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# Chinese Language Flashcards

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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

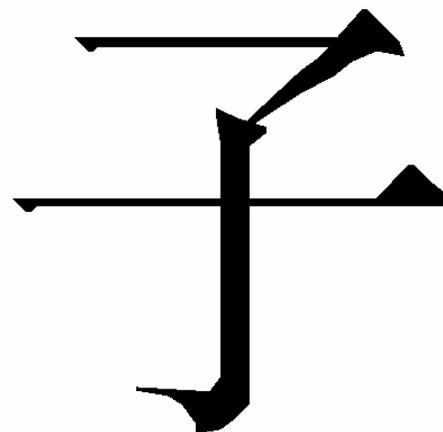
woman kneeling  
or striding  
forward

The character 女 is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It features a horizontal top bar, a vertical stem on the right, and a long, sweeping tail that curves downwards and to the left.

zǐ

infant, child,  
son

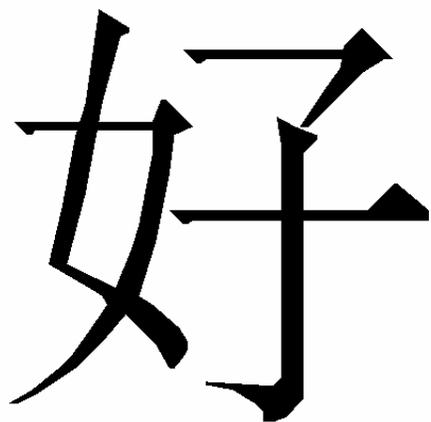
pictography of  
arms out-  
stretched  
in swaddling  
clothes

The character 子 is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It has a horizontal top bar, a vertical stem, and a horizontal bottom bar. The top bar has a small hook on the right side, and the bottom bar has a small hook on the left side.

hǎo

good, excel-  
lent, right

woman + child

The character 好 is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It is a combination of the character 女 (woman) on the left and 子 (child) on the right. The left side has a horizontal top bar and a long, sweeping tail. The right side has a horizontal top bar, a vertical stem, and a horizontal bottom bar.

ān

peace, con-  
tentment

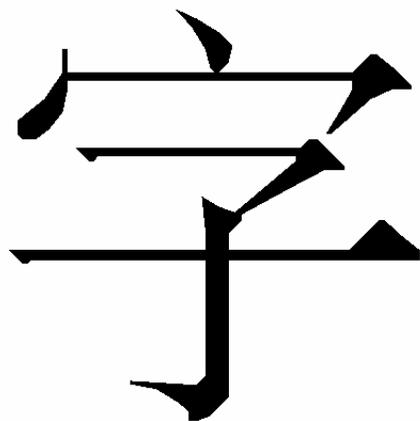
woman under  
your roof

The character 安 is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It is a combination of the character 宀 (roof) on top and 女 (woman) on the bottom. The top part has a horizontal bar with a hook on the right. The bottom part has a vertical stem and a long, sweeping tail.

zì

Letter, symbol,  
character,  
written word

books cherished like a  
child in under  
your roof



shǐ

Pig, hog  
swine

pictography of  
belly, paws,  
back and tail



jiā

house, family

a pig under  
your roof gave  
prosperity



jià

to marry a  
man

adds home to  
woman

an incentive  
for a woman  
to marry



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 (woman). It is written in a bold, black, sans-serif style.

mù

tree / wood

The character 木 is a simple black Chinese character representing a tree or wood. It consists of a vertical stem with two diagonal branches and a horizontal crossbar.

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 (tree) and the bottom part of the character 子 (child). It is written in a bold, black, sans-serif style.

qī

to roost /  
perch / nest

to live in pov-  
erty

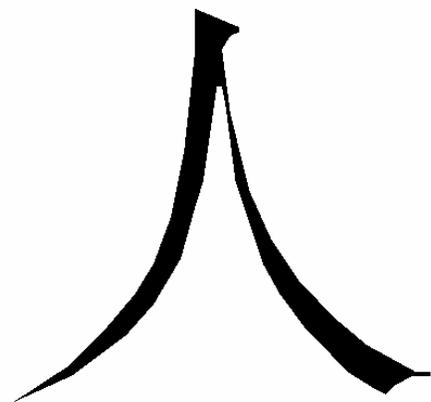
to seek refuge  
tree + west

The character 栖 is composed of the left part of the character 木 (tree) and the right part of the character 西 (west). It is written in a bold, black, sans-serif style.

rén

man; person;  
human

pictograph of  
man astride  
the world



dà

big; great

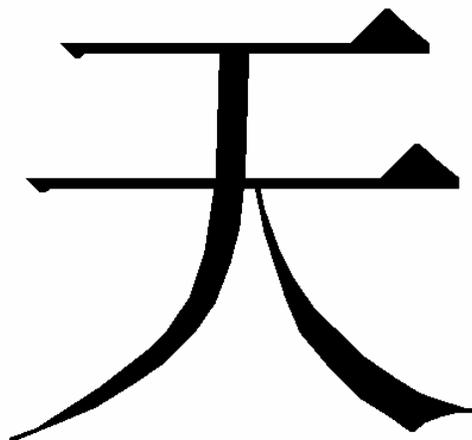
man with  
arms out-  
stretched



tiān

heaven; sky;  
day

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



fū

husband; dis-  
tinguished  
person

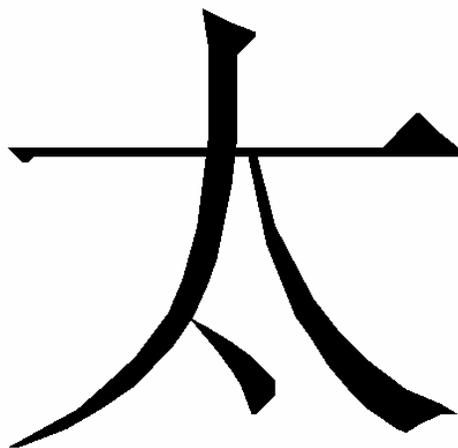
big man with  
hairpin quali-  
fied as pro-  
spective hus-  
band and dis-  
tinguished  
man



tài

too; over; excessive

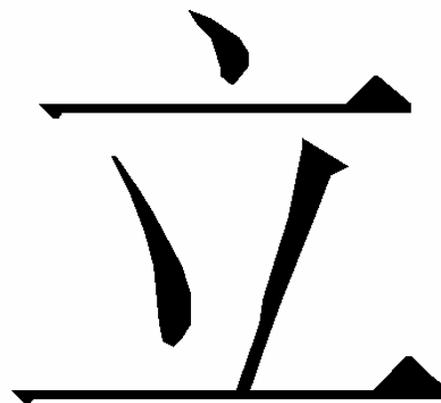
big man underscored



lì

stand / rise up

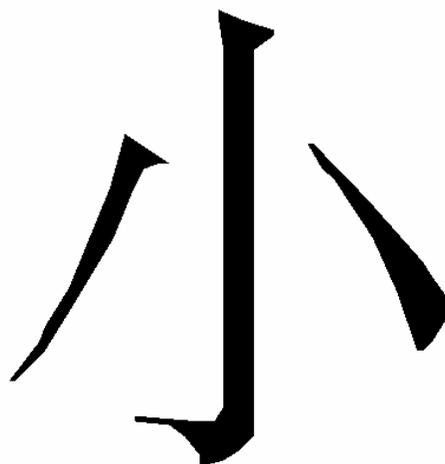
legs standing on firm ground



xiǎo

small / petty / young

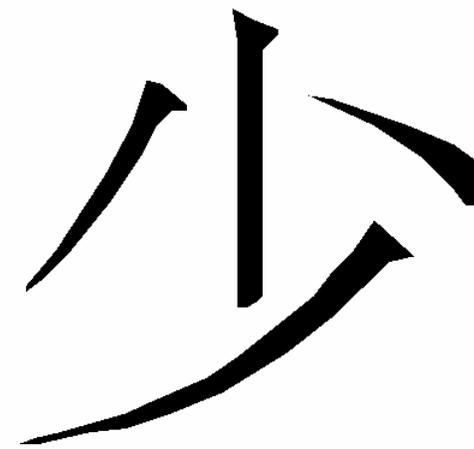
from division (/ \) of an object (J) making smaller



