

# INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY CHINESE

*By*

**J. J. BRANDT**

*Author of* WENLI PARTICLES  
MODERN NEWSPAPER CHINESE, ETC.

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## P R E F A C E

Hardly does there exist another language in which the spoken style differs so much from the written style as in the Chinese. And it would not be an exaggeration to say that in reality there are two Chinese languages—the spoken and the written.

It is quite natural that every foreigner coming to China who wishes to study Chinese begins with the spoken language. Many manuals existing on this subject make the student's work very easy and interesting. But as soon as he has mastered to some extent the spoken Chinese and tries to read the texts of the written style he at once encounters difficulties very hard to overcome. His knowledge of the spoken language is of little use to him because he meets new expressions and unfamiliar forms of sentence structure. It is true that explanations given by his Chinese teacher assist him in getting the meaning of an expression or particle in a given case. Seldom however is his teacher able to explain to him how a particle is used or a sentence formed. Furthermore for this analysis of the written style there is no systematic work which could solve his perplexities and answer his numerous questions. The result is that many people who earnestly wish to study the written Chinese soon lose their enthusiasm and stop midway.

The aim of the present book is to help the students of the Chinese written style in their difficult task by guiding their first steps in its mastery. The book is composed of forty lessons. The texts which comprise various styles of literary writing are, in the beginning, very simple. For every new character used, explanations are given so that a person, who does not know Chinese at all, can start his studies with this book. For those who know the spoken Chinese, it may be of no small value, as in the first ten lessons spoken versions accompany the analysis of the written constructions. The particles of the written style are arranged in groups according to their grammatical usage.

The author is very far from thinking that this book will satisfy completely the acute need of a systematic manual on the Chinese written style. On the contrary, being quite aware of the difficult task which he has assumed, he sees defects and oversights in his work and only consoles himself with the thought that he is on the right path, that the study of the written Chinese according to his method will not be a waste of time and that in the future other sinologues will develop and complete his work in those points where he has not had sufficient ability or time.

The works which have been consulted and made use of in the preparation of this manual, and to which the author is greatly indebted, are listed in the Bibliography.

The material of these lessons has been used in lectures by the author at the COLLEGE OF CHINESE STUDIES during a period of 18 months to three successive groups of students. It gave him a good opportunity to verify experimentally his method of study, to rearrange the material and make necessary alterations. The author is especially grateful to the COLLEGE OF CHINESE STUDIES for the privilege thus granted to him.

The author takes this opportunity to express his hearty thanks to Dr. C. K. Searles for his valuable help and many useful suggestions in the composition of this work.

J. BRANDT.

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# LESSON 1

In the first ten lessons all literary (*Wen-li*, 文理) articles are accompanied by translations into the spoken language.

## PART I

鳥兒呢。親說。人的智識。比鳥強的多。尙且不能先知吉凶。何況  
 們。他父親說。這有甚麼害處。孩子說。我常聽人說。喜鵲  
 有些鳥鵲聚在院內樹上。伸着脖子叫喚。小孩子喝他

吉  
凶

識。遠勝於鳥。尙不能預知吉凶。而況鳥乎。  
 人言。鵲鳴吉。鵲鳴凶。今鳴者鵲也。故叱之。父曰。人智  
 有鵲集庭樹。引頸而鳴。兒叱之。父曰。是何害。兒曰。常聞  
 吉凶

## VOCABULARY

The explanation of words is given only for the Wenli texts. With each character which contains a phonetic element indicative of its true or approximate reading, is given the phonetic number of Soothill's classification of his Student's Pocket Dictionary.

In case there are several different meanings for a character, the particular meaning used in the text is given in SMALL CAPITALS.

In combinations of two and more characters the character the reading of which is set in **black face**, is emphasized.

吉 *chi*<sup>2</sup> - fortunate; prosperous; AUSPICIOUS.

凶 *hsiung*<sup>1</sup> - unfortunate; UNLUCKY; cruel.

有 *yu*<sup>3</sup> - to have; to exist; to be.

鴉 *ya*<sup>1</sup> (165) - A CROW; a raven.

