

ENJOY LEARNING JAPANESE KANJI DISCOVER THEIR HIDDEN MEANINGS

by Kun Ho PARK and Kyung Yong KONG

This radical new approach to learning Chinese characters (called 'KANJI' in Japanese) is founded in deep historical and philological research into the root meanings of the base constituent elements of each character. The authors have identified 250 root characters all of which fall in 3 basic groups. The student is not encouraged to learn them, but rather to remember them subconsciously through this method's multiple mnemonic techniques. A total of 971 basic kanji are taught in a fun and interesting way, the essence of which is the use of jigsaw patterns to build the links between the kanji sharing root characters, or 'radicals', which have a common root meaning.

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Discover their Hidden Meanings

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Kyung Yong Kong



Quit memorizing Japanese Kanji!

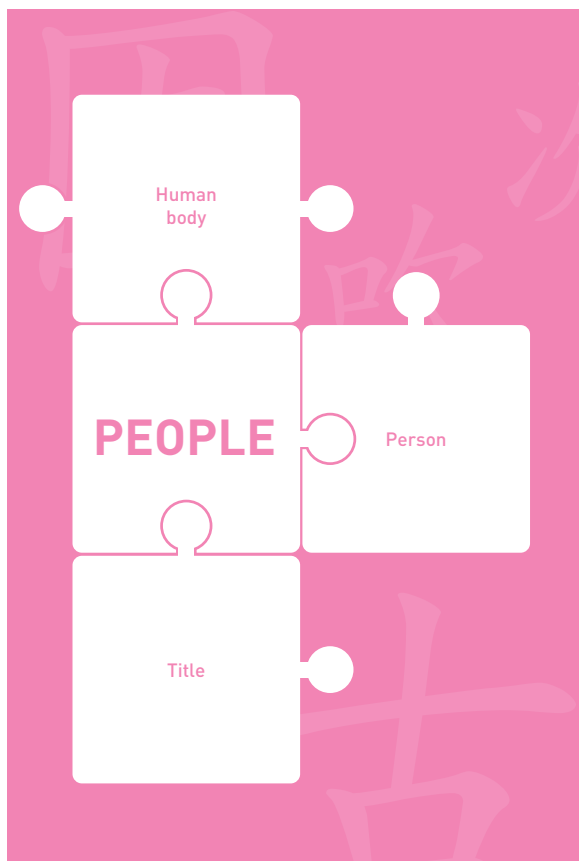
Our storytelling will help you remember the 620 most frequently-used kanji through simple breakdown.



£25 softcover 978-1-63519-000-7
226 x 156mm; 416 pages, all in colour; 971 kanji introduced
using 250 radicals identified from root meaning; on-kun pro-
nunciation index, meaning index, radical index, pattern index.

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Human body

When the ancient Chinese first came up with the shapes that later became the basis of the present kanji, it would have been much easier for them to use something associated with their bodies. Everything from the top of the head to the tip of the toes is depicted in a character.

1. The **head** can also symbolize a leader.
2. A **face** has ears, eyes, a nose and a mouth.
3. Which part of the **body** would be used to describe emotions like happiness, **anxiety** and joy? It's 心 [シ], the character meaning 'heart.'
4. Which body part is used the most? It's our **hands** which is what differentiates us from animals. Of all the body parts, the character for 'hand' is used the most as part of a more complicated character.
5. The second most used body part is **'foot'** which is also part of many other characters.