shǎo

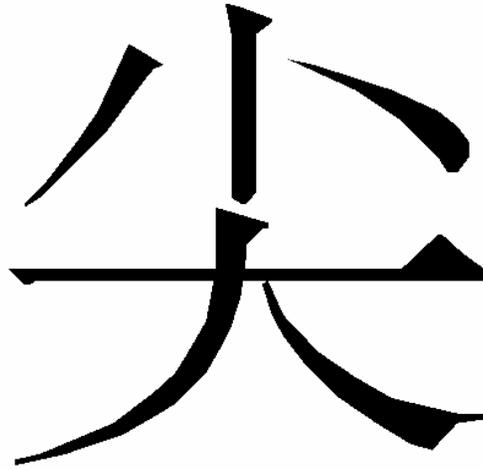
less / few / lack

small cut smaller



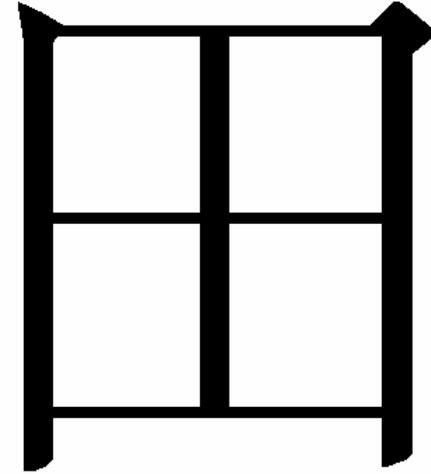
jiān

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



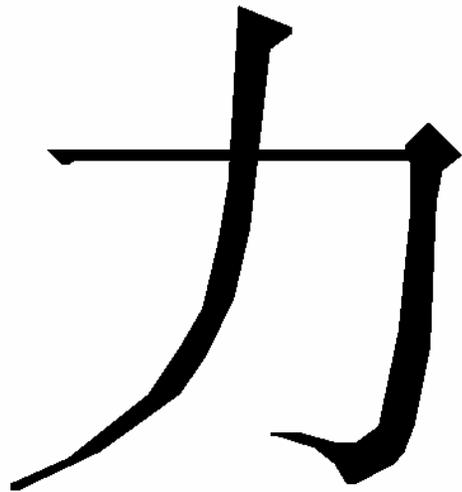
tián

rice field /  
grain field/  
farm  
  
pictograph of  
ploughed field



lì

strength /  
force / power  
  
pictograph of  
a clenched  
forearm



nán

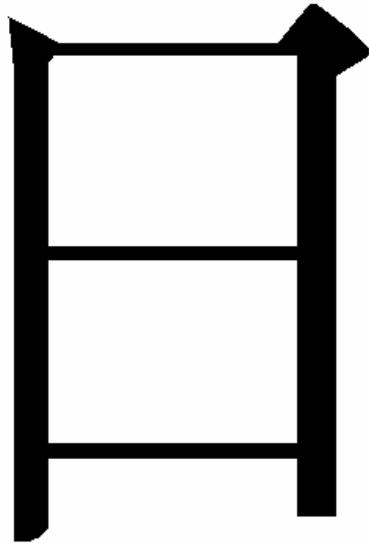
man / male /  
masculine  
  
a field where  
strength is  
exerted



rì

sun / day

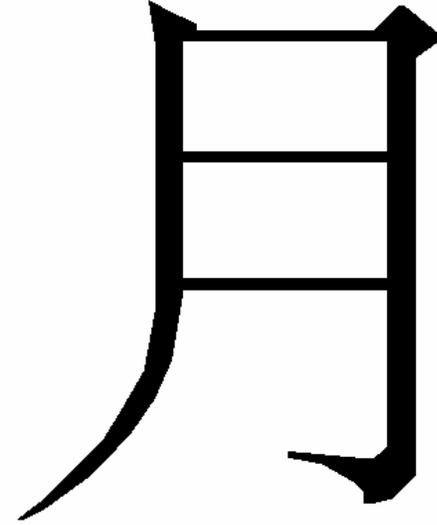
formerly circle  
with rays, now  
squared off



yuè

moon / month

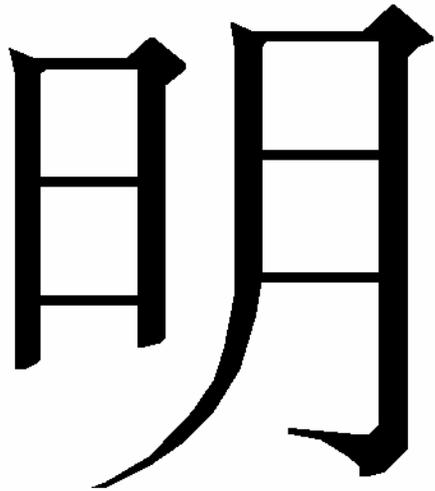
pictograph of  
old moon  
waning



míng

brilliant /  
bright /  
enlightened

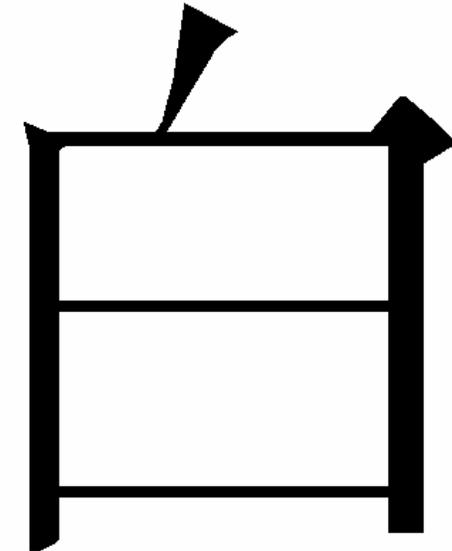
the sun and  
the moon! =  
brilliant Ming  
Dynasty



bái

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

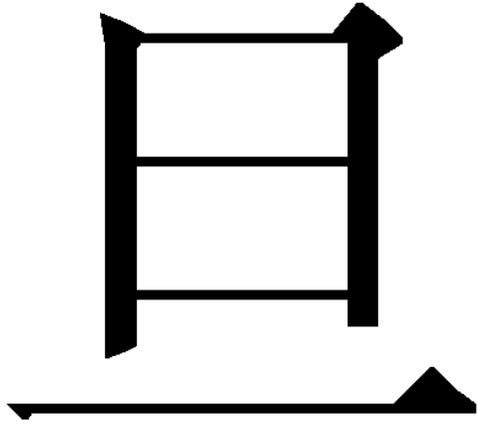
first ray of sun  
over the  
horizon



dàn

dawn / day-  
break/ day

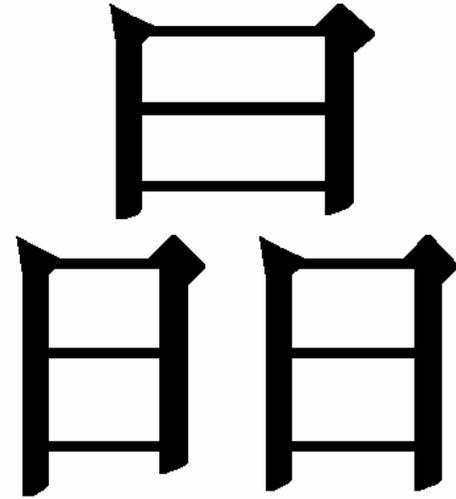
appearance of  
sun over the  
horizon



jīng

crystal /  
brilliant /  
sparkling

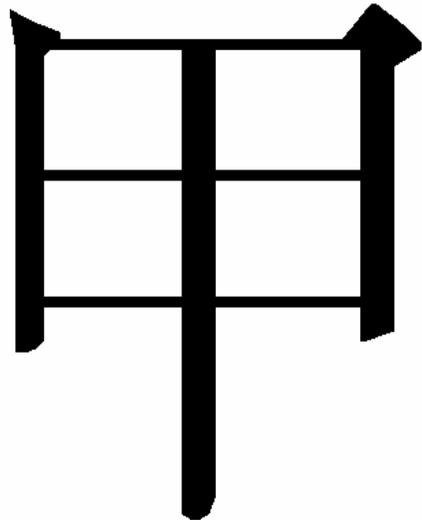
three suns  
into crystal-  
lized pattern



jiǎ

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

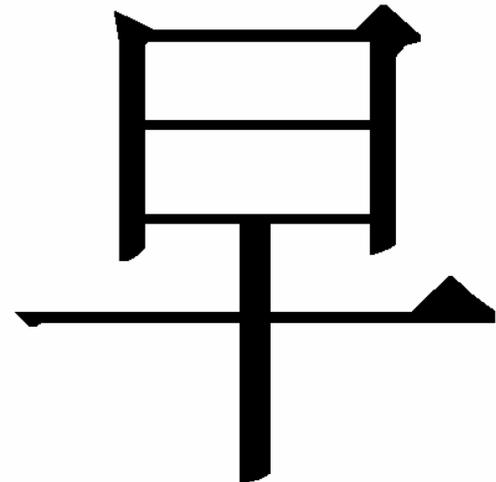
from + (ten) in  
square, clari-  
fied by line ex-  
tended, similar  
to "helmet"  
thus any kind  
of protective  
cover



zǎo

early /  
morning

sun at height  
of man's hel-  
met also "first"  
thus first sun  
or early morn-  
ing



xiū

rest / cease  
man resting  
against a tree

The character '休' is composed of two parts: a vertical line on the left representing a person, and a tree-like structure on the right representing a tree. The person's arm is resting against the tree.

dōng

East  
sun peeping  
thru tree

The character '东' is composed of a tree-like structure on the left and a sun-like shape on the right. The sun is positioned behind the tree, with rays peeping through the branches.

xī

West  
bird roosting  
in nest  
  
(combination  
east+west =  
all things)

The character '西' is a pictograph of a bird's nest. It features a horizontal line at the top representing the nest, with two vertical lines on the sides representing the bird's body. The bird is facing right.

shàng

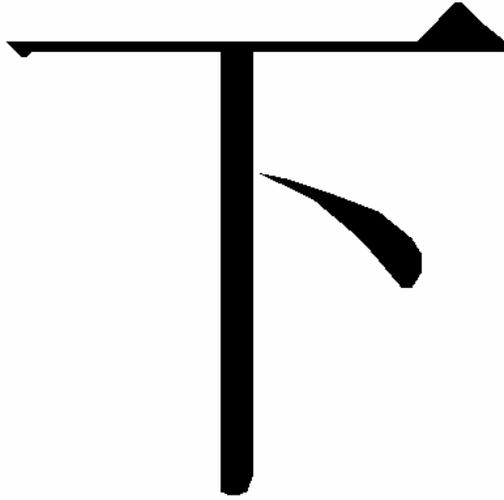
up / above /  
ascend  
  
pictograph

The character '上' is a pictograph of a person standing on a platform. It consists of a vertical line representing the person, a horizontal line representing the platform, and a horizontal line at the top representing the person's head.

xià

down / below /  
descend

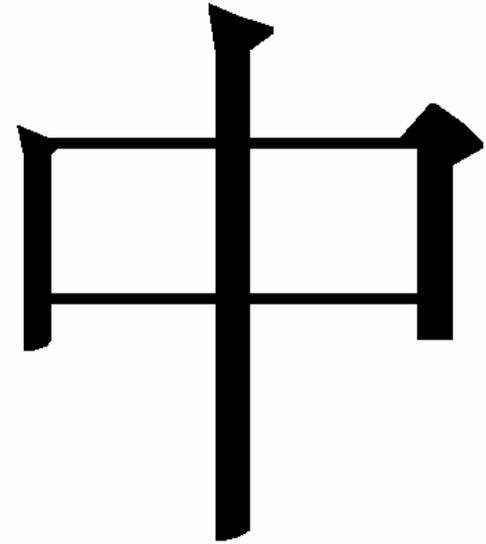
pictograph  
(below hori-  
zon)



