

An Illustrated Account

of Common Chinese Characters

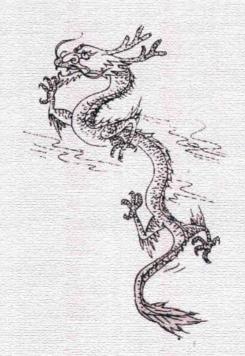
常用汉字图解

谢光辉 主编

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常用汉字图解

(第二版)

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第二版说明

《常用汉字图解》对651个常用汉字的源流演变进行了详细描述,特别讲解了汉字的字源本义及其发展,并给出甲骨文到现代汉字的字形演变过程。每个汉字根据来源配有图解,便于读者对汉字形体演变及本义的理解。自1997年出版发行以来,这本书受到海内外读者的广泛欢迎。

本次修订,对所选汉字进行了一定增删,从汉字字义发展的角度进行了适当的今义讲解,并根据汉字意义类别分为人体、器官、器具、建筑、动物、植物、自然、其他共八大类。

本书是一本普及读物,但对字源的解说注重文字学学理,既具有一定的文字学研究价值,又便于一般读者科学理解汉字的源流演变。

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Notes on the Second Edition

An Illustrated Account of Common Chinese Characters specifically described the origins and the evolutions of 651 commonly used Chinese characters, listing Chinese characters' shapes from the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions to today's Inscriptions. Each character in the book has an illustration according to its sources so that the readers can easily understand the history of Chinese characters' evolution and the original meaning. This book has been widely welcomed by the readers at home and abroad since its publication in 1997.

In this revision, we did some additions and deletions. Considering the development of Chinese characters' meaning, we appropriately explained some current meanings of these characters. Now, we have the book published in eight sections according to the meaning categories of Chinese characters: human body, organ, instruments, building, animal, plant, natural, and others.

Although the book is a popular book, we insist on explaining the characters' origins in accordance with their uses in classical records. Hence, these volumes not only have some values on Chinese characters research, but also are convenient for the general readers to better understand the origins and the evolutions of Chinese characters.

Department of Chinese Language & Linguistics
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前言

汉字是世界上历史最悠久、使用最广泛的文字之一。它已经有了五六千年的发展历史,现在有约占全球人口四分之一的人在使用着它。汉字的起源和发展,与中华民族的文明紧密相关。它是中华传统文化的基本载体,也是中华民族文化思想延伸、传播和交流的基本工具,在中华民族悠久的历史进程中起着极其重要的作用。可以这样说,没有汉字,就没有中华民族光辉灿烂的文化。今天,汉字为全世界每一个华语华文的应用者所时刻不可或缺,在世界文化的发展中起着越来越重要的作用。

学习汉语,首先要解决的问题就是汉字。如何有效地学习汉字,是摆在语文研究工作者面前的一个首先要解决的问题。

汉字是属于表意体系的文字,字的形体与字义密切相关。因此,要了解汉字,首先就要掌握汉字形体结构的特点和规律。根据字形辨析文字的本义,并进而说明其引申义和假借义,是研究汉字的人必须遵循的基本原则。

研究汉字的形体构造,中国传统文字学有"六书"之说。所谓"六书",是指汉字构成和使用的六种方法,即象形、指事、会意、形声、转注和假借。从字形学的角度来看,象形、指事、会意、形声可以说是汉字的构造方法,而转注、假借则不过是用字之法。所以,过去认为"六书"是汉字的造字之法,其实是不确切的。不过,"六书"说基本上反映了汉字产生、发展的一般规律,它对正确了解和掌握汉字的构造原理及其使用规律,进而从根本上认识和把握每一个汉字的本来含义,具有指导性的意义。

1. 象形 所谓象形,就是象实物之形,也就是把客观事物的形体描绘出来的意思。汉字多起源于图画文字。最初的汉字字形多是根据实物的形状把它描画出来的,这就是象形。不过,象形字和图画是有其本质性的区别的。象形字的写法较图画大为简化,往往只是实物形体的一个简单轮廓(如"日、月、山、川、人、大"等),或某一具有特征性意义的部分(如"牛、羊"等)。此外更主要的是,它必须和语言中表示概念的词和语音结合起来,从而成为记录语言的符号。随着字形的不断简化和抽象化,后代的象形字的形体与造字之初大不相同。从甲骨文发展到现在的楷体,原来的象形字已经完全不象形了。实际上,它们已经失去了象形的意义,成了单纯的书写符号。