Person

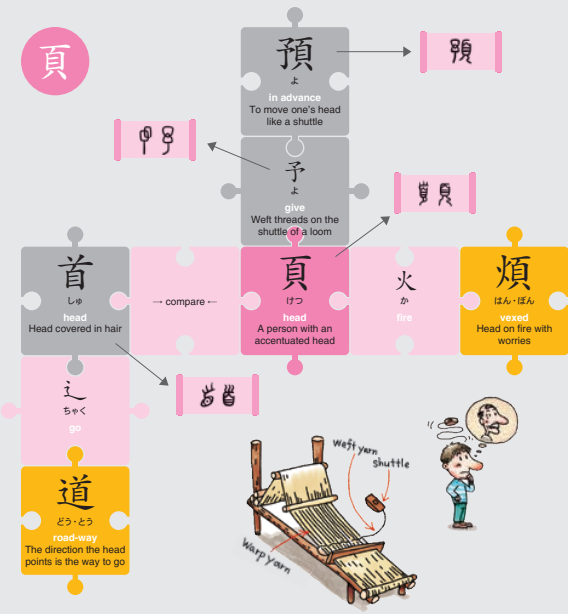
Many characters in this category describe people, not just body parts. Whereas some mean 'a person,' others now entail a different meaning.

1. Explanations on how the meaning of "人," 'a person,' influences a character.
2. Some characters look like "大" 'a man with arms and legs played out.'
3. 'Standing man, crouching man, kneeling man,' and how they change a character's meaning.

Title

Any dictionary will tell you that humans are a social species. In this section, we will find out how titles and classes are inflected in various characters.

1. Some characters describe the class one is **born into**.
2. There is also the **social class** that separates kings from commoners. There are more subjects than kings, hence more characters about subjects.



4 頁 ケツ head
 一 丁 百 百 頁 頁 頁

A head (一) above a person's (儿) legs and face (頁) put together to mean 'head.'

4a 予 ヨ あらかじめ・かねて give / beforehand (預)

Symbolizes two hooks that are interconnected together, or the shape of a flying shuttle in traditional looms. As the shuttle moves back and forth to release string, the meaning of 'to give' is derived.

* "豫," a traditional character which was a combination of "予" and "象," meaning an elephant, became "予," a simplified version that is solely used today. "予" means that an elephant(象) knows **beforehand** when it will be destined to die, and therefore, find its own gravesite.

4b 預 ヨ あずかる・あずける in advance / deposit
 shuttle/give 予 [ヨ] + head 頁 [ケツ]

When weaving with a loom, the weft yarn that goes horizontally is woven through the vertical warp yarn with a flying shuttle(予). This character means that a man's head(頁) or thoughts are moving to and fro, as fast as a shuttle, to think of many options **in advance** so that he can plan ahead. From saving up for the future came the meaning "to assign or entrust."

* When instinctively forecasting the future, we can use the kanji "豫" that includes the elephant(象). When planning or preparing for the future, use "予" with the head(頁).

4c 煩 ハン・ボン vexed
 fire 火 [カ] + head 頁 [ケツ]

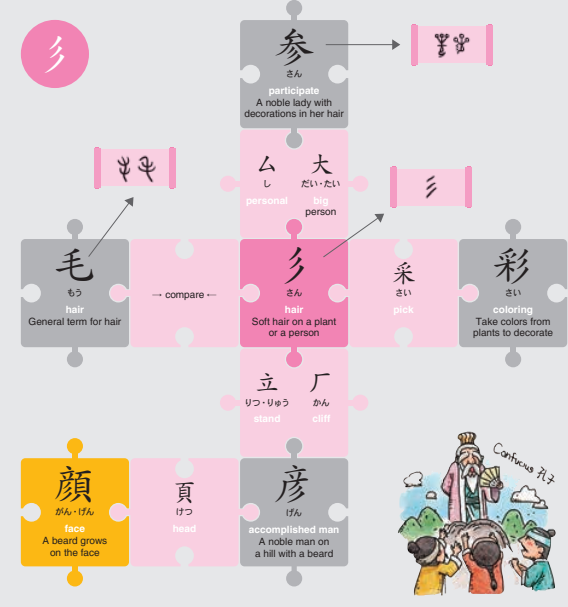
Anyone with a head(頁) on fire(火) would be in much **trouble**.
 煩い [うるさい] noisy; distressed