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 vertical stroke on the right side that curves at the bottom, and a horizontal crossbar that intersects with a diagonal stroke on the left. The overall shape is compact and dynamic.

gē

spear / lance

pictograph of  
ancient  
weapon w/  
hook and  
crossbar

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

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.

nǐ

you

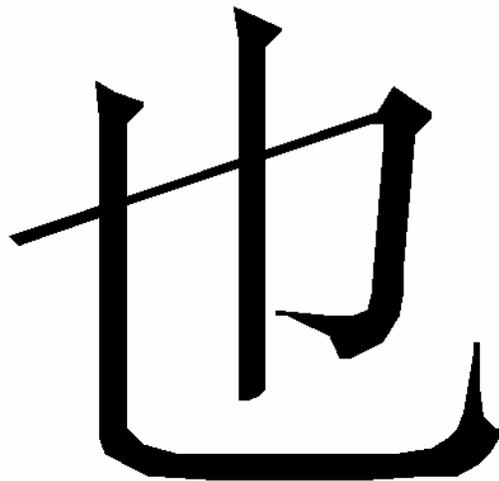
person +  
same weight =  
(male) you

The character '你' is 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.

yě

also / in addition to

(joining man to his) drinking horn



tā

he / she

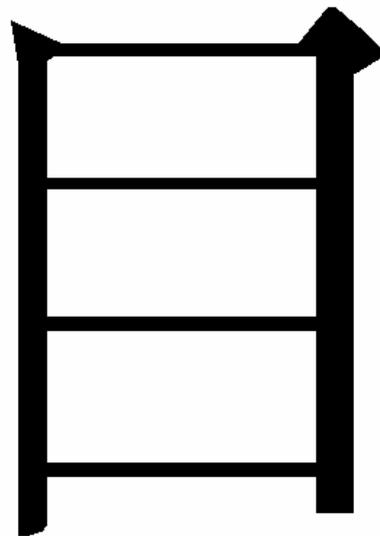
(that) person  
+ also



mù

Eye

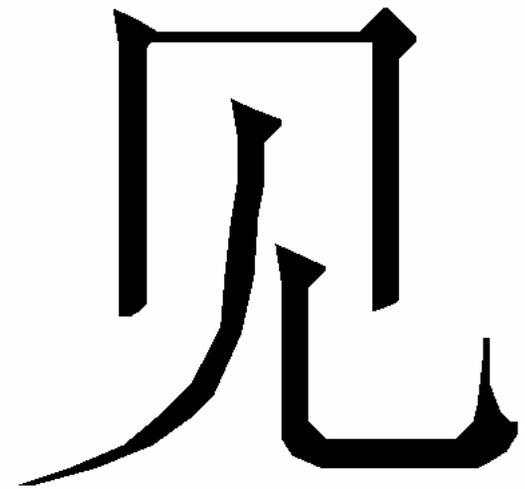
squared off pictograph -  
two eyelids and a pupil



jiàn

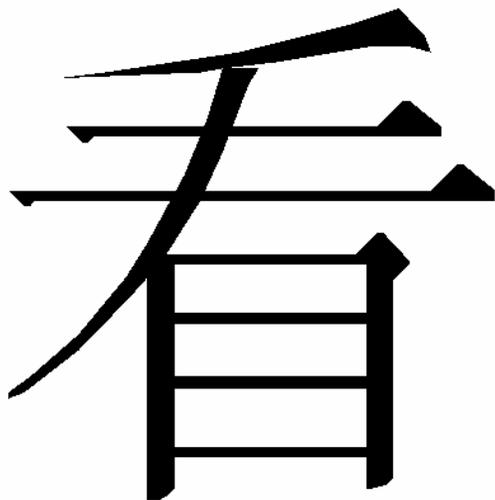
to see

originally eye  
on top of legs



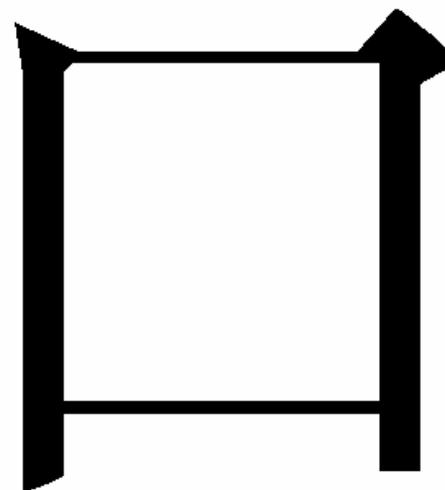
kàn

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



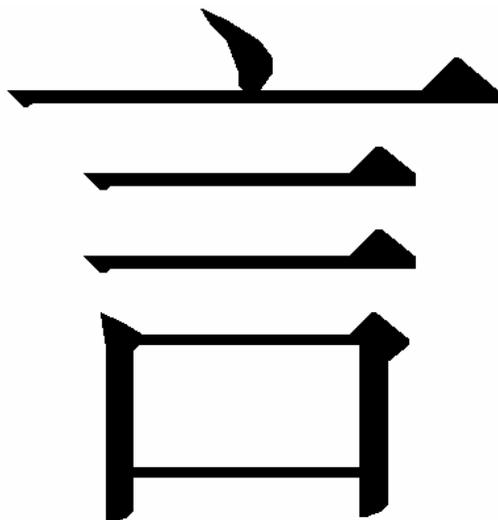
kǒu

mouth /  
opening  
pictograph



yán

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



xìn

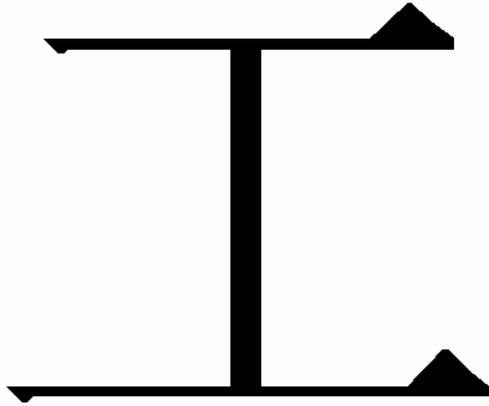
letter; true; to  
believe; sign;  
evidence;

man standing  
by his words  
man transmit-



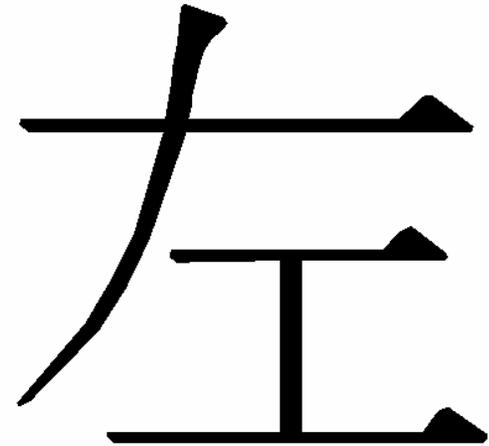
gōng

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



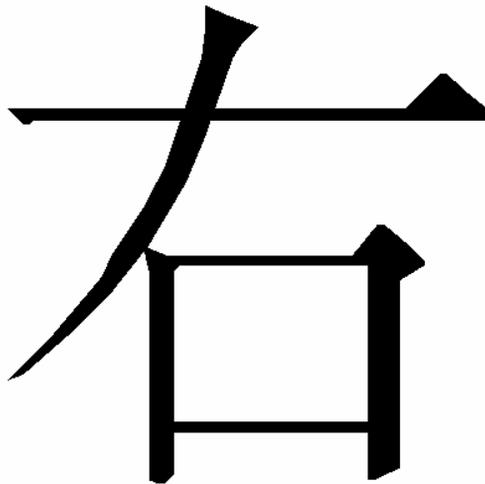
zuǒ

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



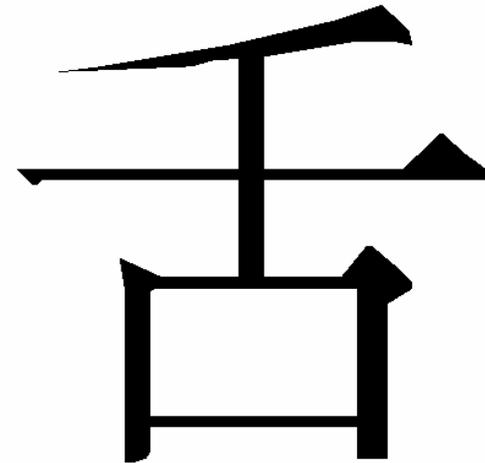
yòu

Right  
hand which  
feeds mouth



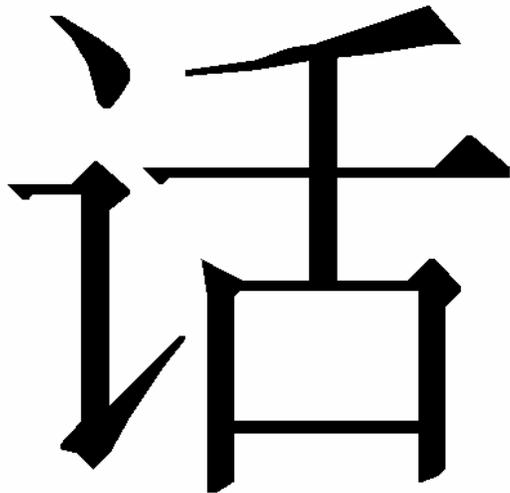
shé

Tongue  
tongue stick-  
ing out of the  
mouth



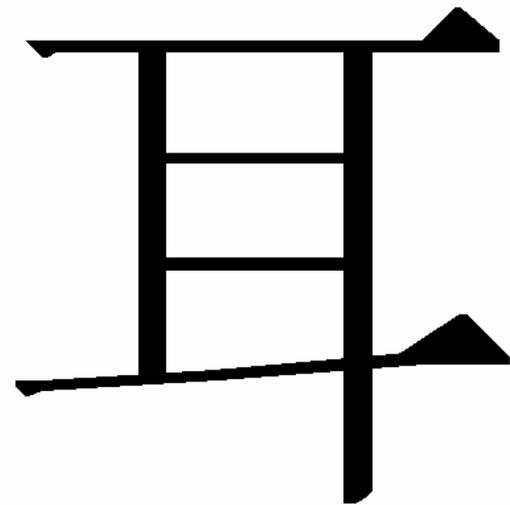
huà

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

bā

Eight (8)

