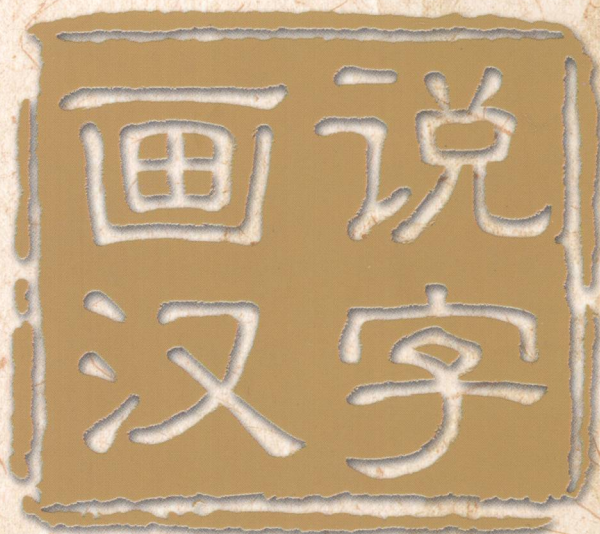


CHINESE

汪 春 郑重庆 编著

Characters in Pictures



(2)

 外语教学出版社
SINOLINGUA

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(2)

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Preface

The American poet Ezra Pound once said, “The easiest language in the world for writing poetry is Chinese.” And in the words of E. E. Cummings, another American poet, “Chinese poets are painters.” This book, *Chinese Characters in Pictures* is one which uses words to explain and pictures to illustrate the form and structure of Chinese characters. Therefore, it is both a collection of poetry and a picture album, so to speak.

Each Chinese character has a form of its own, representing a particular sound and a particular meaning, one at least. In other words, each character is a unity of form, sound and meaning. The student of Chinese must call on every one of the individuals if he or she is to really know the personality of each.

Learning Chinese is quite different from learning any other language. The way of learning is different. In learning a Western language, for instance, you swallow a whole series of sounds, lock, stock and barrel. If you were to take a word apart, separating it into so many phonetic syllables, it would lose its meaning altogether. In learning Chinese, however, what you have to do is exactly that, not into so many syllables, but into so many characters. You learn first the characters, then the word. Take, for instance, the Chinese word 大学 (dà xué) which means “university”. You first learn the words 大 and 学 separately since 大学 is formed by combining the two characters (you might call them elements of language). In meaning, 大学 has to do with both 大 and 学, and yet 大学 is not a simple case of 大 plus 学. 大学 is the Chinese equivalent of the English word “university”. But if you were to take the English word “university” and try to figure out its meaning based on the meanings of the five syllabic components u/ni/ver/si/ty, you would definitely get nowhere, because separately,

these components have no meaning at all and certainly have nothing to do with what the word “university” means. So, the character forms the basis in learning Chinese, whereas the word or sentence forms the basis for learning a Western language. It is no wonder then that there should have been so many textbooks written since ancient times on learning Chinese characters, e.g. *Qian Zi Wen* (Learn A Thousand Characters) and *Bai Jia Xing* (One Hundred Family Names).

The pictures as represented in the Chinese characters vary in complexity. Take the characters contained in this book. Some are as simple as 人, 口, 牛, 羊; others as complicated as 双, 养, 喜, 声. Whether simple or complicated, they are each a picture and a poem. Of course, one cannot expect everyone to agree in their analyses of each and every character, just as people couldn't totally agree, in fact they might totally disagree, in their understanding and interpretation of a painting or a poem. Regardless of whether the poet or painter agrees or disagrees, the reader or viewer would have his own appreciation of the work on the basis of his or her own understanding. The same holds true, more or less, for the written script. It is your right to create the written character, it is my right to interpret it.

