

Some Basic Brushstrokes



Horizontal stroke

“Like a cloud forming over many miles”



Small hook stroke



Sweeping left stroke

“A rhinoceros digging its tusk into the ground”



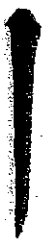
Long hook

“Like a sheep’s leg” or “Sinews of a bow”



Sweeping right hand stroke

“Like a duck’s beak” or “Rising wave”



Vertical stroke

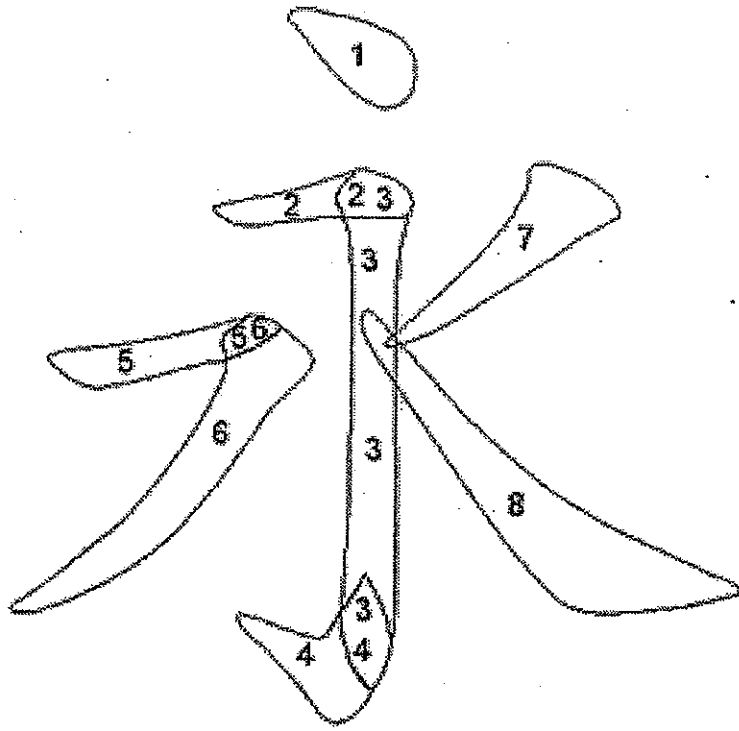
“Suspended needle” or “Withered vine”



Dot

“Teardrop” or “Stone falling from a peak”

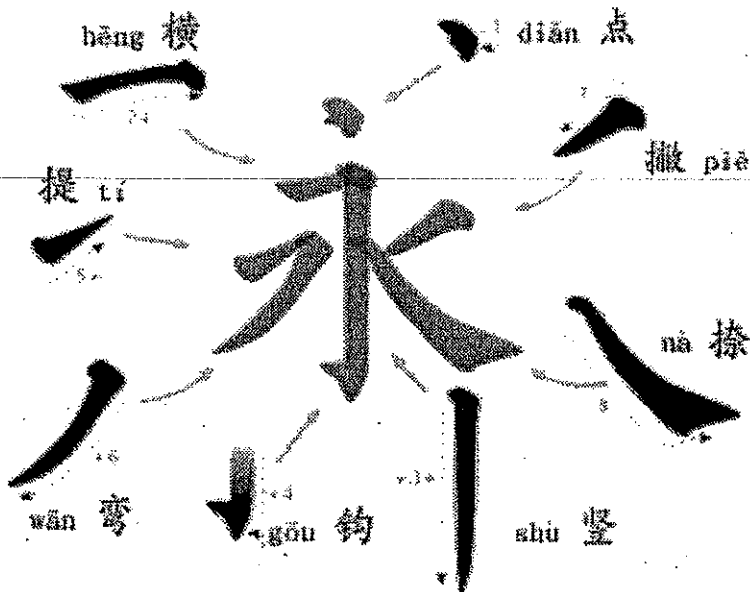
The character 永, *yǒng*, "forever", "permanence"



The strokes numbered

Where there are multiple numbers in an area, the strokes overlap briefly and continue from the previous number to the next.

