

# REMEMBERING THE KANJI

VOL. 1

*A Complete Course on How Not to Forget  
the Meaning and Writing  
of Japanese Characters*

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## Lesson 5

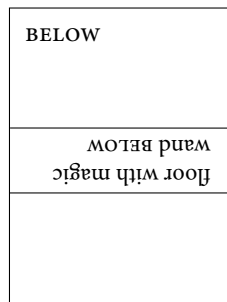
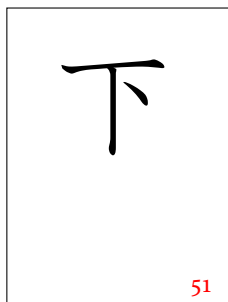
THAT IS ABOUT all we can do with the pieces we have accumulated so far, but as we add each new primitive element to those we already know, the number of kanji we will be able to form will increase by leaps and bounds.

If we were to step outside of the standard list, we would see that there are still a handful of more characters we could make with the pieces at hand, though none of them is very useful

While many of the stories you have learned in the previous lessons are actually more complex than the majority you will learn in the later chapters, they are the *first* stories you have learned, and for that reason are not likely to cause you much difficulty. By now, however, you may be wondering just how to go about reviewing what you have learned. Obviously it won't do simply to flip through the pages you have already studied, because the order already gives them away. The best method is to design for yourself a set of flash cards that you can add to as you go through the book.

If you have not already started doing this on your own, you might try it this way: Buy heavy paper (about twice the thickness of normal index cards), unlined and with a semigloss finish. Cut it into cards of about 9 cm. long and 6 cm. wide. On one side, make a large ball-pen drawing of one kanji in the top two-thirds of the card. (Writing done with fountain pens and felt-tip pens tends to smear with the sweat that comes from holding them in your hands for a long time.) On the bottom right-hand corner, put the number of the frame in which the kanji appeared. On the back side, in the upper left-hand corner, write the key-word meaning of the character. Then draw a line across the middle of the card and another line about 2 cm. below it. The space between these two lines can be used for any notes you may need later to remind you of the primitive elements or stories you used to remember the character. *Only fill this in when you need to, but make a card for every kanji as soon as you have learned it.*

The rest of the space on the card you will need later; when you study the readings of the characters, you might use the space above the double lines. The bottom half of the card, on both sides, can be left free for inserting kanji compounds (front side) and their readings and meanings (back side).



over 4,598 years ago. With the image of a terrace of *flowering tea* bushes in mind, picture a number of brightly painted and very l-o-n-g *wooden poles* (FRAME 207) placed here and there in their midst, with a tiny *umbrella* at the top to shade the delicate-tasting *tea flowers*. [9]

廿 丈 苳 萃 茶 茶

268

spinal column

脊

The **spinal column** has sprouted out of the *flesh* of your back into an *umbrella* that you always have with you, rain or shine. The pair of 2s on each side are the “ribs” of the *umbrella*. Take care to keep your image of the key word distinct from that for spine (FRAME 24). [10]

人 人 夫 脊

\*

meeting

△

This compound primitive depicts a **meeting** as a massive gathering of people under *one umbrella*. The full kanji from which this derives will be introduced later in FRAME 814. The important thing here is to picture the scene just described and associate it with the word **meeting**. [3]

ノ 人 △

269

fit

合

The kanji for **fit** reads literally, top to bottom, as a *meeting of mouths*—which is a rather descriptive way of speaking of a romantic kiss. We all know what happens when there is no meeting of minds and when people’s ideas don’t **fit** with one another. But this kanji invites us to imagine what happened to the romance of a certain unfortunate couple whose *mouths* didn’t **fit**. [6]

△ 合

bine to create a compound element for a *butcher* and his trade. Together they give us the image of a “truckers’ convoy.” [16]

車 輪 輸 輸

308

metaphor

喻

People who try to sound literary often end up **butchering the language**. Here we see a *meeting of butchers* whose *mouths are producing the metaphors*. [12]

口 喻

309

in front

前

We waited to introduce this character until now, even though we had all the elements, because it helps to reinforce the odd kanji of the last frame. Picture the *butcher* hacking away with his knife at a slab of meat on his table with a pair of ram’s *horns* placed **in front** of him (or on his head, if you prefer).