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

duì

exchange or  
barter, to  
cash;

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

shuō

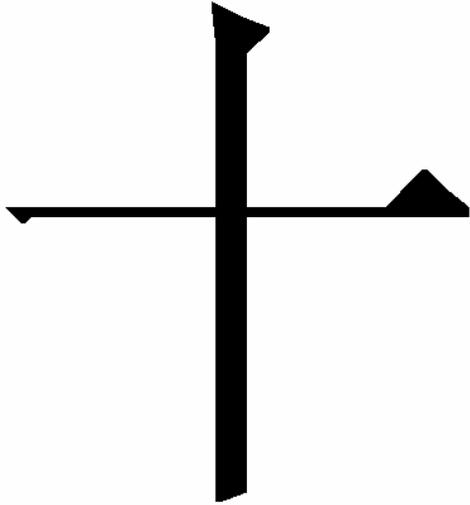
speak; theory;  
story

words being  
exchanged  
(pontificating)  
“by elder  
brother”

shí

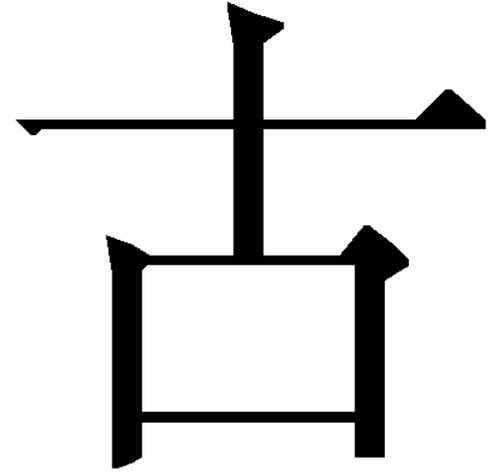
Ten (10)

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



gǔ

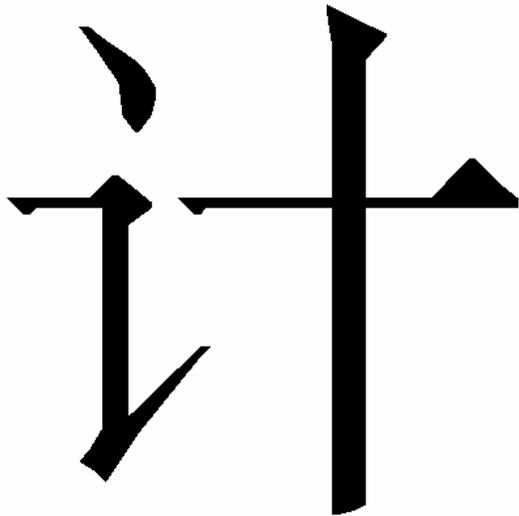
old; ancient  
also Chinese  
surname  
ten mouths =  
tradition



jì

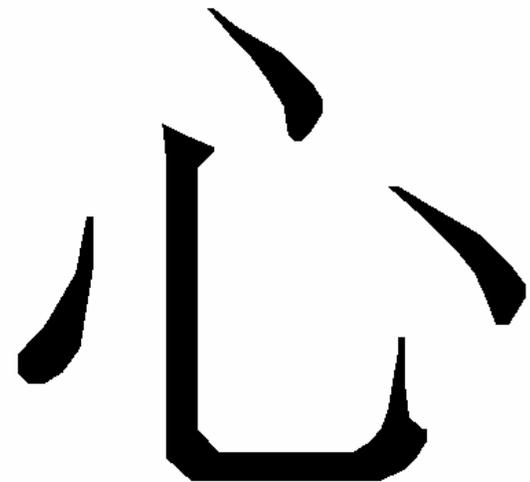
reckon; calcu-  
late; plan;  
scheme

sayings + ten  
implies ability  
to calculate



xīn

Heart, mind  
pictograph



nù

indignant;

anger; pas-  
sion; rage

slave (hand+  
woman)

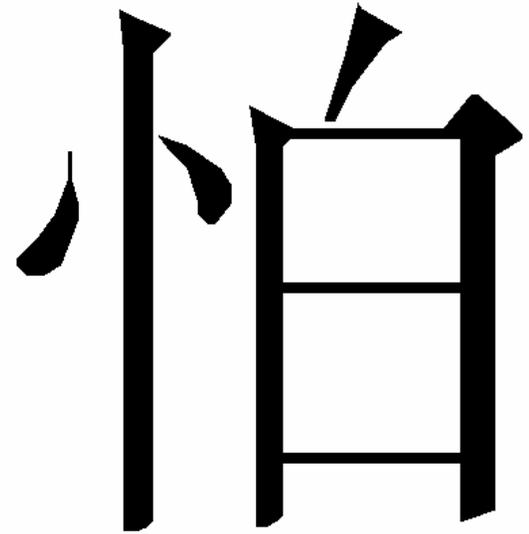
bonded to  
heart



pà

to be afraid; to  
fear;

(white heart)  
variant of  
heart + white



shēn

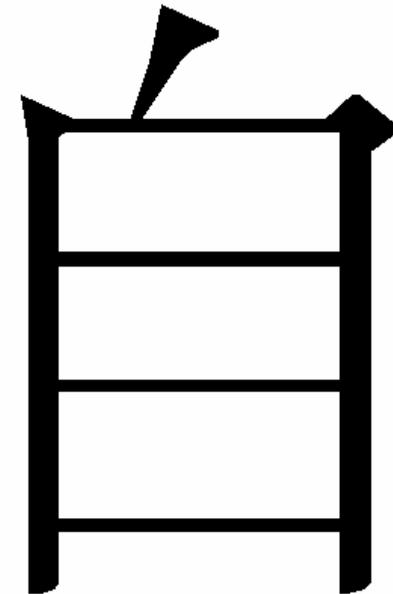
body; torso;  
person; life;  
status; preg-  
nancy;

originally:  
pregnant  
(pictograph)



zì

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



chǐ

Teeth

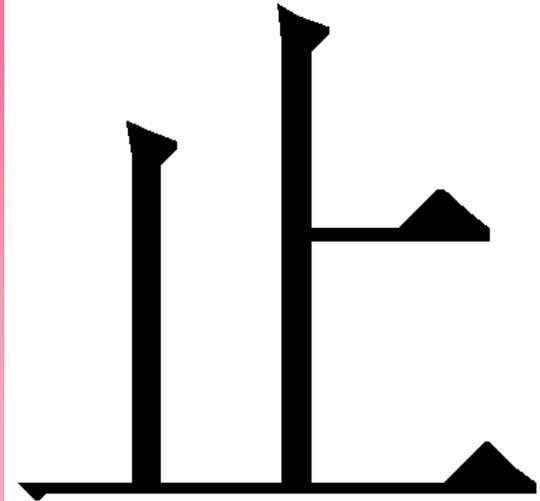
stops (foot) in  
a man's  
mouth = teeth



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);

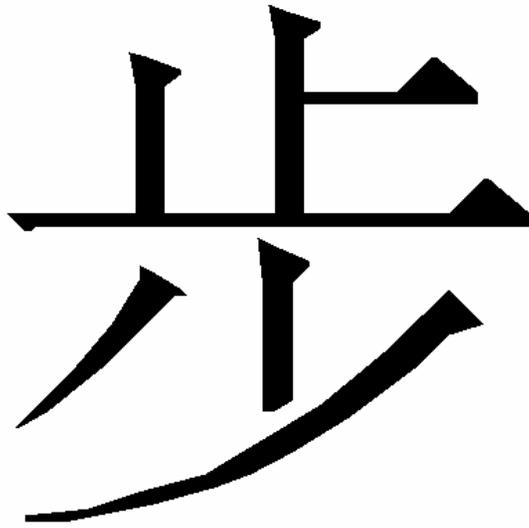
uncompleted  
circle flowing  
into a circle



bù

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

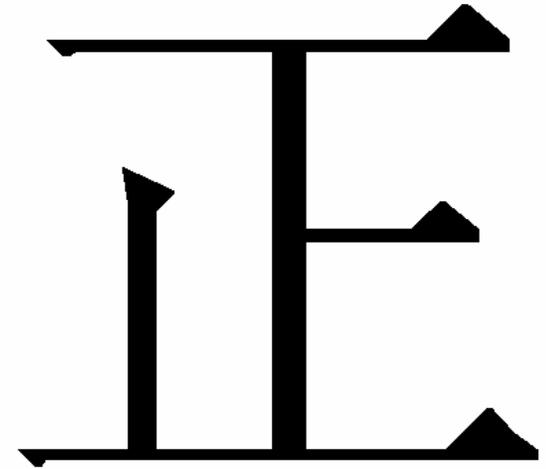
ideograph of  
right foot fol-  
lowing left  
foot



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"