象形字要象实物之形,而语言中很多抽象的概念是无形可象的,是不能"画成其物"的。这一必不可免的局限性制约了象形字的发展。所以在汉字中,象形字的数量并不多。但象形却是汉字最基本的一种造字方法,是各种汉字形成的基础:指事字的大部分是在象形字的基础上增加指示符号造成的,会意字则由两个或两个以上的象形字组合而成,而形声字实际也是两个象形字(或会意字、指事字)的组合,只不过其中一个用来表示意义类属,另一个用来代表读音罢了。

2. 指事 指事是一种用抽象的指示符号来表达语言中某种概念的造字方法。指事字的构成有两种情形:一种是在象形字上添加指示符号构成的指事字,如"刃、本、末"等;另一种是由纯抽象符号组成的指事字,如"上、下、一、二、三"等。

指事字在全部汉字中是数量最少的一种。这是因为,绝大多数字都不需要用 指事的方法来造:要表示客观的物体,可以用象形的方法,而要说明抽象的概念则 可以采用会意或形声。

3. 会意 所谓会意,是把两个或两个以上的字组合在一起以表示一个新的意思。从结构上看,会意字是两个或两个以上的字的并列或重叠。从意义上讲,它又是两个或两个以上字的意义的会合。如一个"木"字代表一棵树,两个"木"字组合在一起则代表成片的树群("林"),而三个"木"字则表示更大面积分布的树林("森")。又如"休"字,由"人"和"木"组成,表示人靠着大树歇息的意思。

会意字是由两个或两个以上的象形字组合而成。它和象形字之间的根本区别在于:象形字是独体的,而会意字则为合体。会意的方法与象形、指事比较起来,有很大的优越性。它既可以描绘具体的实物,也可以表达抽象的概念;不仅能描绘静态的物貌,同时也能够反映物体的动态。一个象形字,可以和很多其他的象形字组成不同的会意字;而同一个象形字,由于排列方式的不同,也可以组成不同的会意字。这样,就大大提高了象形字的利用效率。所以,会意字的数量要比象形字和指事字多得多。在形声造字法广泛使用之前,会意是一种最主要的造字之法。只是在更先进的有标音成分的形声字被普遍使用之后,它才退居次要的地位,甚至原有的会意字,也变成了形声字(如"塊一块"),或为同音的形声字所代替(如"淼一渺")。

4. 形声 形声字是由意符(形旁)和音符(声旁)两部分组成。其中意符表示形声字本义所属的意义范畴(或类属),音符则代表形声字的读音。如以"木"为意符的形声字"松""柏""桃"等都属于树木类,而以"手"为意符的"摧""拉""提""按"等都同手的行为动作有关。但在形声字中,意符只能代表其意义范畴或类属,不能表示具体的字义。它的具体字义是靠不同的读音,也就是不同的音符来区别的。有些形声字的音符既有表音的作用,又有表意的作用(如"娶")。这就是所谓

的"会意兼形声"。但是就多数形声字来说,音符只是表示读音,和字义没有必然的联系。如"江""河"二字,其中的"工""可"只代表读音,和"江""河"的字义是毫无关系的。

形声造字法进一步打破了象形、指事、会意的诸多局限,具有无可比拟的优越性。我们知道,世界上许多事物或抽象概念是很难用象形或会意的方法来表示的。比如"鸟"是鸟类的总称,但是鸟的种类成千上万,无法用象形或会意的办法来一一加以区别。于是,就出现了形声字:用"鸟"作为意符来表示鸟的总类,而用不同的音符来区别不同种类的鸟,如"鸽、鹤、鸡、鹄"等。由此方法,就产生了大量的形声字。越到后代,形声字的发展越快,数量也越多。据统计,在汉代的《说文解字》一书中,形声字约占收录汉字总数的80%;宋代的《六书略》,形声字占了88%;清代的《康熙字典》达到90%;而在现在通用的简化字中,形声字更是占了绝对的多数。

5. 转注 转注是"六书"中争议最多的一个概念,历来众说纷纭,至今没有定论。根据许慎《说文解字》的定义,所谓转注字应该是指那些同一部首、意义相同、可以互相注释的字。如"老"和"考"两个字,都隶属于老部,意义也相同。《说文解字》:"老,考也。"又:"考,老也。"说明它们之间是可以互相注释的。

