刘民钢 著

Chinese Characters

上海书画出版社

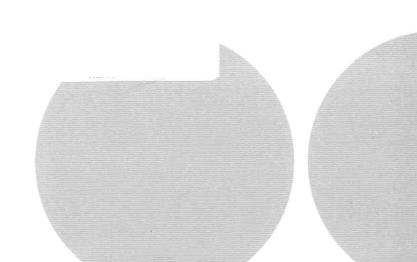


艺术100

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中国字 / 刘民钢著.-- 上海: 上海书画出版 社,2015.8

(艺术100)

ISBN 978-7-5479-1040-5

I. ①中… Ⅱ. ①刘… Ⅲ. ①汉字-基本 知识 Ⅳ.①H12

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2015)第144243号

艺术100 中国字

刘民钢 著

英文翻译 谭方方字例供稿 孙国彬

责任编辑 时洁芳 审 读 沈培方

封面设计 岳文婧

技术编辑 钱勤毅

出版发行 ②上海言委太监社

地址 上海市延安西路593号 200050

网址 www.shshuhua.com

E-mail shcpph@online.sh.cn

印刷 上海文艺大一印刷有限公司

经销 各地新华书店

开本 889×1194 1/24

印张 10.5

版次 2015年8月第1版 2015年8月第1次印刷 书号 ISBN 978-7-5479-1040-5

定价 32.00元

若有印刷、装订质量问题, 请与承印厂联系

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引言: 神秘的汉字

汉字很神秘

文字是人类跨出野蛮的门槛。

文字是人类开启文明的钥匙。

文字的出现极大地加速了人类文明的发展进程。

也许汉字并不是世界上最古老的文字,可是汉字却是人们所使用的文字中持续时间最长、历史最为悠久的文字。

比汉字更古老的文字系统如今都变成了表音文字,只有汉字,三千多年 来绵延不绝,依然保持着它的古老面貌。它的古老,使得不熟悉它的人觉得 它很神秘。

是的,汉字很神秘。但是,汉字也很有趣。

汉字中凝聚着中华文明的智慧,蕴藏着中华文明的精华。每一个汉字都可以为我们讲述一个久远而又有趣的故事。

因为汉字古老,认识它,还可以帮助我们了解人类的祖先是怎样创造 文字,建立起文字系统的。

本书将从一个全新的角度,以简单明了的方式向读者朋友揭示汉字让人惊奇的奥妙。我们选择了103个常用汉字作为认识汉字的入门。它们可以帮助读者朋友,特别是初次接触汉字的外国朋友们,认识汉字的来源和演变,打开汉字神秘的大门。汉字带领我们和原始社会先人们一起,走过蛮荒,走进文明。

汉字有点难

很多外国朋友一说到汉字,往往一边摇头一边说:"汉字太难!"

学习汉字和学习拼音文字(比如英文、德文、法文等等)比较起来,确实有好多困难的地方。比如说,难写。且不说"、一丨丿乀",还有"乚丁",弯弯曲曲,跟画图一样;而且有的字笔画还特别多,像下面这个字:

龍龍

这个字的意思据说是一个人絮絮叨叨话很多,它总共由64个笔画组成,真是惊人。但是这个字极少有人用。

汉字还有一个特点:难认。很多汉字相互之间只差一点,您看下面这两个汉字:

班斑

还有这三个汉字:

巴巴己

都只有一点点的区别, 却是不同的字。

汉字还有第三个特点:字数很多,很难记忆。谁也不知道究竟有多少,至少有好几万个吧。现在收字最多的字典总共收了八万五千多个汉字。那么多字,要记住就太难了。

汉字还有一个让很多朋友都一致头疼的特点:难念。很多文字,比如德文,还有俄文,看着它,即使不知道意思也照样可以读出音来。可是汉字不行。看到一个汉字,单看字形,虽然有些可以知道大概的读音,但要准确地读出它的音来,是很困难的。

难写、难认、难读、难记,这么说来,汉字可真是太难了。如果真是这样,我们怎么可能学好汉字呢?而且中国人的大脑似乎也有些问题——为什么一定要用这么难的一种文字呢?