Description	
1	Dot
2	A straight horizontal line
3	A straight vertical line
4	A hook to the left
5	A tapering horizontal line thinning toward upper right
6	A long slightly curvy tapering line thinning toward lower left
7	A short tapering line thinning toward lower left
8	Thickening line toward lower right, where it is "as sharp as a knife" (hence



seal script

clerical script

cursive script

standard script

林

林

林

林

grove
forest

問

問

问

問

ask

聞

聞

闻

聞

hear,
smell,
news

男

男

男

男

male

思

思

思

思

think
thought

安

安

安

安

peaceful

家

家

家

家

family
home

seal script

clerical script

cursive script

standard script

𠂇	口	𠂇	口	mouth
𠂇	心	心	心	heart
𠂇	子	子	子	son/seed
𠂇	女	女	女	female daughter
𠂇	水	水	水	Water
𠂇	手	手	手	hand
中	中	中	中	middle center

seal script

clerical script

cursive script

standard script



person

big

sun

moon

wood/
tree

field

strength

seal script

clerical script

cursive script

standard script

火

火

火

火

fire

上

上

上

上

up
above

下

下

下

下

down
below

門

門

門

門

door

耳

耳

耳

耳

ear

鳥

鳥

鳥

鳥

bird

入

入

入

入

enter

seal script

clerical script

cursive script

standard script

天 天 天 天

sky

秋 秋 秋 秋

autumn

李 李 李 李

plum

取 取 取 取

obtain
get

鳴 鳴 鳴 鳴

cry of birds

古 古 古 古

ancient

福 福 福 福

blessing

seal script

clerical script

cursive script

standard script

𠃉	友	友	友
𠃊	好	好	好
𠃋	有	有	有
𠃌	忠	忠	忠
𠃍	忘	忘	忘
𠃎	右	右	右
𠃏	左	左	左

friend

good

have

loyal

forget

right
(direction)