严格来讲,转注只不过是一种"训诂"的方法。其目的在于解释字义,即用"互训"的办法比较、说明字义,并不能因此造出新字来。因此,转注不能算作是造字之法,而是一种用字之法。

6. 假借 假借也是一种用字之法。许慎给它的定义是"本无其字,依声托事",即借一个已有的字来表示语言中与其读音相同或相近的词。这种由于音同或音近而被借用来表示另外一个意义的字,就是假借字。它是借用已有的字来表示另外一个新的词,并不能因此而产生一个新的字,所以也不能算是造字之法。

在早期汉字中,假借字的数量是不少的。因为那时所造出来的文字数量不多,要用较少的字表达语言中众多的概念,就必须采用同音假借的办法,以扩大字的使用效率。如甲骨文的"自"是个象形字,其本义是指鼻子,借用来表示自己、自我的意思。又如甲骨文"来"字象麦穗形,本义指麦子,假借为来往之"来"。

本书定名为《常用汉字图解》。所收651个字绝大部分都是常用字。少数字不大常用,但与同类字属于一个系列(如鼎类的"镬"),为使读者有一个系统的认识,一并列出。在选字上,以象形字、指事字、会意字为主,亦杂有个别形声字,主要是由早期的象形字或会意字转变而来的形声字。

按照科学的分类方法,我们把这651个汉字分别归属于人体、器官、器具、建筑、动物、植物、自然等几大类。全书按义类排列,而每一类中又将意义相关的字

排列在一起。通过这样的分类和排列,能使读者更清晰地了解早期汉字的造字规律和特点,即所谓的"近取诸身(人体、器官),远取诸物(器具、建筑)","仰则观象于天(天文),俯则观法于地(地理),视鸟兽之文(动物)与地之宜(植物)"。

本义的解说,以古文字及文献为根据,着重由字形结构说明本义,引申义及常用的转义则随文指明。书中每字配插图一幅,以与文字说明相配合,通过生动活泼的漫画形式,形象地展示由字形结构所反映出来的文字本义。

字头为简化字楷体。字头后()内列相应的繁体,相关的异体字则加[]。根据本义及常用义加注拼音。选临有代表性的古文字字形,以使读者明了字形的源流及其演变的规律。其中"甲"表示甲骨文,"金"代表金文,"篆"代表小篆,此外,"石"表示石鼓文,"玺"代表古玺,"盟"代表盟书。

为便于读者查检,书中附音序索引和笔画索引。

谢光辉 于广州暨南大学

Introduction

The Chinese script is one of the oldest and most widely used writing systems in the world. It has a history of five or six thousand years, and is used by about one fourth of the total population on the earth. The creation and evolution of Chinese characters is closely interwoven with the development of Chinese culture. Chinese characters are the basic carriers of the traditional Chinese culture and as an important tool for extending, spreading and exchanging ideas, they have played a tremendous role in the long history of the Chinese nation. One may well argue that without Chinese characters there would be no such splendid Chinese culture. In the world today, Chinese characters are not only indispensable to any Chinese user but also have an ever increasing important role to play in worldwide cultural development.

Anyone learning Chinese will have to learn the characters first. How to help learners master the characters efficiently, therefore, is a major task for Chinese language workers.

The Chinese script is an ideographic writing system, in which the form is related to the meaning directly. Hence the first step toward the mastery of Chinese characters is to learn the characteristics and regularity in their composition. It is a rule every student of Chinese characters must follow to base one's judgment of the original meaning of a character on its form, and only when that relation is clear can one go on to discuss its extended and shifted meanings.

In the study of the composition of Chinese characters, there is a traditional theory known as Liu Shu (six writings). That is, there are six types of characters in terms of their composition: pictographs, indicatives, ideographs, phonetic compounds, mutual explanatories and phonetic loans. Strictly speaking only the first four refer to the ways to compose Chinese characters, the last two are concerned with the ways to use them. The traditional view that Liu Shu is a summary of the different ways of composing characters, therefore, is not very accurate. Nevertheless the theory Liu Shu is basically correct in revealing the general pattern in the creation and development of Chinese characters. It may help learners to better understand the composition of Chinese

characters and their original meanings, and thence use them more accurately.