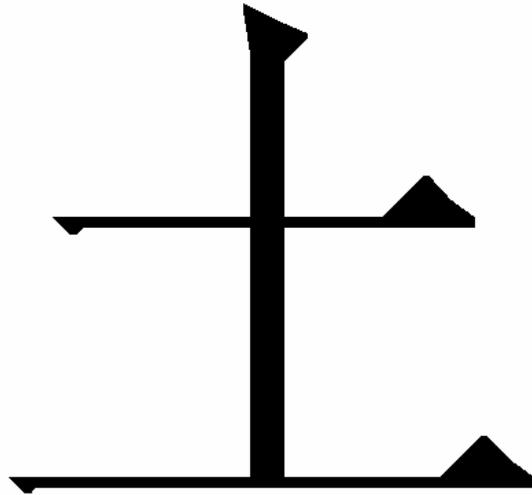
thus bending  
and stopping  
= walking



tǔ

earth; soil;  
ground, dust

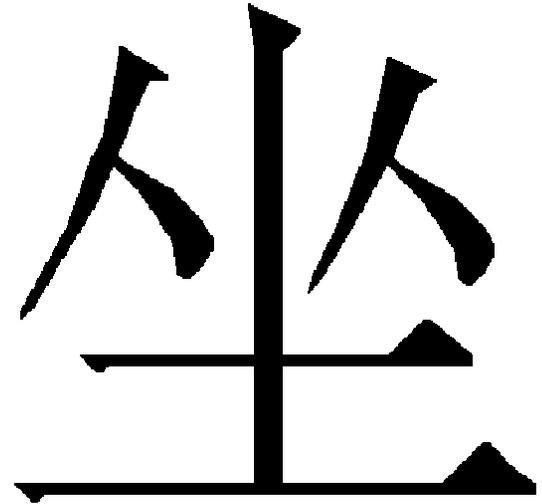
earth = two  
layers from  
which plants  
sprout



zuò

to sit; seat

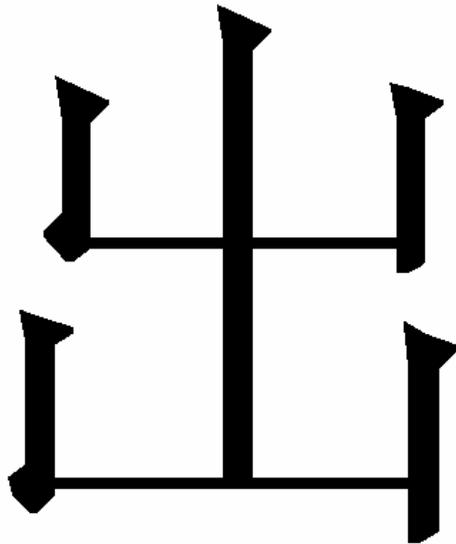
two men talk-  
ing face to  
face on the  
earth



chū

go out; issue;  
produce

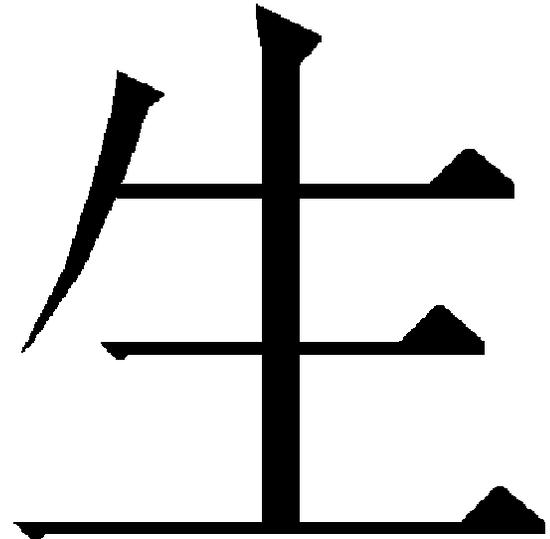
stalk thrusting  
out of pot



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 compound character. It consists of the radical 女 (woman) on the left and the radical 生 (born) on the right. The strokes are bold and black, set against a white background with a vertical pink line to the left.

bèi

shells; valu-  
ables  
pictograph of  
cowrie shell

The character 贝 is a pictograph of a cowrie shell. It features a square top with a horizontal line, and a curved bottom that tapers to a point on the left. The strokes are bold and black, set against a white background with a vertical pink line to the left.

jiàn

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

The character 贱 is a compound character. It consists of the radical 贝 (cowrie shell) on the left and the radical 戔 (two spears shattering) on the right. The strokes are bold and black, set against a white background with a vertical pink line to the left.

guì

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

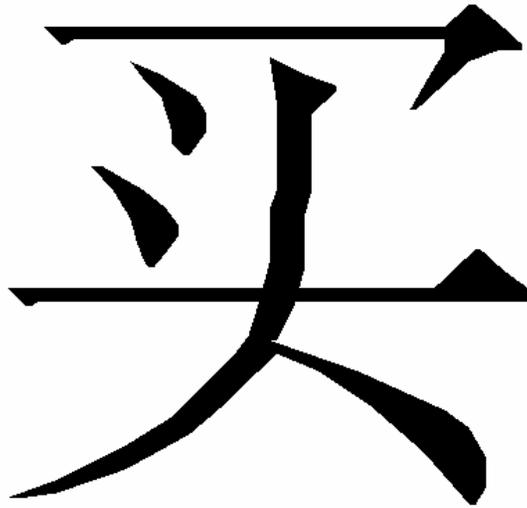
The character 贵 is a compound character. It consists of the radical 中 (basket) on top and the radical 贝 (cowrie shell) on the bottom. The strokes are bold and black, set against a white background with a vertical pink line to the left.

mǎi

Buy

modified net  
and cowrie  
shells

(traditional  
form used for  
bargain buys,  
etc.)



mài

Sell

loading "buy"  
with simplified  
"out"



shuǐ

water/ river

surg-ing wa-  
ters with a  
central main-  
stream and 4  
surg-ing wa-  
ters

variant form  
uses only 3  
drops of water



yǒng

everlasting;  
perpetual; for-  
ever

but come and  
go, but water  
flows forever

water + added  
foams and rip-  
ples



bīng

Ice

radical water  
dripping and  
freezing into  
icicle

The character '冰' (bīng) is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It consists of a vertical stroke on the right side, with a horizontal stroke at the top. On the left side, there are two curved strokes that resemble icicles or water droplets, one above the other, attached to the vertical stroke.

quán

spring;  
fountain

pure + water

The character '泉' (quán) is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It features a horizontal stroke at the top with a small hook on the left. Below this, there are two horizontal strokes, and then a vertical stroke that curves to the right at the bottom. On the left side, there are two curved strokes that resemble water droplets or a spring's flow, attached to the vertical stroke.

yǔ

Rain

raindrops fall-  
ing down

from cloud in  
the heavens

The character '雨' (yǔ) is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It has a horizontal stroke at the top with a small hook on the right. Below this, there are two vertical strokes that curve to the right at the bottom. On the left side, there are two curved strokes that resemble raindrops, one above the other, attached to the vertical strokes.

lòu

funnel; to  
leak; to let  
out; to divulge

rain under a  
roof + more  
water as radi-  
cal

The character '漏' (lòu) is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It features a horizontal stroke at the top with a small hook on the right. Below this, there are two horizontal strokes, and then a vertical stroke that curves to the right at the bottom. On the left side, there are two curved strokes that resemble raindrops, one above the other, attached to the vertical stroke.

yún

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

The character '云' (yún) is composed of three horizontal strokes at the top and two diagonal strokes at the bottom. The top stroke is a simple horizontal line. The second stroke is a horizontal line with a small upward-pointing arrow at its right end. The third stroke is a horizontal line with a small upward-pointing arrow at its right end. The bottom-left stroke is a diagonal line starting from the middle of the second stroke and going down and to the left, ending with a small downward-pointing arrow. The bottom-right stroke is a diagonal line starting from the middle of the second stroke and going down and to the right, ending with a small downward-pointing arrow.

xuě

Snow  
rain + hand  
rain you can  
hold in your  
hand

The character '雪' (xuě) is composed of a top radical '雨' (yǔ) and a bottom radical '手' (shǒu). The '雨' radical has four horizontal strokes, with the top one having an upward-pointing arrow at its right end. The '手' radical has three horizontal strokes, with the top one having an upward-pointing arrow at its right end. The character is written in a stylized, bold font.

diàn

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

The character '电' (diàn) is composed of a top radical '雨' (yǔ) and a bottom radical '田' (tián). The '雨' radical has four horizontal strokes, with the top one having an upward-pointing arrow at its right end. The '田' radical has three horizontal strokes, with the top one having an upward-pointing arrow at its right end. The character is written in a stylized, bold font.

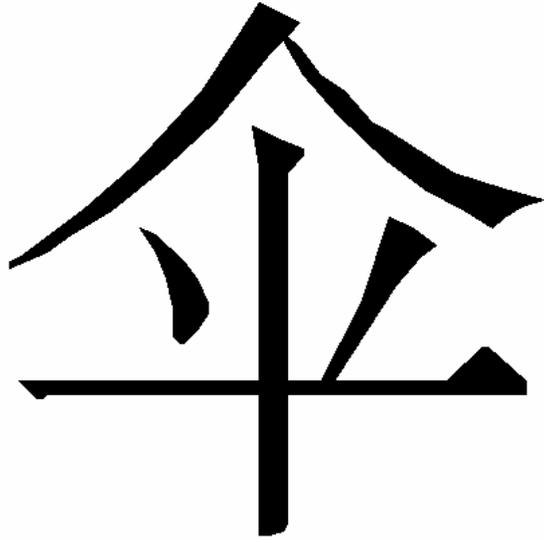
léi

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

The character '雷' (léi) is composed of a top radical '雨' (yǔ) and a bottom radical '田' (tián). The '雨' radical has four horizontal strokes, with the top one having an upward-pointing arrow at its right end. The '田' radical has three horizontal strokes, with the top one having an upward-pointing arrow at its right end. The character is written in a stylized, bold font.