left

seal script

clerical script

cursive script

standard script

明

明

明

明

bright

母

母

母

母

mother

川

川

川

川

river

流

流

流

流

flow
drift

内

内

内

内

inside

出

出

出

出

exit

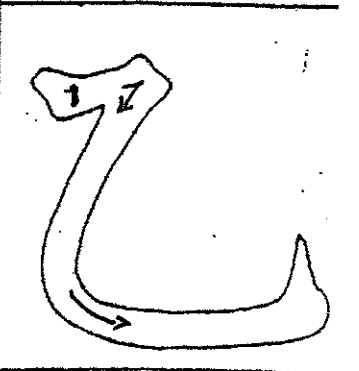
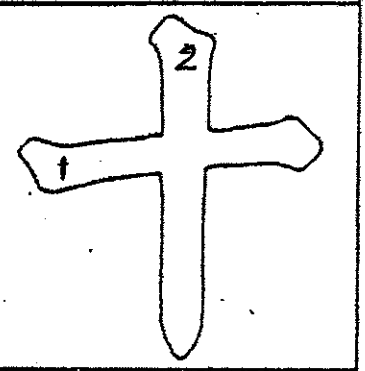
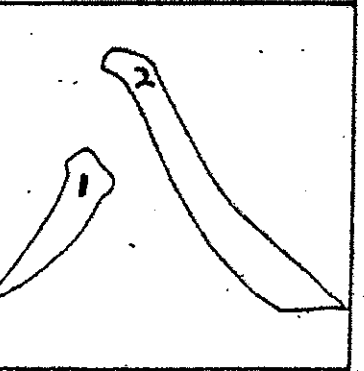
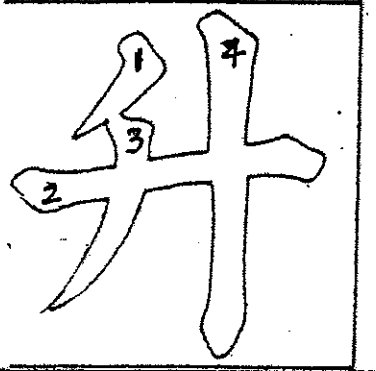
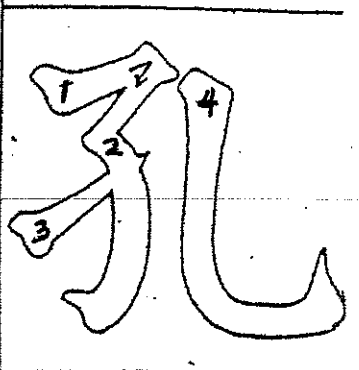
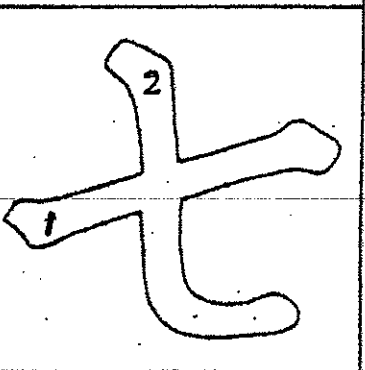
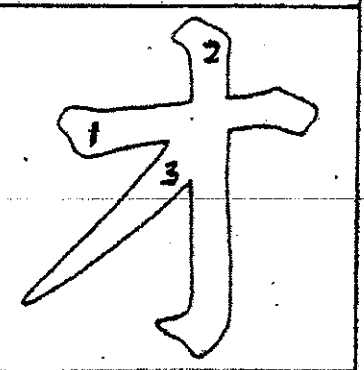
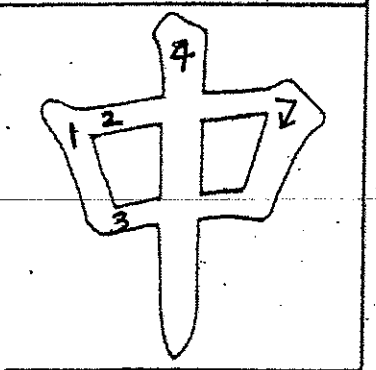
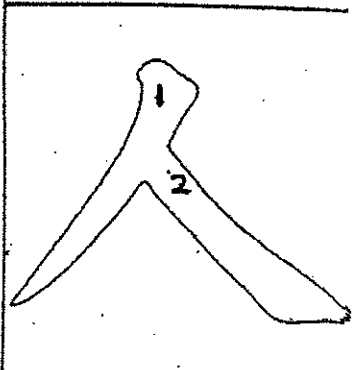
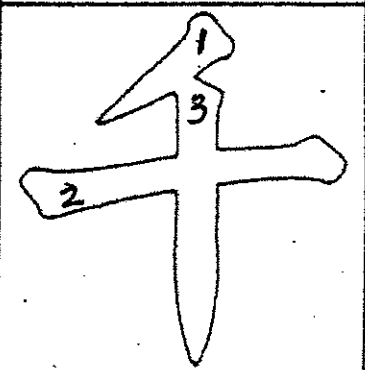
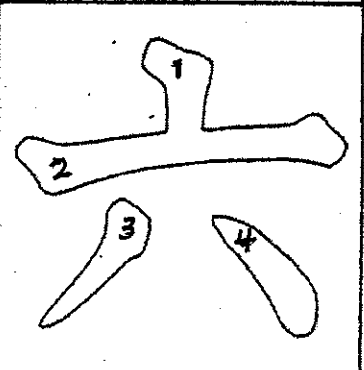
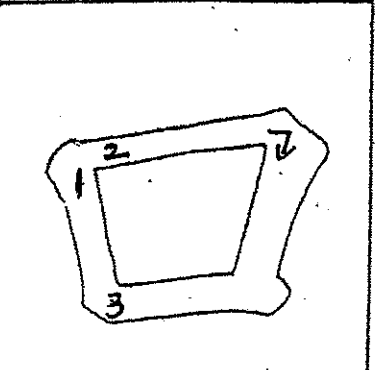
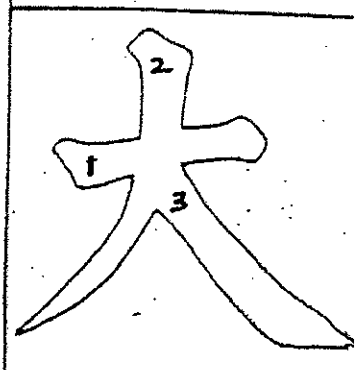
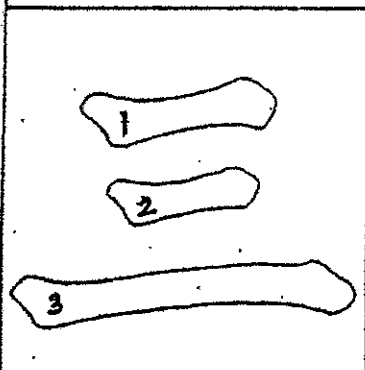
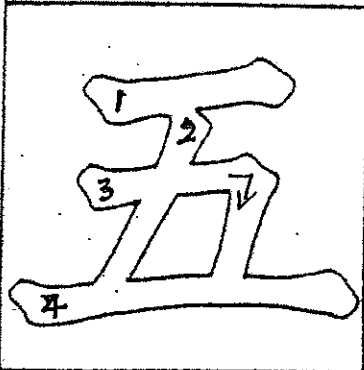
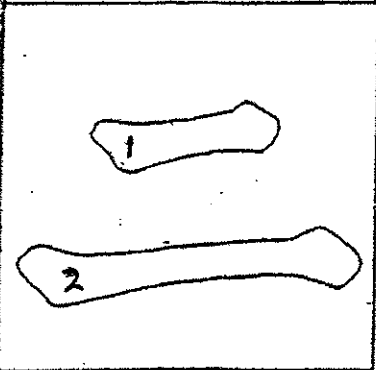
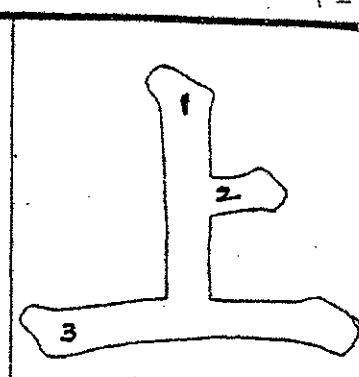
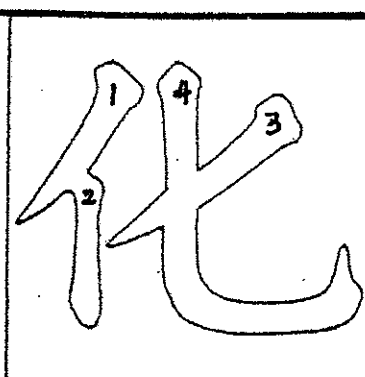
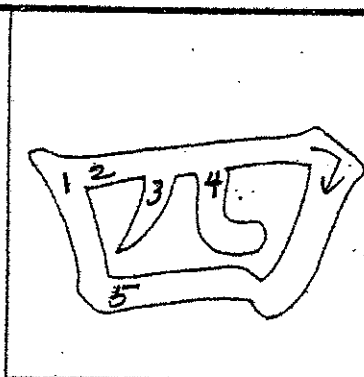
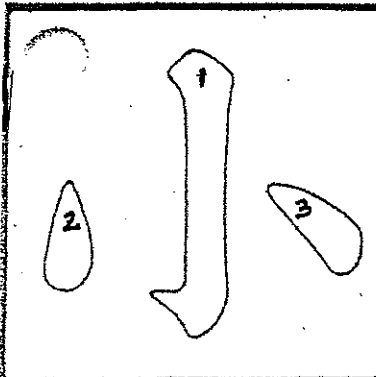
比