不过,汉字真的很难吗?请先看完这本小书再说吧。

说文解字

Characters and Synthetic characters

汉字的历史很长,汉字的数量也很多。总的说来,汉字大概可以分成两类,一类叫作"文",一类叫作"字",合起来叫作"文字"。"文"和"字"不完全一样,大概地说,"文"是简单的、单一的文字,是对世界上各种事物的描绘,字呢,则是把不同的"文"合并起来组成的比较复杂的文字。我们这本书,就是为了解释最基本的汉字,所以这一节叫作"说文解字",除了解说"文"和"字"之外,我们也举出几个例子来说明汉字是怎么象形的。

The Chinese language boasts a large number of characters with a long history. Generally speaking, the Chinese characters are divided into two categories: pictographs and synthetic characters. The two categories combined the written system of Mandarin. Pictographs are usually just simple portray the things, and the synthetic characters are complicated characters which consist of pictographs. This book is aimed to explain the most common basic characters in Chinese. Accordingly, this chapter is entitled "说文解字"(Explaining Basic Characters), some basic characters are listed to show how the Chinese characters are said to be pictographs.



"文"字的现在意思是文章。但是在古时 候。"文"字的意思是花纹、纹理。

早期的汉字是比照自然界中的图案画出 来的,所以早期的汉字往往和自然界里的事物 十分相像。比如"日"字画的就是一个太阳。

"月"字画的就是一个月亮。"山"字画的 就是几座山。"水"字画的就是一条河。古人 把这些符号叫作"文"。"文"这个汉字最 早的写法就是表示花纹、图案。在甲骨文里, "文"字写作:



就是表示在人的身上画着花纹(一直到今天) 身体上刺上花纹还叫作"文身")。以后 "文"字逐渐演变并加以简化。省去了中间的 花纹、只剩下一个人体的轮廓。

"文", a character in modern Chinese, means articles or compositions. However, its earliest form refers to patterns or stripes in ancient Chinese.

The primeval Chinese characters were drawn according to the patterns of real things in nature. Therefore, they look very much like things in the natural world. E.g. "H"(the sun) shows the image of the sun, "月"(the moon) shows the outlines of the moon, "山"(mountains) shows patterns of mountains, and "tk" (water) manifests the image of a river. Such symbols were called "文" in ancient times. Its two ancient forms are: "常" and "食", both indicating a man with patterns on his body. Up till now, the word "文身"(tattoo) is still used in Chinese. Later on, the old form of "文" evolved until it was simplified into the outline of the human body.



链接:"文"字也可以作为偏旁来使用,但真正用"文"字的有一个"斑"。斑虎现字里常用的有一个"斑"。斑虎说完的意思,比如"斑点"这个神灵是说的,是说这种马身上有着系元,是的人员。"斑马",是说这种马身上有着系元的人员。"斑马",是说这种马身上有看系元的,是"武"。这个字的一半是"斌"。这个字的一半是"斌"。这个字的一半是能每个字,一个人了。大概本领,以我们常常在人名中看到这个字。

Linkage: "文" can be used as a component of a few Chinese characters. One of the commonly used characters with "文" as a component is "斑"(piebaldness), which is used together with others, forming such words as "斑点"(flecks, speckles), "斑马"(zebra), and "斑马线"(zebra crossing, pedestrian crossing). Besides, there is another character known as "斌", which frequently appears in personal names, it consists of "文" (articles, compositions) and "武"(Chinese martial arts). If a person is able to wield both the pen and the sword, he or she is really remarkable. Almost every child in China is expected to become such exceptionally outstanding talents. That is why "斌" is often included in some personal given names.



京→南→字→字



"字"在现代汉语里的意思是文字。汉字已经有了几千年的历史,其数量也越来越多。从最初的几十、几百个汉字,到今天的七八万个汉字,增加了几百倍。

这么多的汉字,不可能都是象形字,事实上汉字里的象形字也就几百个,而且世界上有好多东西也没有办法把它们都画出来。比如说颜色,我们就不大可能在写字的时候把它们都一一表现出来,至于那些表示抽象意思的诸如伟大、美丽、热爱、厌恶等等,就更难画了。

聪明的古人又想了一个办法。他们在表示意义范畴"文"的旁边,或者再加上一个符号或图形,或者加上一个表示读音的符号,创造出一个

表示比较抽象的意义的文字。

"字"本来意思是哺乳、养育后代。"字"在古文字里写作上面为"宀",下面一个"子",从字形上看,意思是一个人在房子里哺育一个小孩子。用一个象形字加上另一个表示意思或声音的字组成新的汉字,就像是从一个文字里生出许多新的文字来,所以,它们也就被叫作"字"。现在,人们把"文"和"字"放在一起表示所有的汉字,就叫作"文字"。

"字" means characters in modern Chinese. Boasting a long history of several thousand years, the Chinese characters have multiplied from a few hundred in the beginning to about 70-80 thousand at present.