集 *chi*<sup>2</sup> - TO FLOCK TOGETHER; to collect; to compile.

庭 *t'ing*<sup>2</sup> (70) - the audience hall. A COURTYARD; a room; a house.

樹 *shu*<sup>4</sup> - A TREE. To set up; to erect.

引 *yin*<sup>3</sup> - to draw out; TO STRETCH; to prolong; to lead, to quote.

頸 *ching*<sup>3</sup> (427) - THE NECK; the throat; an isthmus.

而 *erb*<sup>2</sup> - A CONJUNCTIVE PARTICLE; an adversative particle. AND; yet; but; like. You; your.

鳴 *ming*<sup>2</sup> - the cry of a bird or animal; a sound. To sing; to cry.

兒 *erb*<sup>2</sup> - A CHILD; a son; male.

叱 *ch'ih*<sup>4</sup> - to hoot at.

之 *chih*<sup>1</sup> - a particle having various uses; very often it is used as a pronoun of the third person in the objective case, also as a sign of the possessive case. To go; to proceed. An expletive.

父 *fu*<sup>4</sup> - a father.

曰 *yüeh*<sup>4</sup> - to speak.

是 *shih*<sup>4</sup> - to be. Right. THIS; that.

何 *ho*<sup>2</sup> (700) - an interrogative particle. How? Why? What?

害 *hai*<sup>4</sup> - to injure; HARM.

常 *ch'ang*<sup>2</sup> - constant; usual; frequent.

聞 *wen*<sup>2</sup> - TO HEAR. To smell. Read *wen*<sup>4</sup> - to make known; to state.

人 *jen*<sup>2</sup> - a man.

言 *yen*<sup>2</sup> - words; language. TO SPEAK; to express.

鵲 *ch'iao*<sup>3</sup> (*ch'io*<sup>4</sup>) - the magpie; the jay.

今 *chin*<sup>1</sup> - now; the present time.

者 *che*<sup>3</sup> - a particle of many uses imparting various shades of meaning, - adjectival, participial, etc., to words to which it is joined (see note d).

也 *yeh*<sup>3</sup> - a final particle (see note e).

故 *ku*<sup>4</sup> (702) - A CONSEQUENTIAL PARTICLE. Cause; reason; therefore; a causal particle.

智 *chih*<sup>1</sup> (475) - wisdom; knowledge.

識 *shih*<sup>2</sup> (93) - to know; to be acquainted with.

智識 *chih*<sup>1</sup> - *shih*<sup>2</sup> - knowledge and experience.

遠 *yuan*<sup>3</sup> (370) - far off; distant; remote.

勝 *sheng*<sup>4</sup> - to conquer; TO EXCEL. Read *sheng*<sup>1</sup> - to be adequate to; to be worthy of.

於 *yü*<sup>2</sup> - in; at; on; for; among; by. THAN (see note g).

鳥 *niao*<sup>3</sup> - a bird.

尙 *shang*<sup>4</sup> - to wish. To esteem.  
To add. STILL.

不 *pu*<sup>1</sup> - not.

能 *neng*<sup>2</sup> - to be able; to be competent; ability.

豫, 預 *yü*<sup>4</sup> (114) - pleased; satisfied.  
To be ready; BEFOREHAND.

知 *chih*<sup>1</sup> - to know; to perceive; to be aware of.

預知 *yü*<sup>4</sup>-*chih*<sup>1</sup> - to foreknow; to foresee.

況 *k'uang*<sup>4</sup> - moreover; still more; how much more.

而況 *erb*<sup>2</sup>-*k'uang*<sup>4</sup> - still more; how much more.

乎 *hu*<sup>1</sup> - an interrogative and EXCLAMATORY particle. An expletive.

## NOTES

- a. 集庭樹 - "Flocked together (upon a) tree (in a) courtyard."

The use of the prepositions "upon" and "in" can be easily deduced from the connection; while in the spoken version of the story the prepositions are clearly indicated:

## 聚在院內樹上

This simple example demonstrates to what extent the written style differs from the spoken language. The latter created for hearing and having comparatively poor phonetic reserve, must inevitably have recourse to more complicated combinations. The written style, which takes into account the eye-sight of the reader, can express any conception in a much shorter and laconical way leaving the reader to deduce the meaning from the connection or by the aid of various particles which play a very important part in the written language.