sǎn

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



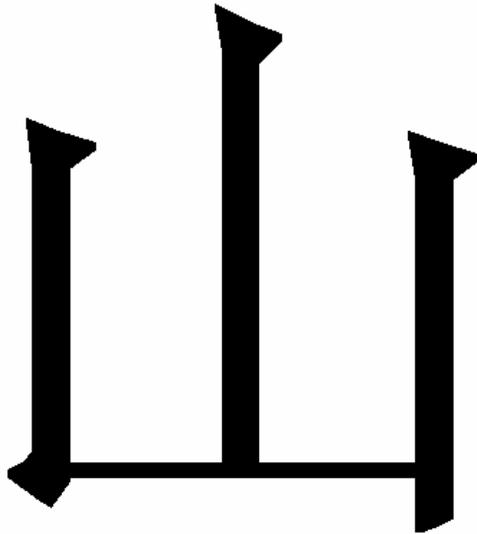
chuān

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



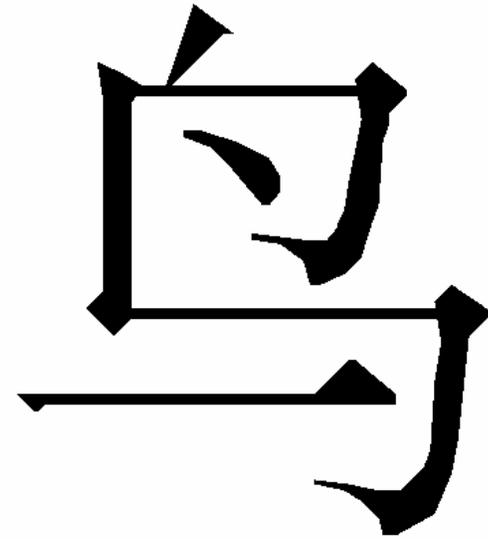
shān

mountain, hill  
a range with  
three towering  
peaks



niǎo

Bird  
bird in a cage

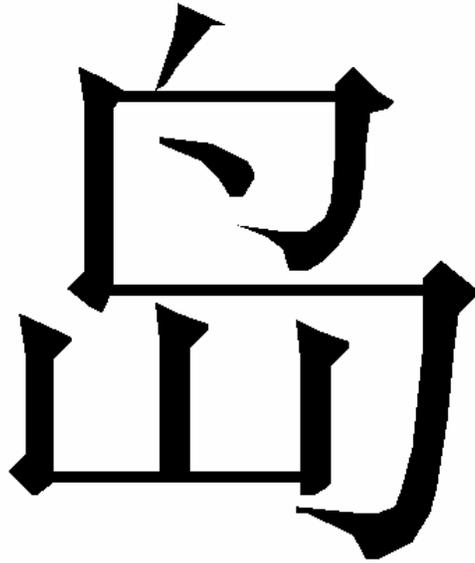


dǎo

Island

birds perch on  
peak  
(mountain)

sticking out of  
ocean and  
forming an is-  
land

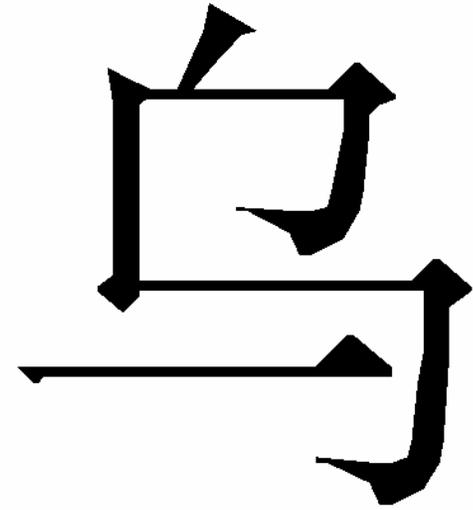


wū

Crow

same as "bird"  
but with eyes  
omitted

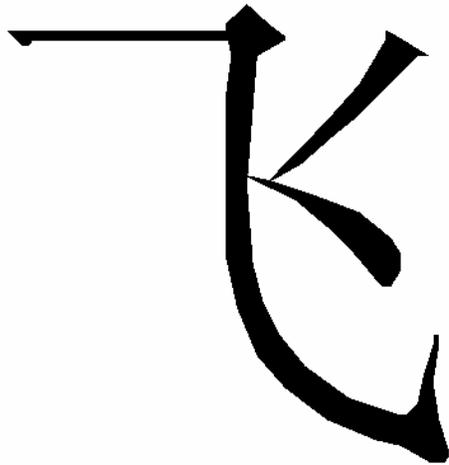
(can't see  
eyes on black  
birds?)



fēi

Fly

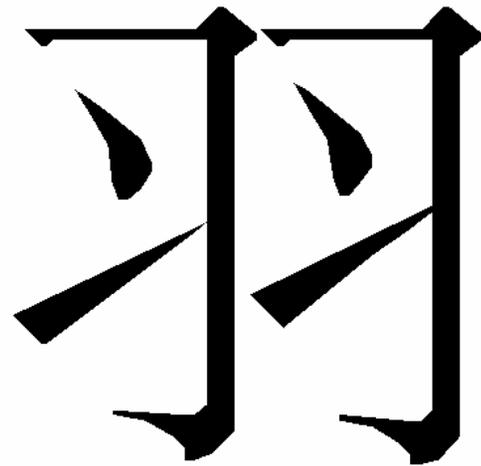
flying crane  
with neck  
tucked in, and  
wings



yǔ

feathers,  
wings

pictograph of  
a pair of wings

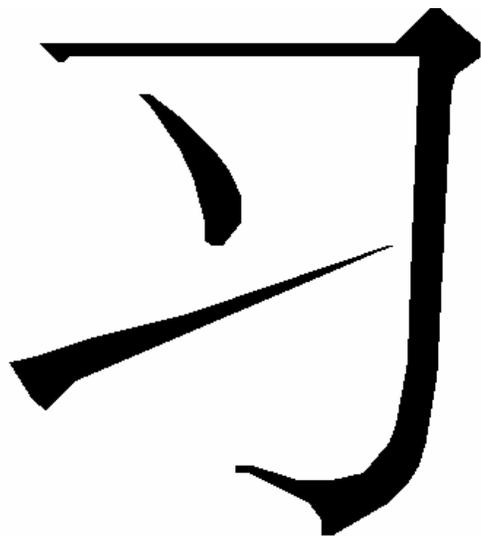


xí

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

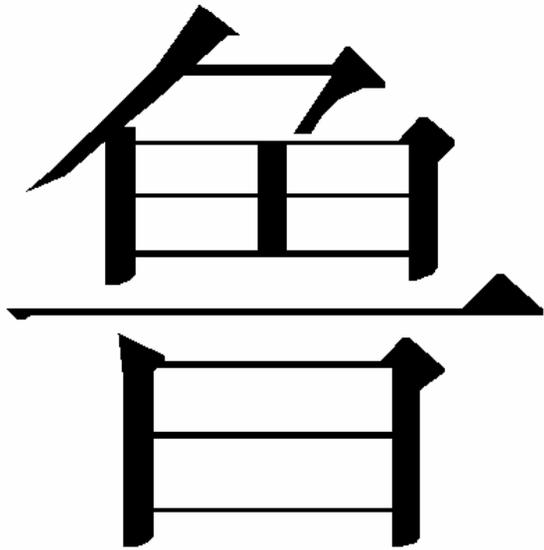


lu

stupid, simple

trad fish +  
nose

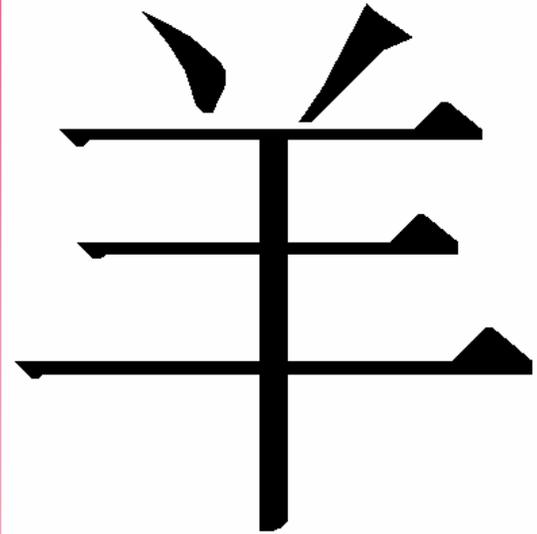
corrupted to  
fish + speak



yáng

(surname);  
sheep, goat

frontal picto-  
graph of  
horns, etc



xiān

Fresh

fish + sheep

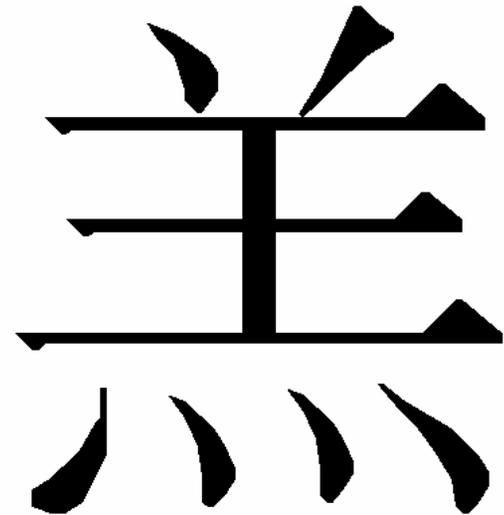
despite salt,  
ancient man  
preferred to  
eat them fresh



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 consists of 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 features a large, vertical stroke on the left that curves slightly to the right at the bottom. To the right of this stroke, there are two smaller, vertical strokes that resemble the shape of a fan or a flame.