比

比

比

compare



CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY SYNOPSIS

The development of Chinese characters is classified into six categories. We will cover only the first three classifications—pictograms, simple ideograms, and ideogrammic compounds—through a discussion of the different “scripts” of Chinese calligraphy.



JiaGuWen (oracle bone writing): The oldest extant form of Chinese writing, carved on ox scapulas and tortoise plastrons.



JinWen (bronze ware script): Inscriptions seen on bronzewares of the Shang and Zhou dynasties.



DaZhuān (large seal script): Also developed during the Shang and Zhou dynasties, although the term “large seal script” generally refers to all scripts created prior to the Qin dynasty (221 BCE).



XiaoZhuān (small seal script): The script used in the court of Emperor Qín Shi Huang (221 BCE), who not only united China, but also standardized the Chinese written language. In this style, all brush strokes are applied with even pressure, giving the characters a uniform line quality. Today the generic term “seal script” refers to the small seal script.



Lishu (clerical script): The official script of the Han court, characterized by longer horizontal than vertical brush strokes, which gives the characters a flattened, rectangular look. While popularized under the Han, archaeological evidence indicates that this script was actually developed in the Qin state of the Warring States period, even if not used in the Qin dynasty court.



Kaishu (regular or standard script): A style developed from clerical script sometime between Eastern Han and Cao Wei dynasties (150-230 CE). Unlike the flattened style of *lishu*, characters are more vertical than horizontal and the beginning and end of each brush stroke is clearly defined. Stylistically, the script matured under six master calligraphers of the Tang dynasty (Ouyang, Yu, chu, Xue, Yan and Liu), whose writings still form the foundation for modern characters. For this reason, calligraphers must master *kaishu* before moving on to other scripts.