- b. 引頸而鳴 - - - The characters 引頸 with the aid of 而 (whose literal meaning here is "and") form a complement to the verb 鳴, answering to the question: "how?" "in what way?"

In what way did the crows caw? "Stretching their necks," or—"with stretched necks."

## SIMILAR EXAMPLES

背理而行 - - - to act contrary to right.

(背 *pei*<sup>4</sup>-behind; contrary; 理 *li*<sup>3</sup>-right; 行 *hsing*<sup>2</sup>-to act; to do)

不思而得 - - - to get without think (of it).

(思 *ssu*<sup>1</sup>-to think; 得 *te*<sup>2</sup>-to get; to receive).

不嚴而治 - - - to govern without severity.

(嚴 *yen*<sup>2</sup>-severe; 治 *chih*<sup>4</sup>-to govern).

- c. 兒叱之 - - - here 之 is a pronoun: "them."

- d. 鳴者 - - - in this case 者 gives a participial force to the preceding verb: "singing," or, "those who sing."

## SIMILAR EXAMPLES

知者不言.言者不知也 - - - those who know do not speak; those who speak do not know.

知之者不如好之者 ---- those who know it (之) (virtue) are not equal to those who love it.

(如 *ju*<sup>2</sup>-like; as; 不如 *pu*<sup>1</sup>-*ju*<sup>2</sup>-not equal, worse; 好 *hao*<sup>4</sup>-to love; to like).

有德者必有言有言者不必有德

—those who have virtue are certain to be able to speak; those who can speak are not certain to have virtue.

(德 *te*<sup>2</sup>-virtue; 必 *pi*<sup>4</sup>-certainly; must).

- e. 鵲也 ----, (those who sing) are the crows.” In this case the final particle 也 marks the end of the sentence as it usually does.

#### SIMILAR EXAMPLES

不知其仁也 ---- I do not know that he is benevolent (其 *ch'i*<sup>2</sup>-he; it; 仁 *jen*<sup>2</sup>-benevolent).

我不信也 ---- I do not believe (it).

(我 *wo*<sup>2</sup>-I; me; 信 *hsin*<sup>4</sup>-to believe).

Sometimes 也 makes a pause in a sentence, and so gives emphasis to the preceding words, like:

學也祿在其中矣 ---- as to learning, (one's) salary may be found therein.

(學 *hsüeh*<sup>2</sup>-to learn; 祿 *lu*<sup>4</sup>-salary; 在 *tsai*<sup>4</sup>-at; in; 中 *chung*<sup>1</sup>-middle; within; 矣 *i*<sup>3</sup>-a final particle).

耕也鋤在其中矣—as to ploughing, hunger is to be found therein.

(耕 *keng*<sup>1</sup>-to plough; 餒 *nei*<sup>3</sup>-hunger).

- f. 人之智識 ---- here 之 is used to express the possessive case: “man's knowledge and experience.”

- g. 遠勝於鳥 ---- “much higher than (those of) birds.”

#### SIMILAR EXAMPLES

莫大於天 ---- there is nothing greater than God.

(莫 *mo*<sup>4</sup>-not; there is not; 大 *ta*<sup>4</sup>-big; great; 天 *t'ien*<sup>1</sup>-heaven, God).

水高於岸 ---- the water is higher than the bank.

(水 *shui*<sup>3</sup>-water; 高 *kao*<sup>4</sup>-high; 岸 *an*<sup>4</sup>-shore; bank).

貴於銀 ---- more valuable than silver.

(貴 *kuei*<sup>4</sup>-dear; honourable; 銀 *yin*<sup>2</sup>-silver).

