

cháo

Nest
three fledg-
lings on top of
fruit

The character 巢 is composed of the radical 巛 (three fledglings) on top and 果 (fruit) on the bottom. The 巛 radical consists of three small, downward-pointing, hook-like shapes.

mò

end; final
stage; latter
part;
tree with tip
emphasized
by horizontal
stroke

The character 末 is composed of a vertical stroke with a pointed tip, intersected by two horizontal strokes. The top horizontal stroke is shorter than the middle one, and both have small upward-pointing hooks at their right ends.

wèi

1-3 p.m.; 8th
earthly
branch; not
yet; did not;
have not; not;
tree + second
horizontal
stroke empha-
sized (not yet
attained the
end)

The character 未 is composed of a vertical stroke with a pointed tip, intersected by two horizontal strokes. The top horizontal stroke is shorter than the middle one, and both have small upward-pointing hooks at their right ends. The middle horizontal stroke is significantly longer than the top one.

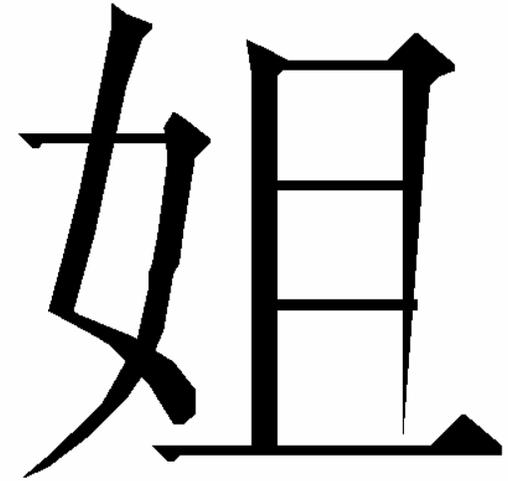
mèi

younger sister
woman + not
yet



jiě

elder sister
woman + stool
with two rungs



ài

love; affection
regular form:
breathe into
heart with gra-
cious motion
simplified:
breathe into +
hand in hand



xiǎng

to think; to be-
lieve; to sup-
pose; to wish;
to want; to
miss;
inspect (eye be-
hind a tree) over
heart
inspect in the
heart of mind=
hope, ponder,
think



yì

recall; remember; reflect

traditional:
sound over
heart + second

simplified:
heart + second heart

wàng

to forget; to overlook; to neglect;
disappear or perish over heart

kuài

quick; fast

heart + pictograph of man and hand drawing a bowstring



qī

to roost /
perch / nest

to live in
poverty

to seek ref-
uge

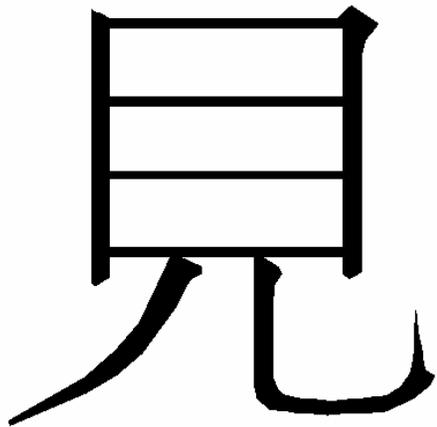
simplified: tree
+ west tradi-
tional: tree +
wife



dōng

East

traditional:
sun peeping
thru tree



jiàn

to see; to
meet; to ap-
pear (to be
sth); to inter-
view;

originally eye
on top of legs



shuō

to speak; to
say;

words being
exchanged
(pontificating)
by elder
brother

The character 齿 (chǐ) is composed of the top part of 止 (to stop) and the bottom part of 人 (person). It is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

chǐ

Teeth

stops (foot) in
a man's
mouth =
teeth

The character 贝 (bèi) is composed of the top part of 貝 (cowrie shell) and the bottom part of 人 (person). It is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

bèi

cowries; shell;
valuables;
shellfish;

traditional:
pictograph of
cowrie shell

The character 贱 (jiàn) is composed of the left part of 貝 (cowrie shell) and the right part of 戔 (to shatter). It is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

jiàn

cheap; inex-
pensive, lowly
simplified: one
spear shatter-
ing the value
of simplified
cowrie shell
traditional: two
spears shatter-
ing the value
of traditional
cowrie shell