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 consists of a vertical stroke on the left that curves slightly to the right at the bottom. To the right of this stroke, there are two smaller, vertical strokes that resemble the shape of a fire or a spear.

hēi

black; dark;  
Heilongjiang Province  
(abbrev.);

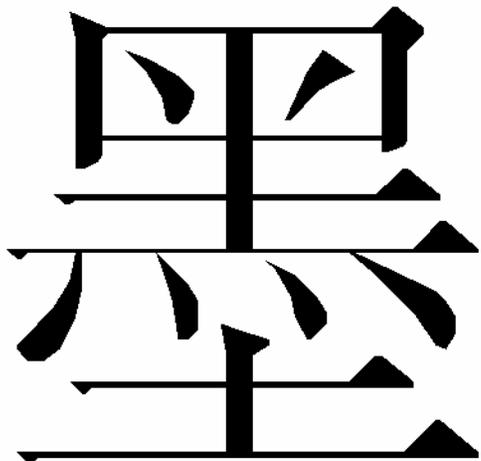
modified flame under a window  
blackening it

The character 黑 (hēi) is written in a bold, black, traditional style. It features a large, vertical stroke on the left that curves slightly to the right at the bottom. To the right of this stroke, there are two smaller, vertical strokes that resemble the shape of a flame or a window.

mò

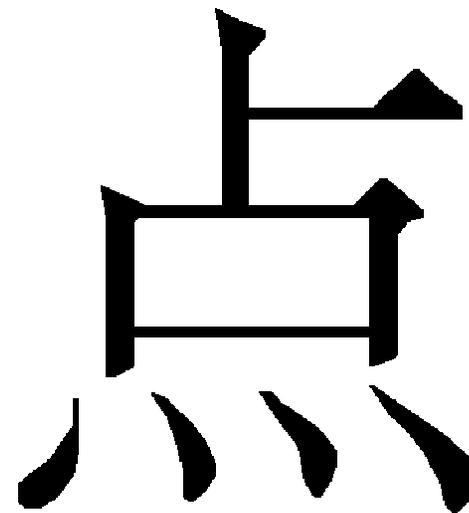
ink; Chinese ink

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



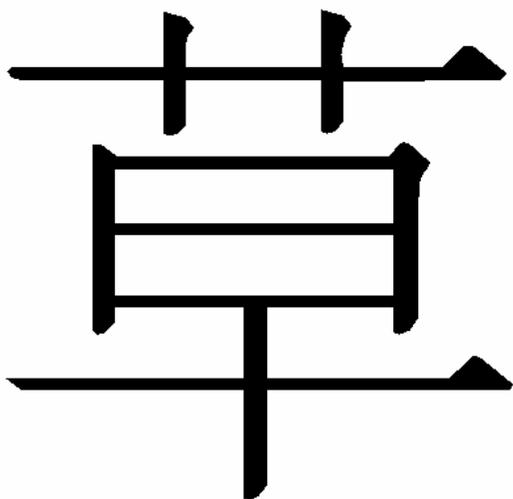
diǎn

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



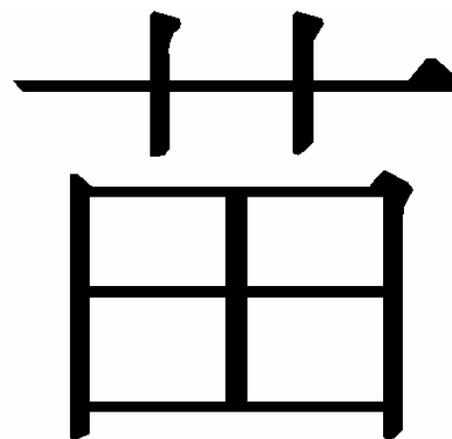
cǎo

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 under-  
goes radical  
change

The character '花' (huā) is a simplified Chinese character. It features a horizontal stroke at the top with two small triangles pointing upwards. Below this, there are two vertical strokes that curve outwards at the top, and a large, sweeping stroke that curves downwards and to the right, ending in a hook.

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 stroke at the top with two small triangles pointing upwards. Below this, there are two vertical strokes that curve outwards at the top, and a large, sweeping stroke that curves downwards and to the right, ending in a hook.

yīng

(surname);  
English;  
brave; heroic

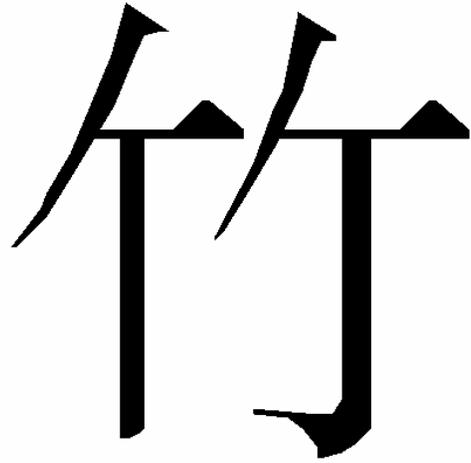
mature man,  
in a large  
space, thick  
with vegeta-  
tion = brave  
man in the  
jungle

The character '英' (yīng) is a simplified Chinese character. It features a horizontal stroke at the top with two small triangles pointing upwards. Below this, there are two vertical strokes that curve outwards at the top, and a large, sweeping stroke that curves downwards and to the right, ending in a hook.

zhú

Bamboo

pictograph of  
two whorls of  
bamboo  
leaves



bǐ

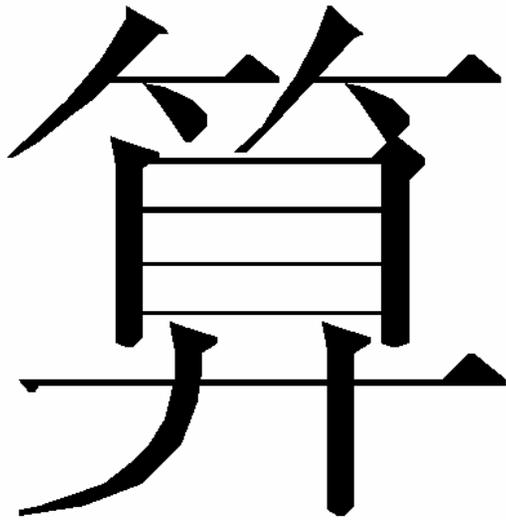
pen; pencil,  
writing brush;  
to write or  
compose; the  
strokes of Chi-  
nese charac-  
ters hand  
holding bam-  
boo



suàn

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

two hands +  
abacus made  
of bamboo



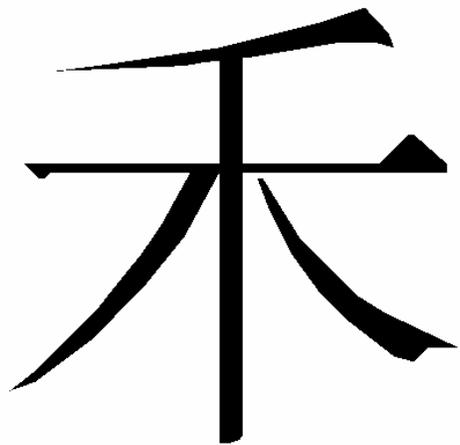
xiào

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

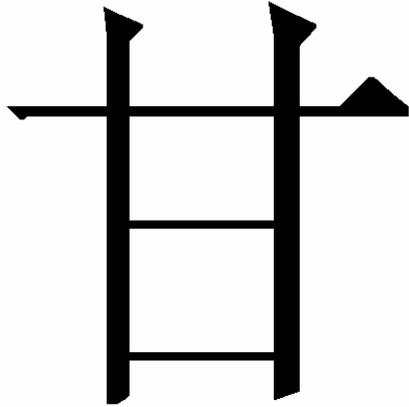
Year

man bearing  
sheaf of grain  
- the job of the  
year



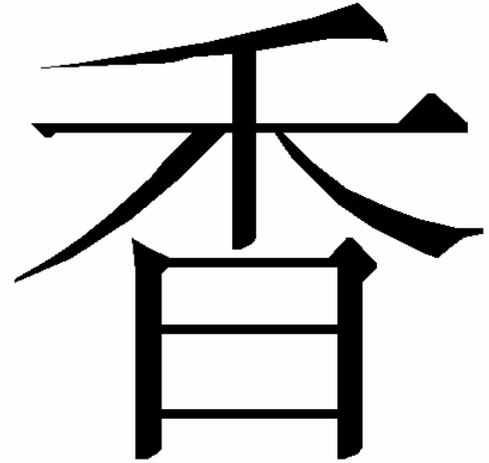
gān

(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 small 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 shape.

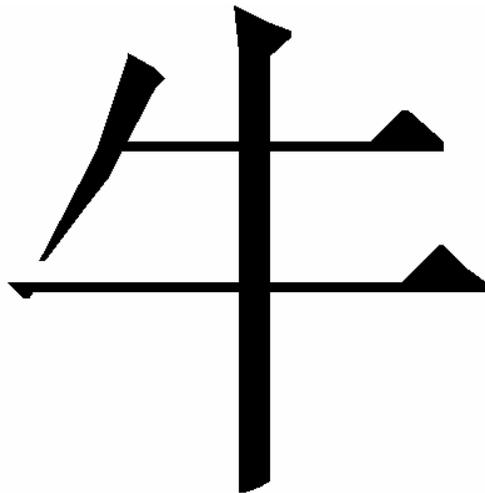
xiāng

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 small hook on the right side. Below this, there are two vertical strokes, one on the left and one on the right, both with a small 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 shape.

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 small 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 shape.

jiàn

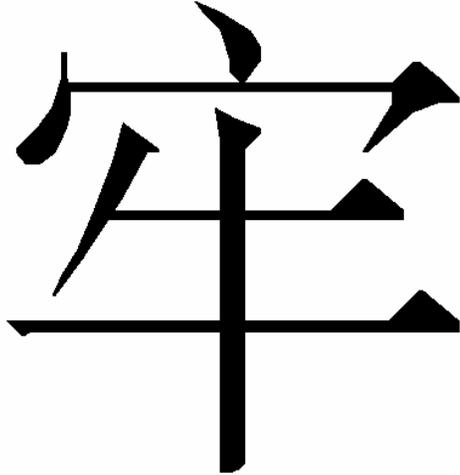
piece; article  
a measure  
word for thing,  
clothes, item;

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 small 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 shape.