### TRANSLATION

#### LUCKY AND BAD OMENS

There were (some) crows (which) flocked together (upon a) tree (in a) courtyard and cawed (lit., sang) stretching (their) necks. (A) boy hooted at them (之). (His) father asked (lit., said), “What (is) the harm (in) this (是)?” (The) boy said. “(I) have often heard people say (that when a) magpie chatters, (it brings) good luck, (and when a) crow caws, (it brings) bad luck. Today the crows have been cawing, therefore (故) I have hooted at them.” The father said, “Man's knowledge and experience (are) much higher (遠勝) than (於) (those of) birds, yet (尚) he cannot foresee good luck and ill luck. Still more the birds are not able to do it.”

## PART II

## 人 影

新月初上。兒行廊下。似有一人隨其後。不敢回顧。急入告姊。姊曰。此汝身之影也。汝立燈前。行日下。皆有影。何忘之耶。兒乃悟。

## 人 影

月亮剛上來。有小孩在廊下走。覺着好像有一個人。在身後跟着他似的。他不敢回頭看。急忙進去。告知他姐姐。他姐姐說。這是你身子的影兒。你在燈前站着。日下走着。全有影兒。怎麼會忘了。於是小孩纔醒悟。

## VOCABULARY

影 *ying*<sup>3</sup> - a shadow.

新 *hsin*<sup>1</sup> - new; recent.

月 *yüeb*<sup>4</sup> - the moon. A lunar month.

初 *ch'u*<sup>1</sup> - to begin; at first; JUST.

上 *shang*<sup>4</sup> - up; top; TO GO UP; summit; high; best.

行 *hsing*<sup>2</sup> - TO WALK; to do; to act; to carry out.

廊 *lang*<sup>2</sup>(362) - A VERANDAH; a corridor.

似 *ssu*<sup>4</sup> - like; similar; TO SEEM.

一 *i*<sup>1</sup> - ONE; the first. All; throughout.

隨 *sui*<sup>2</sup> (180) - TO FOLLOW; to accompany; together.

其 *ch'i*<sup>2</sup> - HE; she; it; they. This; that.

後 *hou*<sup>4</sup> - BEHIND; after; posterity.

下 *hsia*<sup>4</sup> - down; BENEATH; inferior. To come down. To take off.

敢 *kan*<sup>3</sup> - to dare; to venture.

回 *hui*<sup>2</sup> - to come back; to return.

顧 *ku*<sup>4</sup> (55) - to look at; to regard; to care for.

回顧 *hui*<sup>2</sup>-*ku*<sup>4</sup> - to look back.

急 *chi*<sup>2</sup> - HASTE; impatient; anxious. Urgent.

入 *ju*<sup>4</sup> - TO GO IN; to put in.

告 *kao*<sup>4</sup> - TO TELL; to announce. To lay a plaint.

姊 *tz'u*<sup>3</sup> - an elder sister.

此 *tz'u*<sup>3</sup> - this.

汝 *ju*<sup>3</sup> - you; yours.

身 *shen*<sup>1</sup> - the body; the person.

立 *li*<sup>4</sup> - TO STAND UP; to set up; to fix; to establish. Immediately.

燈 *teng*<sup>1</sup> (733) - A LAMP; a lantern.

前 *ch'ien*<sup>2</sup> - before.

日 *jih*<sup>4</sup> - THE SUN; a day.

皆 *chieh*<sup>4</sup> - all; every. AN EQUALIZING PARTICLE (see note b.).

忘 *wang*<sup>2</sup> (646) - to forget.

耶 *yeh*<sup>1</sup> - an interrogative particle.

乃 *nai*<sup>3</sup> - thereupon; A CONSEQUENTIAL PARTICLE. Now; so. However; but (see note c).

悟 *wu*<sup>4</sup> (763) - to awake; TO UNDERSTAND.

### NOTES

- a. 汝身之影 - - - - here 之 is a sign of the possessive case: "the shadow of your body."  
 b. 皆有影 - - - - here 皆 is used as an equalizing particle (see Lesson 4.III) which indicates that a quality, a state or an action relates to two or several objects to the same extent.

#### SIMILAR EXAMPLES

人人皆知 - - - - all men know that.

老少皆在 - - - - old and young all are there.

(老 *lao*<sup>3</sup>-old; 少 *shao*<sup>3</sup>-few; little; young; 在 *tsai*<sup>4</sup>-present; alive).