The character 贵 (guì) is composed of the top part of 貴 (precious) and the bottom part of 貝 (cowrie shell). It is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

guì

expensive;
dear; honor-
able

basket filled
with precious
cowrie shells

The character is a traditional Chinese character for 'buy'. It consists of a top part that looks like a modified net with three rectangular holes, and a bottom part that looks like a cowrie shell with three horizontal lines. The entire character is supported by two curved feet.

mǎi

Buy
modified net
and cowrie
shells
(traditional
form used for
bargain buys,
etc.)

The character is a simplified Chinese character for 'sell'. It features a top part with a vertical line and a horizontal bar, resembling a simplified 'buy' character. Below this is a cowrie shell-like shape with three horizontal lines, and it is supported by two curved feet.

mài

Sell
loading "buy"
with simplified
"out"

The character is a traditional Chinese character for 'cloud'. It has a top part with a vertical line and a horizontal bar, and a bottom part with a vertical line and a horizontal bar, resembling a stylized cloud. The entire character is supported by two curved feet.

yún

Cloud
humid vapors
rise, con-
dense, and
form clouds

The character is a traditional Chinese character for 'lightning' or 'electricity'. It has a top part with a vertical line and a horizontal bar, and a bottom part with a vertical line and a horizontal bar, resembling a stylized lightning bolt. The entire character is supported by two curved feet.

diàn

lightning; elec-
tricity
(crop of) field
+ motion

The image shows the traditional Chinese character for 'umbrella' (傘). It consists of a central vertical stroke with four curved strokes branching out from the top, resembling the ribs of an umbrella.

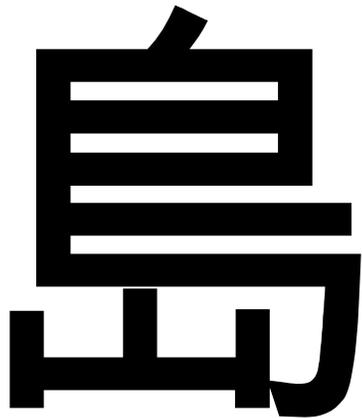
sǎn

Umbrella
the traditional
form has four
persons un-
der cover

The image shows the traditional Chinese character for 'bird' (鳥). It features a large, stylized bird-like shape with a long tail and a beak, composed of several horizontal and curved strokes.

niǎo

Bird
bird in a cage

The image shows the traditional Chinese character for 'island' (島). It is a stylized representation of a mountain peak with a bird perched on top, composed of several horizontal and curved strokes.

dǎo

Island
birds perch
on peak
(mountain)
sticking out
of ocean and
forming an
island

The image shows the traditional Chinese character for 'crow' (烏). It is a stylized representation of a crow, composed of several horizontal and curved strokes, with the top part resembling a bird's head and beak.

wū

Crow
Trad same as
"bird" but with
eyes omitted
(can't see
eyes on black
birds?)

The character 飛 is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It features a horizontal top bar, a vertical stem, and two large, curved wings extending from the right side.

fēi

Fly
flying crane
with neck
tucked in,
and wings

The character 習 is composed of two parts: the top part is a stylized bird with its wings spread, and the bottom part is a white square with a horizontal line through the middle, representing a bird's body.

xí

to practice; to
study; habit;
young bird try-
ing to fly
trad form
combines
"wings" +
"sell"

The character 魚 is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It has a wide, flat top with a horizontal line, and a bottom part that resembles a fish's tail with three curved rays.

yú

fish (noun)
field suggest-
ing harvesting
food
trad form has
bottom as
form of fire
suggesting
cooking the
fish