1. Pictographs A pictograph is a depiction of a material object. Chinese characters mostly originaled from picture writing. In other words, most Chinese characters were originally pictures of objects. However there is a fundamental difference between pictographs and pictures: the former, usually rough sketches of objects (e. g. 日 "sun", 月 "moon", 山 "mountain", 川 "river", 人 "man", 大 "big") or consisting of a characteristic part only (e. g. 牛 "ox", 羊 "sheep"), are much simpler than the latter. More important is that pictographs are associated with definite meanings and pronunciations, and have become symbolic. And as a result of increasing simplification and abstraction, pictographs of the later ages are quite different from their originals. Compared with those in the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions, pictographs in the Regular Script are no longer picturelike. In a sense they are not really pictographic, but simply symbdic.

Pictographs are based on the external form of material objects, but the abstract concepts in language are formless, which renders it impossible to picture them. This impossibility inevitably hinders the growth of pictographs, and that is why their number is limited. However, pictography remains the most important method of composing Chinese characters. The others are only developments on this basis: indicatives are mostly formed by adding indicating signs to pictographs, ideographs are usually made up of two or more pictographs, and phonetic compounds are also composed of two pictographs (or ideographs or indicatives), except that one of them specifies the meaning while the other represents the pronunciation.

2. Indicatives Indication refers to the way to form abstract characters with indicating signs. There are two subtypes of indicatives: one is composed of a pictograph and an indicating sign, e. g. \mathcal{D} (knife-edge), \bigstar (root), \bigstar (treetop); the other is composed purely of abstract signs, e. g. \bot (on top of), \top (underneath), - (one), \bot (two) and Ξ (three).

Indicatives account for the smallest percentage of Chinese characters. The reason is that for most characters there are simpler ways of composition: characters referring to material objects may be composed pictographically and those expressing abstract concepts may be composed ideographically or by way of phonetic-compounding.

3. Ideographs Ideographs are compounds, composed of two or more than two existing characters. In terms of structure, an ideograph is the composition of two or

more characters side by side or one on top of another. In terms of meaning, an ideograph is also the composition of the meanings of its component characters. For example, a single character 木 stands for a tree, two trees together (ጳ) refers to a group of trees—forest, and the character made up of three trees (ٰ) means a place full of trees, a thick forest. And the character ጳ consists of ጳ (man) and ጳ (tree), signifying that a man is taking a rest against a tree.

Ideographs are made up of two or more than two pictographs, hence they differ from each other in that the former are complex while the latter simplex. Compared witn pictography and indication, ideography is more adaptable. Characters of various kinds may be composed in this way, whether they refer to material objects or express abstract concepts, depict static states or describe dynamic processes. The same pictograph may be used to form different ideographs with different pictographs, or with the same pictograph by appearing in diffent positions. Thus there are more chances of existing pictographs used in the composition of new characters. As a result there are much more ideographs than pictographs or indicatives in Chinese. Ideography was the most important way of composing characters before Phonetic compounds became popular. It was only because phonetic compounds, with a phonetic component, are more convenient to use that the importance of ideographs decreased. Some ideographs were even changed into phonetic compounds, e. g. 块 (the original complicated from being 塊), and some were replaced by phonetic compounds pronounced the same, e. g. 渺.

4. Phonetic compounds A phonetic compound consists of a radical and a Phonetic. The radical indicates its semantic field and the phonetic is pronunciation. For example, phonetic compounds with 木 (tree) as the radical like 松 (pine), 柏 (cypress), 桃 (peach) are all names of trees; those with 手 (hand) as the radical like 推 (push), 拉 (pull), 提 (lift), 按 (press) all refer to actions performed by the hand. However the radical only shows the general semantic class of the character, not its specific meaning. The specific meanings of the characters sharing the same radical are differentiated by the phonetics they each have. The phonetics in some phonetic compounds may also be semantical, e. g. the phonetic 取 in 娶 is also meaningful in the sense of "take", hence the name ideographic-phonetic compounds. But as far as the majority of phonetic compounds are concerned, the phonetic is only phonetical, not semantical. For example, the phonetics I and 可 in 江 and 河 respectively are only

indicative of their pronunciations, and have nothing to do with their meanings.