Among them, not every character is a pictograph. In fact, there are only several hundred pictographs in Chinese, owing to the fact that many things in the world are impossible to draw. E.g. colors are inexpressible with pictographs. Such abstract concepts as greatness, love, beauty and hatred are even more difficult to draw.

Our intelligent ancestors managed to add a sign, a figure, or even a sound-indicating symbol

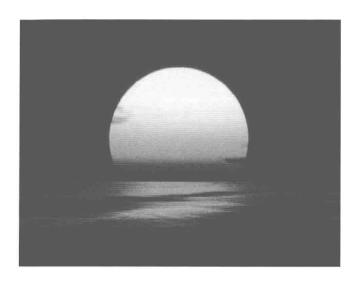
to a character which denotes a meaning category, thus creating abstract characters.

"字" initially means "feeding or nurturing a child". From its form, we can deduce its meaning: A person is feeding a child in the room. Many characters were created by combining a pictograph with a meaning-denoting and a sound-indicating character. Nowadays, "文" and "字" are put together, which denotes all the Chinese characters.



链接:汉字有多少字? 大概目前谁也无 法给出一个准确的数字。不过, 在几千 年的发展过程中, 汉字总是在不断地 增多,从三千年前的三千个字左右,发 展到今天, 大约有八万多个汉字。这么 多汉字并不需要全部记住。现在,能记 住一千左右的汉字就可以阅读了,能记 三千五百个左右的汉字, 一般人就够用 了。

Linkage: Perhaps nobody can tell the exact number of the Chinese characters, which have constantly increased in number over thousands of years. There were only about 3000 characters 3000 years ago. Now there are more than eighty thousand. You are not required to memorize all of them. If you have learned about 1000 Chinese characters, you are able to read Chinese materials. When you have memorized 3500, you have no trouble in reading most of Chinese books.



自然界中对人类生存影响最大的大概要算是太阳了,在自然界中人类最早认识的东西,大概也要算太阳了。她是万物生长和人类生存不可缺少的自然物。古代的中国人把太阳叫作"日"。

"日"字是最早出现的汉字之一。在六千多年前的汉字里,就可以看见它的存在。后来我们在三千多年以前甲骨文里看到的"日"字,也是太阳

形状的描绘: ②。因为甲骨文是刀刻的,所以太阳是方形或者六边形的,又因为古人觉得光画一个方框容易引起别人的误会,所以在里面加上了一个短横或点。在比甲骨文稍晚一些的金文里的"日"字,因为是石刻,所以写得更为象形些: ②。到了后来的汉字里,"日"字慢慢地变方了: ②(篆书),到了现代楷书里,"日"字已经变成了一个长方端正的框子了: 日(楷书),它已经完全不像天上的太阳了。

Of all things in nature, the sun perhaps exerts the greatest influence on human life. The sun was probably one of the first things that came to be familiar to human beings. It is fundamental to the growth of all things on the earth and indispensable to human existence. Our ancestors referred to "太阳"(the sun) as "日".

"∃" is one of the earliest Chinese characters. You can find its earliest form among Chinese characters which existed over 6000 years ago. Its earlier form "⊡" found in the inscriptions on tortoise shells is a vivid portrayal of the shape of the sun. Its subsequent form in the scripts on bronze vessels is very much like the sun. Afterwards, it gradually became squarer "∃". However, it has become so square that it doesn't look like the sun at all in the regular script in modern Chinese.



链接:用"日"字可以组成很多的汉字、 其中最著名的大概是"旦"字。"旦"字 的意思是"清晨日出时分"。它的上面是 一个太阳,下面的一横表示地平线。当 太阳升起在地平线上时、当然是早晨了。 和它相对的是"慕"字。"慕"字早先的 时候写作"莫",它在金文里是这么写的 "慧"。我们一看就能明白,这是太阳落到 了草丛后面。"莫"字的意思就是日落时 分。后来这个"莫"字因为和当时语言 里表示"没有人"或者"没有什么东西" 的代词同音、所以被人们借去做了代词。 这样一个"草"字就有了两个意思。人 们为了区别这两层不同的含义,于是在 表示日暮时分这个意思时,在"莫"字 的底下再加上一个"日"字,变成了"暮"。

Linkage: Many Chinese characters contain "目". The most typical one is perhaps "旦", which means early morning when the sun rises. "旦" consists of "目" and a "一" below, which denotes the horizon. When the sun rises from the horizon, it is naturally early in the morning. The antonym of "旦" is "暮"(dusk). The initial form of "暮" was written as "鬟", which obviously means that the sun sinks behind thick grass, meant the time when the sun set. Later on, "目" was added to "奠", hence "暮", which is the present character referring to dusk.