Chinese Characters in Pictures is written for those non-Chinese who intend to explore the secrets of the civilization. It is somewhat like a guidebook, listing nearly two hundred cultural sites. Like the looking glass in *Alice in Wonderland*, the characters depicted in this book will take the tourist into the kaleidoscopic world that is Chinese culture.

by Cheng Xianghui
Dean of College of Chinese Language
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前言

美国诗人埃兹拉·庞德曾经说过：“世界上最适合写诗的语言是汉语。”美国另一位诗人E. E. 卡明斯说：“中国诗人都是画家。”《画说汉字》用语言诠释、用图画演示汉字的结构和字形，因此可以说：这本书既是诗集又是画册。

每个汉字都有其独特的字形、特别的发音和至少一个字义。换句话说，每个汉字都是字形、声音和意义的统一体。学习汉语的学生必须接触每一个汉字才能真正了解它们的个性。

学习汉语的方法不同于学习其他语言。例如在西方语言中，若干个毫无意义的音节构成一个词，如果你把一个词拆分成音节，它的意义就不复存在。但是学习汉语则不同，你要做的恰恰是把一个词拆分成独立的字，在学习词之前先要学习字。以汉语“大学”（university）为例，你先要分别学习“大”和“学”这两个字，因为“大学”这个词是由这两个字组成的（你可以称它们为“语素”）。从词义上看，“大学”和“大”和“学”有关系，但并不等于“大”和“学”这两个字义的简单相加。和“大学”对应的英文是university，如果你试图通过这个英文单词的五个音节u/ni/ver/si/ty推断出它的意思，那将是白费力气，因为这些音节没有意义，和词义毫无关联。词或句子是西方语言的基本元素，而汉语的基本元素是汉字。正是因为如此，从古至今，学习汉字的书层出不穷，如：《千字文》，《百家姓》等。

用以表示汉字的图形繁简不一。拿这本书中涉及的字来说，有些非常简单，象“人”、“口”、“牛”、“羊”，有些却非常复杂，象“双”、“养”、“喜”、“声”。不论简单还是复杂，每一个字都象是一幅画、一首诗。也许并非所有人都赞同本书中对每个汉字的诠释，就象每个人对诗歌或绘画都有不同的理解一样，不论原创者有着怎样的寓意，读者或观者总是会在欣赏时加入自己的理解，对汉字的理解也或多或少地符合这一规则。

《画说汉字》是为那些希望探究中国文明史的外国朋友编写的，它就象一本旅游手册，带领读者徜徉于近200个“文化名胜”；书中的汉字就象《爱丽斯漫游奇境》中的魔镜，引导旅游者进入中国文化的万花筒。

程祥徽

澳门大学汉语学院院长

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隘

ài

(mountain pass)



这是一个象形字。左边的“阝”是“阜”的简写，表示“高山”。右边的“益”意思是“附加”，表示“在山顶用土修建防御工事”。两部分和在一起指战略要地，或山的关口。

A pictogram. “阝” on the left is an abbreviation of 阜, meaning a tall mountain. The other half, 益, meaning addition, implies that an earthen defence is built on the top of a mountain. The combination means a place which is strategically located and difficult to access, or simply a mountain pass.

【部首】 Radical 阝 (ear)

【同部首字】 Characters under the radical

阴(cloudy), 阻(block), 除(get rid of)

【词语】 Words and phrases

隘口	àikǒu	(mountain) pass
隘路	àilù	narrow passage
隘巷	àixiàng	a narrow lane; alley
狭隘	xiá ài	narrow-minded
要隘	yào ài	a strategic pass