Compared with pictography, indication and ideography, phonetic compound is more flexible. There are many objects and abstract ideas which are difficult to express through plctography or ideography. For example, \(\beta\) is the general term for birds, but there are tens of thousands types of birds in the world, and it is impossible to differentiate each of them by way of pictography or ideography. In contrast this is easily achieved in phonetic compounding by adding different phonetics to the radical 鸟, e. g. 鸧 (pigeon), 鹤 (crane), 鸡 (chicken) and 鹄 (swan). Thus there is an enormous number of phonetic compounds in Chinese, and this number is growing larger and larger in the modern period. Statistics show that phonetic compounds accounted for 80% of the total characters in the Origin of Chinese Characters (Shuo Wen Jie Zi) of the Han Dynasty, 88% in Aspects of the Six Categories of Chinese Characters (Liu Shu Lüe) of the Song Dynasty, and 90% in Kangxi (K'ang-Hsi) Dictionary of the Oing Dynasty. In the modern simplified form currently in use, phonetic compounds make up an even larger percent.

5. Mutual explanatories Mutual explanation is a most dubious concept in the theory Of Liu Shu. Numerous definitions have been offered, but none of them is definitive. According to Xu Shen's definition in his Origin of Chinese Characters, mutual explanatories are those which share the same radical, mean the same and are mutually explainable. For example, the characters 老 and 考, both of the age radical (老) and meaning the same, are mutual explanatories. Thus the Origin of Chinese Characters says, "老 means 考" and "考 means 老".

Strictly speaking, mutual explanation is a way to explain the meaning of characters through comparison. There is no new character created in this way. Hence mutual explanation is not a way of composing new characters, but a way of using existing ones.

6. Phonetic loans Phonetic loan is also a way of using existing characters. Xu Shen defined it as a character which is used in a new sense on account of its pronunciation. In other words, it is an internal borrowing on the basis of pronunciation: a character is used in a new meaning which is expressed by a similar sound in the spoken form. In this way an existing character has acquired a new meaning, but no new character is created. Phonetic loan, therefore, is not a way of composing Chinese characters either.

At the early stage, there were quite a few phonetic loans in the writing system. As the number of existing characters at that time was limited, many concepts had to be expressed by phonetic loans. For example, the character 自 in the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions was Originally a pictograph and referred to the nose, but it is now used in the sense of "self" as a result of phonetic loan. The character 来 in the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions was also a pictograph, referring to the wheat, but is now used in the sense of "come" as a phonetic loan.

This book is entitled the *An Illustrated Account of Common Chinese Characters*. The characters in the book, 651 in total, mostly have a high frequency of use. A few characters, which are not as frequently used, are also included for the purpose of presenting a complete picture of the characters in the same series, e. g. the character 镬 in the 鼎 series. In terms of composition type, most of the characters are pictographs, indicatives and ideographs. The few phonetic compounds included are developments of earlier pictographs or ideographs.

The 651 characters are classified on the basis of their meaning into categories of the human body, implements, buildings, animals' plants, nature, etc., under which there are specific classes, again based on the meaning. The arrangement of characters in this way is intended to help readers better understand the regularity and characteristics of character creation in the early stage, that is, people modeled the characters on all kinds of things, as close as the various parts of the human body and as distant as material objects like implements and buildings. In order to compose characters more rationally, they looked closely upward at the celestial bodies in the sky and downward at the configuration of the earth's surface. They observed the movements of animals and appearances of plants.

The original meaning of a character is determined in accordance with its form in ancient writing systems and its use in classical records. The emphasis is on the revelation of the relation between the original meaning and the shape of the character, the extended and shifted meanings are mentioned in passing. To show the original meaning of the characters more vividly, there is a picture, or rather a cartoon, accompanying the text for each character.

At the beginning of each entry, the character is represented by its simplified form in the Regular Script, after which is its original complicated form in brackets, and the variant, if any, is enclosed in square brackets. The phonetic transcription given shows how the character is pronounced when it is used in its original meaning or common meaning. We also emumerate the representative forms of the character in ancient writing systems, tracing it to its source. The characters \mathbb{P} , $\widehat{\mathfrak{L}}$ and $\widehat{\mathfrak{F}}$ beside the ancient forms are abbreviations of \mathbb{P} 骨文 (the Oracle-Bone Inscriptions), $\widehat{\mathfrak{L}}$ (the Bronze Inscriptions) and 小篆 (the Later Seal Character). In addition, $\widehat{\mathfrak{L}}$ is short for $\widehat{\mathfrak{L}}$ $\widehat{\mathfrak{L}}$ (the Stone-Drum Inscriptions) and $\widehat{\mathfrak{L}}$ is short for $\widehat{\mathfrak{L}}$ (ancient seals).

To facilitate readers' use of the book, there are two indexes in it, one is in an alphabetical order of the characters in *Pinyin* and the other is in the order of the number of strokes in a character.

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