4d 首 シュ くび head

A person's face(自) with hair(辵) on top to mean a **head**.
 * In this character, "self 自 [己]" is the nose, which is the boldest feature on one's face.
 首都 [しゅと] capital city -44 824

4e 道 ドウ・トウ みち road-way; moral
 head 首 [シユ] + go 辵 [チヤク]

The direction the head(首), or the leader goes(辵), is the way his men must follow. This character also means **morals**, because it's the way one must go, the right way.
 步道 [ほどう] sidewalk; pavement -44a 44 横道 [よこみち] byway; side road; digression -189a 44



5 参 サン hair

The **soft hair** on a plant or a person. Hair on the head keeps one warm, but hair elsewhere is more decorative than functional. Characters that include this character have something to do with decorations or the act of decorating.

5a 参 サン まいる participate
 personal 亼 [シ] + person/big 大 [ダイ・タイ] + decorate/hair 参 [サン]

When **taking part in** a party, a noble lady(大) decorates (参) her hair with an accessory(亼).
 * The traditional character(参) takes the shape of decorations(彡) in the hair(dark and bushy 参 [シン]) to attend a party or a function.

参る [まいる] (honorific) go, come, visit 参加 [さんか] participation -5a 125b
 持参 [じさん] bringing; bearing -179 5a 参考 [さんこう] reference -5a 81c

5b 彩 サイ coloring
 pick 采 [サイ] + decorate/hair 参 [サン]

To take the leaves(采) of a tree or plant and create different **colors** to dye material or clothes for decoration(参) purposes.
 色彩 [しきさい] color -15a 9a

5c 彦 ゲン accomplished man
 stand 立 [リツ・リュウ] + cliff 厂 [カン] + hair 参 [サン]

A learned **nobleman** with a long beard(参) standing(立) on top of a hill(厂).

5d 顔 ガン・ゲン かお face
 accomplished man 彦 [ゲン] + head 頁 [ケツ]

Virtuous men who were respected(彦) grew long beards(参). The part of one's head(頁) with long strands of hair is one's **face**.
 笑顔 [えがお] a smiling (beaming) face -11a 5d

5e 毛 モウ け hair

Refers to any type of **hair**, be it human, animal, plant, or even fruit.
 毛皮 [けがわ] fur; pelt -5a 149 毛布 [もうふ] blanket -5a 103a

User Guide

To learn kanji much more easily, one must understand how they came to be. This book will introduce you to the characters about people, life and nature.

Characters about people

Human body: Though different in color and size, we share the same physical characteristics. Most characters are based on human physical attributes.

Person: Many basic characters depict the form of certain human postures, such as 'standing man,' 'crouching man,' and 'kneeling man.'

Title: From an unborn baby to an elderly man, and from a slave to a king.

Characters about life

War: The history of man might as well be the history of war. Many kanji are related to war, which influenced life greatly.

Necessities of life: Characters related to the necessities of life.

Agriculture: Farming is an occupation that produces food, the most essential element for human existence. It has a long association with the survival of mankind.

Characters about nature

Animals: They can be categorized into 'land animals,' 'other animals' and 'animal by-products.'

Natural scenery: Characters about mountains, minerals, water, greenery and trees are the most-used kanji.

Heavenly bodies: The characters about the sun, moon and stars are combined with other characters, contributing to produce another meaning.

Miscellaneous: Numbers and signs.

By finding out how these kanji were initially developed, and later by and repeatedly using the same basic characters in more complicated ones, you will be able to dissect the complicated ones and appreciate the story each of them tell. If you practice reading and writing these characters repeatedly, your kanji ability will improve surprisingly fast. Furthermore, if you come across new characters not listed in this book, you can guess what their pronunciation would be and what they mean.

explanation about them. That is because these characters would have already been explained and therefore a short introduction should be enough to have you guess the origin and meaning of it. When you go back to reread about a certain character, the short introduction and diagram will be enough to jog your memory.