隘 隘 廕 廕

心胸狭隘

xīn xiōng xiá ài

narrow-minded; intolerant

狭隘的山道

xiá ài de shān dào

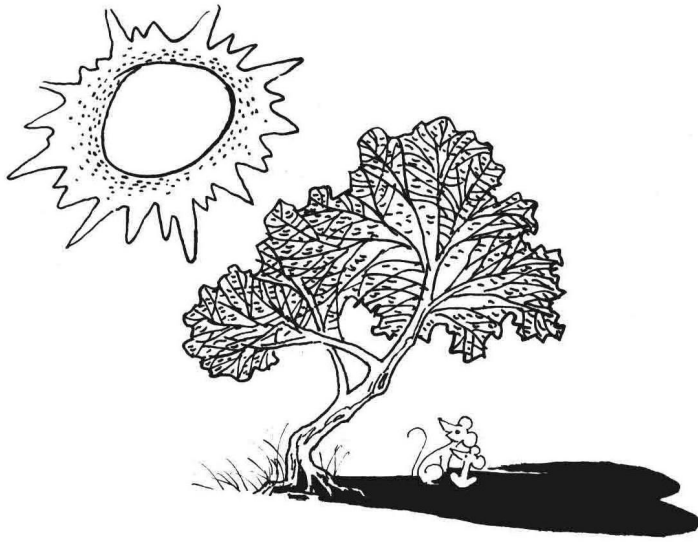
mountain trail

【例句】 Example

到那个村庄的最短路线不是那条主公路，而是一条狭窄的、簇叶丛生的隘路。

dào nà ge cūn zhuāng de zuì duǎn lù xiàn bú shì nà tiáo zhǔ gōng lù, ér shì yì tiáo xiá zhǎi de, cù yè cóng shēng de ài lù

The shortest route to the village isn't by the main road but by a narrow, overgrown track.



暗

àn

(dark; hidden)

丨	丩	月	日	日'	日 ^ˊ	日 ^ˋ	日 ^ˊ	𠄎	𠄎	𠄎	暗	暗
---	---	---	---	----	----------------	----------------	----------------	---	---	---	---	---

这个字由两部分组成：左边的“日”字代表太阳，所以它与光线有关；右边的“音”则与发音有关。“暗”就是因为光线不足而引起的，于是就造出了这个“暗”字。

This pictophonetic character comprises two parts. On the left is the character 日 (sun), and on the right 音 (hidden, secret). The combination suggests darkness due to insufficient light.

【部首】 Radical 日(sun)

【同部首字】 Characters under the radical

明(bright), 晓(dawn), 旷(vast)

【词语】 Words and phrases

暗藏	àncáng	hide; conceal
暗娼	ànchāng	unlicensed (or unregistered) prostitute
暗淡	àndàn	dim; faint
暗害	ànhài	kill secretly; stab in the back
暗井	ànjǐng	blind shaft; winze
暗探	àntàn	secret agent; detective
暗笑	ànxiào	laugh in (or up) one's sleeve; snigger
暗语	ànyǔ	code word

暗暗

暗无天日

àn wú tiān rì

complete darkness; total absence of justice

暗渡陈仓

àn dù chén cāng

do one thing under the cover of another; illicit activities

暗送秋波

àn sòng qiū bō

make eyes at sb. while others are not looking; make secret overtures to sb.

【例句】 Example

他暗示要我走开。

tā àn shì yào wǒ zǒu kāi

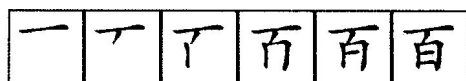
He hinted that he wanted me to leave.



百

bǎi

(a hundred)



当我们比较白和百时，就会发现它们的发音相同：(bai)。原来，后者是由前者演变来的，本来它是指白色、明亮的意义。但有时文字的发展很奇怪，它后来竟渐渐发展成数目字，而“百”就是十的十倍了。

By comparing two ancient Chinese pictograms “𠄎” and “𠄐”, both pronounced as bai, we find the latter is derived from the former, which means white or bright. How it came to mean a hundred is not clear.