láo

cattle pen;  
prison

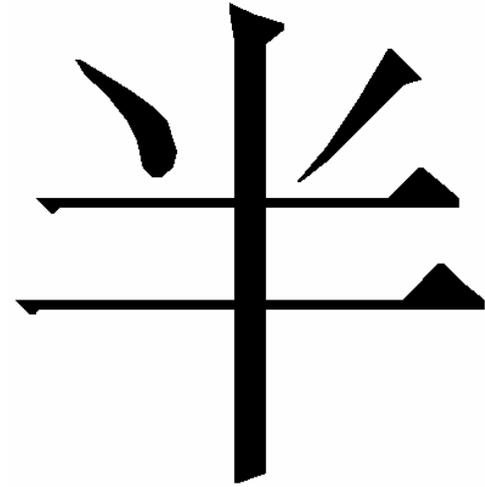
formerly cattle  
inside a corral  
but now under  
a roof



bàn

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

from cutting  
ox into two  
halves,  
lengthwise for  
exact division



bàn

companion;  
associate;  
mate

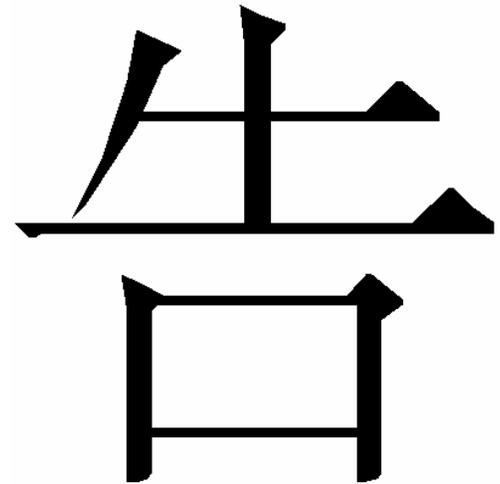
man + half  
completes the  
whole



gào

to tell; to in-  
form; to say;

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



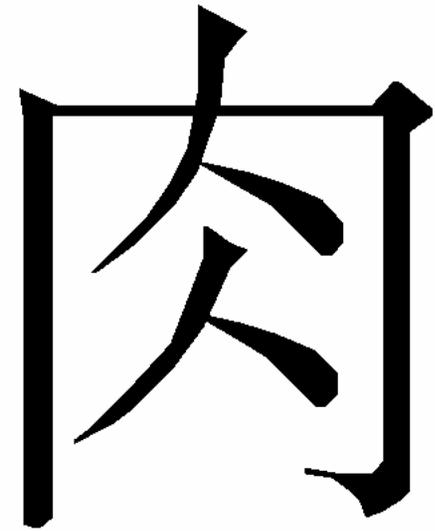
mù

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



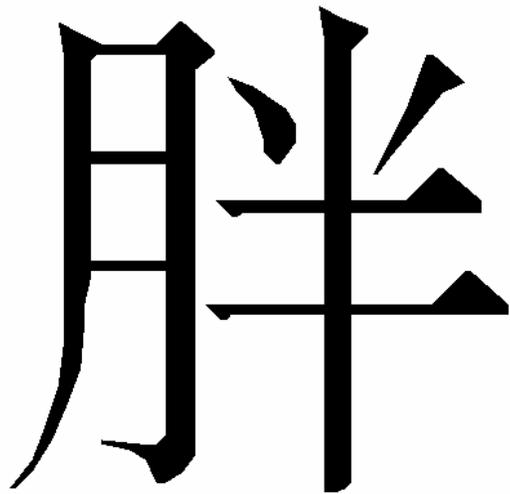
ròu

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



pàng

fat; fleshy,  
plump  
flesh + half a  
bull



yǒu

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

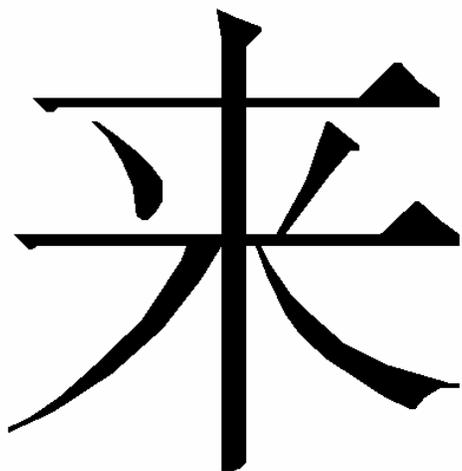


lái

to come

originally pictograph of growing wheat or barley

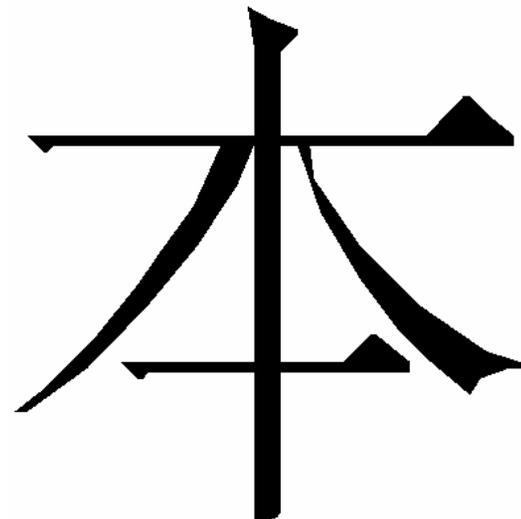
now rice + tree the harvest "comes"



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



tǐ

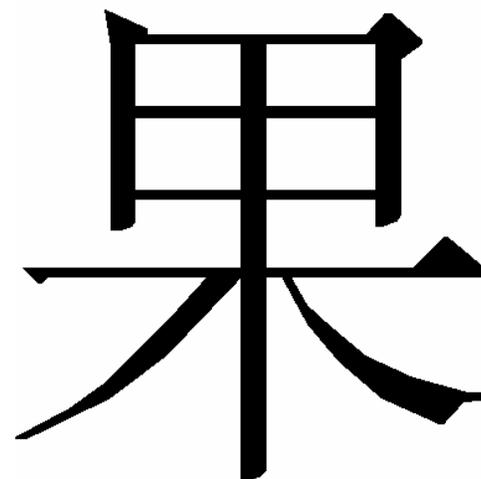
body; form; style; system;

man + root = man's root



guǒ

fruit; result; field on top of tree (crop of trees)



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.

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 longer than the middle one.

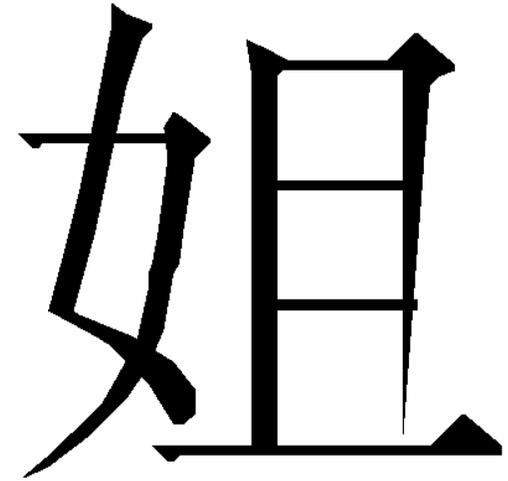
mèi

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

The character 棲 is a large, bold black font. It consists of a vertical stroke on the left, a horizontal stroke across the top, and a complex structure on the right that resembles a bird's nest or a person sitting.

qī

to roost /  
perch / nest

to live in  
poverty

to seek ref-  
uge

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

The character 東 is a large, bold black font. It features a horizontal stroke at the top, a vertical stroke in the middle, and a curved stroke at the bottom that sweeps from the right towards the left.

dōng

East

traditional:  
sun peeping  
thru tree

The character 見 is a large, bold black font. It has a square-like top with three horizontal lines inside, and a curved stroke at the bottom that sweeps from the left towards the right.

jiàn

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

originally eye  
on top of legs

The character 說 is a large, bold black font. It is composed of three stacked horizontal strokes on the left, a vertical stroke in the middle, and a curved stroke at the bottom that sweeps from the right towards the left.

shuō

to speak; to  
say;

words being  
exchanged  
(pontificating)  
by elder  
brother

The character 齿 (chǐ) is composed of the top part of the character 止 (to stop) and the bottom part of the character 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 the character 貝 (shell) and the bottom part of the character 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 character 貝 (shell) on the left and the character 戔 (to shatter) on the right. 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 character 虫 (insect) on top and the character 貝 (shell) on the bottom. 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/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', which is a large, stylized character with a central vertical stroke and four curved strokes extending outwards from the top, resembling the ribs of an umbrella.

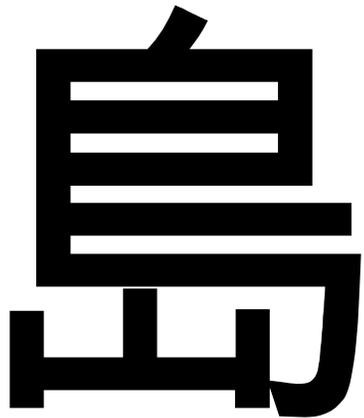
sǎn

Umbrella  
the traditional  
form has four  
persons un-  
der cover

The image shows the traditional Chinese character for 'bird', which is a large, stylized character with a prominent top stroke and several curved strokes below, resembling the shape of a bird.

niǎo

Bird  
bird in a cage

The image shows the traditional Chinese character for 'island', which is a large, stylized character with a prominent top stroke and several curved strokes below, resembling the shape of a bird perched on a peak.

dǎo

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

The image shows the traditional Chinese character for 'crow', which is a large, stylized character with a prominent top stroke and several curved strokes below, resembling the shape of a crow.

wū

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

A large, bold black Chinese character '飛' (fēi) is centered in the top-left quadrant. The character is composed of a horizontal top bar, a vertical stem, and two curved wings extending from the right side.

fēi

Fly

flying crane  
with neck  
tucked in,  
and wings

A large, bold black Chinese character '習' (xí) is centered in the top-right quadrant. It features a 'wings' radical (羽) on the left and a 'sell' radical (白) on the right.

xí

to practice; to  
study; habit;  
young bird try-  
ing to fly

trad form  
combines  
"wings" +  
"sell"

A large, bold black Chinese character '魚' (yú) is centered in the bottom-left quadrant. It has a fish-like shape with a square body and a tail.

yú

fish (noun)

field suggest-  
ing harvesting  
food

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

A large, bold black Chinese character '漁' (yú) is centered in the bottom-right quadrant. It consists of a 'water' radical (氵) on the left and a 'fish' radical (魚) on the right.

yú

Fishing

fish + water

神

shén

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

鮮

xiān

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

義

yì

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

戶

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 宀 (roof) on the left and 火 (fire) on the right. The radical 宀 is formed by a curved top stroke and two vertical strokes. The radical 火 is formed by a vertical stroke and three curved strokes.

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 three curved strokes. The radical 堯 is formed by two 土 (earth) radicals stacked vertically and a 灬 (fire) 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;