- 3. Ancient characters:** In order to help the readers to better understand the characters in current use, the ancient characters such as the inscriptions on bones and tortoise carapaces, bronze inscriptions and seal characters have been listed in this book. These ancient characters will help the readers to clearly understand the hidden meanings of the kanji by simple storytelling of each character.

The main body

1. Quick reference number
2. Character explained
3. On-yomi and Kun-yomi
4. Dissection
5. Stroke order
6. Vocabulary
7. Explanations and footnotes

- 1. Quick reference number:** Each character in this book has its own quick reference number. This is to aid you in searching for a specific character you do not know or cannot remember. Use them to go back to a certain word or character that appears on another page.
- 2. Character explained:** If the kanji appears on a yellow background, it means it is used in a word from JLPT N5. Even if the background color is not yellow, the character is still important because its radical could connect it to a kanji with greater application.

Structure of the content

To gain the most from this book, you will need to understand the structure of the content of this book and the intention of the editors. The contents of this book can be divided into two parts, the diagram and the explanation.

The diagram



1. The main character
2. Condensed explanation
3. Ancient characters

1. The main character: These may not be part of the 214 radicals that the scholars have identified. But remember that a character doesn't have to be a radical to have an important meaning within another, more complicated, character. In essence, radicals are only used to categorize characters and are seldomly used other than when one is looking up a character up in a dictionary. So, because they are of little importance, this book does not list radicals. By the time you are done reading, you will be able to dissect each kanji into the basic components, and with this information you can look them up in a kanji dictionary. The on-yomi shown on the diagram is written with hiragana. Generally, on-yomi should be written with katakana, but we have written it in hiragana for our readers who have difficulty reading katakana. Of course, the on-yomi is written in katakana in the main body, so if possible, being comfortable reading in katakana would be beneficial.

2. Condensed explanation: Read the short explanation, and you will be able to understand how a certain kanji was originally developed. In the latter part of the book, you will find some kanji appearing in a diagram without much

3. On-yomi and kun-yomi: On-yomi means to read a kanji in its Chinese or Korean pronunciation. In Japan, this would be considered a foreign language, so it's printed in katakana. Of course, Chinese characters had been introduced a long time ago into Japan and had spread gradually over many years, so the current pronunciation does not correspond to that of Mandarin pinyin or Korean hanja. Some kanji originated in Japan and those characters do not have an *On*. Also, some characters are not used as radicals, so these don't have an *On*. In that case, we have used its closest possible pronunciation of kanji.

Kun-yomi is to read a kanji in Japanese to portray its own meaning. This is a Japanese pronunciation and is printed in hiragana. But, if a kanji was created based on an item or notion that did not exist in Japanese language, its corresponding *Kun* may not exist. One kanji can be used to portray multiple meanings, and can also have different *Kun* based on the period when it was introduced to Japan. Depending on characters, there exist many dozens of *Kun*. In this book, we have only printed those *Kun* characters applicable to those characters used in vocabulary from JLPT N5-N1.

4. Dissection: This explains which basic characters are brought together to make the complicated one. It is also helpful to check how the pronunciation of one affects that of the other. As the epilogue states, most characters not mentioned in this book take the pronunciation of a character it is composed of. Also, there is nothing to worry if the shape of a character changes when it becomes part of another. That change was made over centuries, according to what the people thought would look better.

5. Stroke order: There's a rule to the stroke order when writing a kanji. Left to right, top to bottom. When two strokes meet, write the horizontal stroke first, then the vertical. Follow the stroke order in this book and your kanji will look balanced. It should help if you try to recall the smaller components of each character when writing.

6. Explanations and footnotes: This is the most important part of this book. These explain how a character is made. In some cases, the ancient version of the same character is provided to aid understanding.

7. Vocabulary: Words printed in black have been listed here only when those characters explained are used and applied as kun-yomi. Words printed in grey show a linguistic process where a kanji explained is added to another kanji to develop a new meaning. These words should help you understand how that a specific kanji explained can be used in its applications.