四海之內皆兄弟也 - - - all within the four seas are brothers.

(四 *ssu*<sup>4</sup>-four; 海 *hai*<sup>3</sup>-the sea; 內 *nei*<sup>4</sup>-inside; within; 兄 *hsung*<sup>1</sup>-an elder brother; 弟 *ti*<sup>4</sup>-a younger brother; 兄弟 *hsiung*<sup>1</sup>-*ti*<sup>4</sup>-brothers).

- c. 兒乃悟 - - - - here 乃 is used as a consequential particle (see Lesson 17.III).

#### SIMILAR EXAMPLES

乃可 - - - - it will then do (可 *k'o*<sup>3</sup>-can; may).

百事乃遂 - - - - everything then has gone right.

(百 *pai*<sup>3</sup>, *po*<sup>2</sup>-hundred; all; 事 *shit*<sup>4</sup>-affair; matter; 遂 *sui*<sup>4</sup>-comply; follow).

### TRANSLATION

#### MAN'S SHADOW

The new moon had just (初) risen. A boy was passing under a verandah, (and) it seemed (to him) that somebody (lit., one man) was following him (其). The boy did not dare to look back. Hurriedly (急) he entered (the house), (and) told (his) elder sister. (His) sister said, "It (is) the shadow of your body. (When) you are standing before a lamp, (or) going under the sun, there always (皆) is a shadow. How is it that you forget it (之)?" The boy then (乃) understood.



## PART III

## 多言無益

或問墨子曰。言以多爲貴乎。墨子曰。蝦蟆日夜鳴。而人厭之。雄雞一鳴。天下振動。言在當時而已。多言何益。

## 多言無益

有人問墨子說。言語貴乎多嗎。墨子說。蝦蟆成天成夜的叫。人却都厭惡他。公雞一叫。天下都振動。說話不過得是時候。多言有甚麼益處。

## VOCABULARY

多 *to*<sup>1</sup> - many; MUCH; mostly; often.

無益 *nn*<sup>2</sup> - not; nothing; without.

益 *i*<sup>2(4)</sup> - to increase; to benefit; ADVANTAGE; still more.

或 *huo*<sup>4</sup> - some; SOMEONE; or; perhaps.

問 *ven*<sup>4</sup> - TO ASK; to inquire. To hold responsible.

子 *tzu*<sup>3</sup> - a child; a son. A gentleman. You; Sir, A PHILOSOPHER.

墨 *mo*<sup>4</sup> - ink; black; obscure.

翟 *ti*<sup>2</sup> (*chai*<sup>2</sup>) - the Tartar pheasant.

墨子 *mo*<sup>4</sup>-*tzu*<sup>3</sup> (墨翟 *mo*<sup>4</sup>-*ti*<sup>2</sup>) - a philosopher (4th and 3rd century B. C.) of the Sung State, who propounded a doctrine of "universal love." He was vigorously opposed by Mencius, who exhibited the unpractical side of that doctrine.

以 *i*<sup>3</sup> - to take; to cause; to use. A particle of many uses (see note a).

爲 *wei*<sup>2</sup> - to do; to make; to cause. Read *wei*<sup>4</sup> - because of; for; by; on behalf of.

貴 *kuei*<sup>4</sup> - honourable; esteemed; dear; expensive.

蝦 *hsia*<sup>1</sup> (639) - a shrimp, a prawn. Read *ha*<sup>2</sup> - a frog.

蟆 *ma*<sup>2</sup> (*mo*<sup>1</sup>) (453) - a frog.

蝦蟆 *ha*<sup>2</sup>-*ma*<sup>2</sup> - a common toad; a frog.

夜 *yeh*<sup>4</sup> - night; darkness.

厭 *yen*<sup>4</sup> - to dislike; to hate; to loathe.

雄 *hsung*<sup>2</sup> - the male of birds. Brave; martial.

鷄 *chi*<sup>1</sup> (881) - the fowl; the chicken. The cock.

雄鷄 *hsung*<sup>2</sup>-*chi*<sup>4</sup> - a cock.