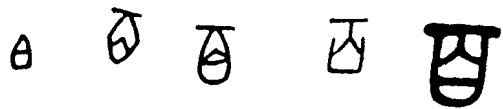
【部首】 Radical 白(white)

【同部首字】 Characters under the radical

皂(black), 皆(all), 泉(spring of a small stream)

【词语】 Words and phrases

百般	bǎibān	in a hundred and one ways; in every possible way; by every means
百倍	bǎibèi	a hundredfold; a hundred times
百部	bǎibù	the tuber of stemona (Stemona japonica or Stemona sessilifolia)
百合	bǎihé	lily
百货	bǎihuò	general merchandise



百年 bǎinián a hundred years;
a century

百万 bǎiwàn million

百姓 bǎixìng common people

百读不厌

bǎi dú bú yàn

be worth reading a hundred times

百感交集

bǎi gǎn jiāo jí

all sorts of feelings well up in one's heart

百孔千疮

bǎi kǒng qiān chuāng

riddled with gaping wounds; afflicted with all ills

百川归海

bǎi chuān guī hǎi

all rivers flow to the sea; all things tend in one direction

百思不解

bǎi sī bù jiě

remain puzzled after pondering over sth. a hundred times; remain perplexed despite much thought

百尺竿头，更进一步

bǎi chǐ gān tóu, gèng jìn yí bù

make still further progress

【例句】 Example

这个故事百听不厌。

zhè gè gù shì bǎi tīng bú yàn

You never get tired of hearing this story.



北

běi

(north)

	丨	丩	𠂔	北
--	---	---	---	---

这是一个会意字。甲骨文中的“北”字是两个背靠背坐着的人。古人认为应该面向南而坐，如果向北而坐就是坐反了。

An ideogram. It derived from “𠂔” found on oracle bones depicting two persons sitting with their backs to each other. Ancient Chinese used to think that facing the south was the correct way of sitting, while facing the north was thought to be sitting backward.

【部首】 Radical | (vertical line)

【同部首字】 Characters under the radical

旧 (old), 出 (go out), 中 (center)

【词语】 Words and phrases

败北	bàiběi	defeat
北斗星	běidǒuxīng	the Big Dipper; the Plough
北方	běifāng	north; the northern part of the country, esp. the area north of the Huanghe river; the North
北极	Běijí	the North Pole; the Arctic Pole; the north magnetic pole
北京	Běijīng	Beijing (Peking)
北美洲	Běiměizhōu	North America
北温带	běiwēndài	the north temperate zone

北 北 北 北 北

北伐战争

běi fá zhàn zhēng

the Northern Expedition(1926-1927)

北国风光

běi guó fēng guāng

northern scenery

北回归线

běi huí guī xiàn

the Tropic of Cancer

北洋军阀

běi yáng jūn fá

the Northern Warlords(1912-1927)

【例句】 Example

我生在南方，但从小生活在北方。

wǒ shēng zài nán fāng, dàn cóng xiǎo shēng huó zài běi fāng

I was born in the South, but I've settled in the North since my childhood.



贝

bèi

(cowrie; shellfish)

丨	冂	贝	贝
---	---	---	---

象形字里，“贝”（𧇧）的上面是外壳（𧇧），下面是触角（丨丨）。当我们取走壳里的生物后，剩下的空壳便叫“贝”。以前的原始人早就懂得用贝壳来造装饰品，它曾经也被用作钱币呢！

A pictogram, 贝 refers to the empty shell which remains after the meat of the clam inside is removed. Its origin found on oracle bones looked like this “𧇧”. The upper part “𧇧” represents the shell and the lower part “丨丨” the clam's two feelers. From the artifacts unearthed by archaeologists, we discover that the primitive people were very fond of decorating themselves with stringed shells.

【部首】 Radical 贝(shell)

【同部首字】 Characters under the radical

贞(loyal), 贡(tribute), 财(wealth)

【词语】 Words and phrases

贝雕	bèidiāo	shell carving
贝壳	bèiké	shell
贝类	bèilèi	shellfish; molluscs
贝母	bèimǔ	the bulb of fritillary (fritillaria thunbergii)
贝丘	bèiqiū	shell mound