How the Chinese characters were made

- **Pictograms:** The origin of Chinese characters are the pictograms of items the ancient Chinese used to communicate with. A tree's branches(一), roots(八), and trunk(|) became the character "tree 木 [ボク・モク]." Once you know their origins, the 300 odd Chinese pictograms shouldn't be so hard to memorize.
- **Codes:** Codes were used to convey meanings that were difficult to do so with shapes. For example, a long horizontal stroke(一) on top of a tree(木) to emphasize the end of something came to mean "end 末 [マツ・バツ]." There are about 130 such characters. If you remember they are made based on pictograms, these also should be easy to remember.
- **Ideograms:** As time passed, pictograms and codes were combined to make new characters. For example, a person(亻) leaning against a tree(木) means "rest 休 [キユウ]." There are about 1,000 such ideograms. Once you know the pictograms and codes these characters are based on, they shouldn't be such a threat.
- **Combined characters:** The meanings of ideograms can be memorized based on the characters they are composed of, but remembering the pronunciation is a whole new matter. Therefore, the ancient Chinese made new characters by borrowing the meaning of one and the pronunciation of another and combining them. For example, they combined "clothes 衤 [イ・エ]" and "end 末 [マツ・バツ]" to make "socks 袜 [バツ・マチ]." About 97% of all Chinese characters were made this way.
- **In addition** to the above-mentioned characters, there are 'derivative cognates (reciprocal meaning)' and 'rebus (or phonetic loan or borrowed characters).' They have, however, slight variations in meaning or pronunciation, and therefore shouldn't need much effort to remember.

Basic characters as the backbone

We can tell that all ideograms, combined characters, 'derivative cognates (reciprocal meaning)' and 'rebus (or phonetic loan or borrowed characters)' were made with pictograms and codes. So if we know all the characters that are pictograms and codes, then we can easily deduce the meaning, which is a unique quality of Kanji.

Xu Shen(30 AD~124), a Han Dynasty scholar and the author of the first Chinese language dictionary Shuowen Jiezi (説文解字), selected 540 basic characters. Scholars from countries that still use Chinese characters, namely China, Korea, and Japan, selected 200~214 of them and called them 'radicals.' However, there are some basic characters that are not radicals, so including those, there are about 250 basic characters in the Chinese language.

That's it. All languages have a basic form, and Chinese is, of course, no exception. English has the 26-letter alphabet while Korean has 24 vowels and consonants and Japanese has 50 letters. Remember those basics and you can learn the language. 250 basic Chinese characters sounds daunting, but it shouldn't be. English, Korean, and Japanese are phonetic languages, so just because you can read and write doesn't mean you understand. But Chinese characters are ideograms with meaning, and with memorizing comes understanding.

SO, IN SUMMARY...

- **Radical & Original:** This new system is ground-breaking and will be welcomed by students the world over because it de-mystifies Chinese characters from the outset by identifying their constituent parts NOT by traditional radicals alone, but by MEANING – which incorporates traditional radicals but adds more.
- **Scholarly:** The research required to identify the meanings in the ancient characters from which the 250 radicals identified have grown has been the life-work of the two authors and required deep research into ancient inscriptions and texts that could only be carried out by experts in the Chinese language.
- **Painless and Fun:** No need to memorize: as the student encounters the history of each root and the way they are combined with other roots to form characters linked by the jigsaw system devised by the authors, their synapses are stimulated to remember the pathways that lead to form and meaning. It begins to click, and gone are the days of painfully trying to memorize thousands of characters.
- **JLPT N5:** This book takes the student through to the level of mastery required for *Japanese Language Proficiency Test Level 5* – the only measure of proficiency devised and recognised by the Japanese government.
- **Furthermore:** The book includes 4 indexes and stroke order for all characters.

ALSO AVAILABLE...

- *Enjoy Learning Chinese Characters* (£27): The Kong & Park system is employed for the first time in this brilliant and fun book, first published in 2013.