The character 漁 is composed of two parts: the top part is a stylized fish with its tail and fins, and the bottom part is a white square with a horizontal line through the middle, representing a fish's body.

yú

Fishing
fish + water

The character 神 is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. It consists of a vertical stroke on the left, a vertical stroke on the right, and a central vertical stroke with a horizontal bar across it.

shén

God; unusual; mysterious; soul; spirit; divine essence; lively; spiritual being;

The character 鮮 is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. It is composed of two parts: 魚 (fish) on the left and 羊 (sheep) on the right.

xiān

Fresh
fish + sheep
despite salt,
ancient man
preferred to
eat them fresh

The character 義 is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. It features a horizontal bar at the top with three short vertical strokes, and a large, stylized character below it.

yì

justice, righteousness
trad. the aggressive
spear of "I"
becomes subdued
like a sheep
simplified and
balanced justice

The character 戶 is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. It has a thick horizontal top bar, a vertical stroke on the left, and a horizontal bar on the right.

hù

a household;
door; family;

The character 談 is composed of the radical 讠 (speech) on the left and 炎 (fire) on the right. The radical 讠 is formed by three horizontal strokes and a vertical stroke. The radical 炎 is formed by two 火 (fire) radicals stacked vertically.

tán

chat; talk
words next to
the fire

The character 掸 is composed of the radical 扌 (brush) on the left and 單 (single) on the right. The radical 扌 is formed by a vertical stroke and a hook. The radical 單 is formed by two 口 (mouth) radicals stacked vertically and a 巾 (cloth) radical at the bottom.

dǎn

brush away;
dust off; a
brush or
duster; to
dust;

The character 災 is composed of the radical 火 (fire) on the left and 災 (disaster) on the right. The radical 火 is formed by a vertical stroke and a hook. The radical 災 is formed by two 火 (fire) radicals stacked vertically.

zāi

disaster; ca-
lamity;
fire under your
roof

The character 燒 is composed of the radical 火 (fire) on the left and 堯 (Yao) on the right. The radical 火 is formed by a vertical stroke and a hook. The radical 堯 is formed by two 土 (earth) radicals stacked vertically and a 尧 (Yao) radical at the bottom.

shāo

burn; bake;
roast
fire + spear
piled on a
pedestal (as
in tempering
in a kiln)

diǎn

o'clock; (a
measure
word); point;
dot; (decimal
point);

to divine +
mouth (ie:
orally)

the cracks of a
heated tortoise
shell + black

yè

leaves

simplified:
borrows char-
acter for har-
mony

bǐ

pen; pencil
hand holding
bamboo

sū

Revive

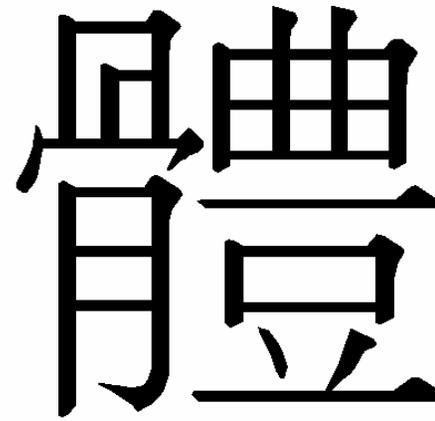
traditional: fish
+ grain +
grass, the
weed that re-
vives easily

simplified:
power, equally
balanced on
both sides +
weed



lái

to come
originally pictograph of
growing
wheat or barley now rice
+ tree
the harvest
"comes"



tǐ

body; form;
style; system;
man + root =
man's root



kè

subject; class;
lesson;
modified
words + fruit



ài

love; affection
regular
form: breathe
into heart
with gracious
motion
simplified:
breathe into
+ hand in
hand

憶

yì

recall; re-
member; re-
flect

traditional:
sound over
heart + sec-
ond heart

simplified:
heart + sec-
ond heart

手

shǒu

hand; con-
venient;

pictograph

愚

yú

stupid;

媿

měi

beautiful;