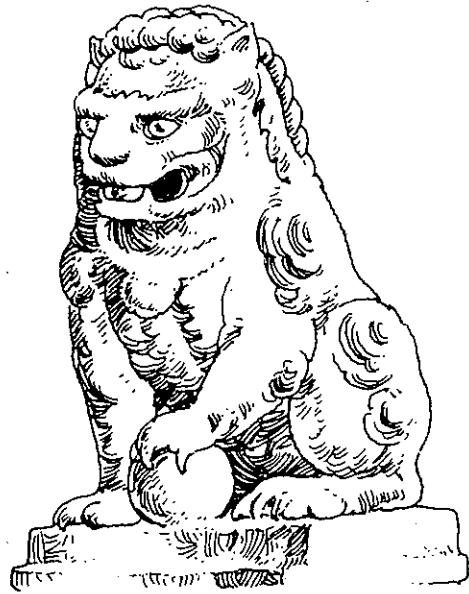
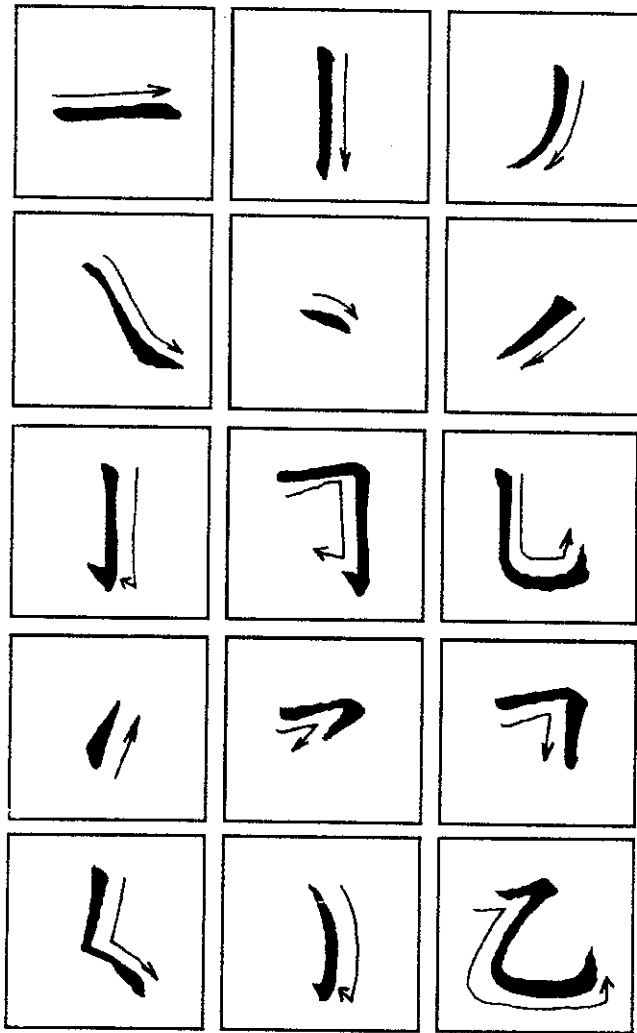


Xingshu (semi-cursive or running script): Though also derived from clerical script, this style is considered less formal and is primarily used in personal correspondence.



CaoShu (cursive script or grass writing): Admired more for its beauty and speed than for its legibility, this script developed in two stages. The first stage occurred during the Han dynasty when scribes sought a faster way to write clerical script and simplified characters by omitting certain strokes. In the second stage, the script evolved during the Wei and Jin dynasties when the older Han style was mixed with influences from the semi-cursive and standard styles.

Chinese characters



We call Chinese word symbols "characters".

Characters are made up of strokes. The basic strokes that make up Chinese characters are shown here.

Before you start writing characters, practise writing these strokes. Be sure always to write them in the directions shown by the arrows.

Chinese characters are so beautiful that writing them is like painting, and the art of doing so has a special name: *calligraphy*. Chinese people for thousands of years have loved calligraphy. Calligraphers use writing brushes (made from wolf or goat hair), ink stones, ink sticks and fine paper.

These four items were all invented in China where they are called "The Four Treasures".