There is no need to worry about confusing this kanji with that for *before* (FRAME 263), since it will not appear as a primitive in any other character used in this book. [9]

、 丿 一 前 前

310

roast

煎

Think of **roasting** the guest of honor at a party—literally, in *front* of an *oven-fire*. [13]

前 煎

\*

walking legs

夂

We call this element **walking legs** because it indicates “legs in motion,” whether you want to think of them as jogging or walking in long strides, as the shape seems to suggest. Be careful how you write it, with the first two strokes like a stylized “7” [3]

ノ 夕 夂

* As a primitive, either <i>muscle</i> or <i>power</i> can be used.	
923 男	man <i>Rice fields . . . muscle.</i> This character is the gender-specific <b>man</b> , not the generic human <i>person</i> of FRAME 1023. [7]
924 劳	labor <i>Schoolhouse . . . muscle.</i> [7]
925 募	recruit <i>Graveyard . . . muscle.</i> [12]
926 劣	inferiority <i>Few . . . muscles.</i> [6]
927 功	achievement <i>Craft . . . muscle.</i> [5]
928 勸	persuade <i>Pegasus . . . muscle.</i> [13]
929 努	toil <i>Guy . . . muscle.</i> [7]
930 勃	uprising If you think of the <i>ten</i> as a little “cross” sitting atop the root of a <i>house</i> where we are used to seeing the “chimney” ( <i>drop</i> ), then you have the image of a <i>chapel</i> . (This combination will appear once more in this book: FRAME 1465.) To complete the picture for <b>uprising</b> , add: <i>child . . . muscles.</i> [9]
931 励	encourage <i>Cliff . . . ten thousand . . . muscle.</i> [7]

for <i>brains</i> at the top, which might prove more helpful than <i>rice field</i> for creating an image. The writing, however, follows the order of a <i>sun</i> with a <i>tree</i> whose trunk runs through the <i>sun</i> . [8]	
1203 菓	confectionary <i>Flowers . . . fruits.</i> [11]
1204 課	chapter <i>Words . . . fruit.</i> [15]
1205 裸	naked <i>Cloak . . . fruit.</i> [13]

## Lesson 31


BY NOW YOU will have learned to handle a great number of very difficult kanji with perfect ease and without fear of forgetting. Some others, of course, will take review. But let us focus on the ones you are most confident about and can write most fluently, in order to add a remark about what role the stories, plots, and primitives should continue to play even after you have learned a character to your own satisfaction.

This course has been designed to move in steps from the full-bodied story (Part One) to the skeletal plot (Part Two) to the heap of bones we call primitive elements (Part Three). This also happens roughly to be the way memory works. At first the full story is necessary (as a rule, for every kanji, no matter how simple it appears), in that it enables you to focus your attention and your interest on the vivid images of the primitives, which in turn dictate how you write the character. Once the image has strutted through the full light of imagination, it will pass on, leaving its footprints on the interstices of the brain in some mysterious way. And those footprints are often enough of a clue about the nature of the beast to enable you to reconstruct the plot in broad outlines. Should you need to, you can nearly always follow the tracks back to their source and recall your whole story, but that is generally unnecessary. The third stage occurs when

1373		stimulate
促	<i>Person . . . leg.</i> [9]	
1374		nab
捉	<i>Fingers . . . leg.</i> [10]	
1375		long-distance
距	<i>Wooden leg . . . gigantic.</i> [12]	
1376		path
路	<i>Wooden leg . . . each.</i> [13]	
1377		dew
露	<i>Rain . . . path.</i> [21]	
1378		hop
跳	<i>Wooden leg . . . portent.</i> [13]	
1379		leap
躍	<i>Wooden leg . . . feathers . . . turkey.</i> [21]	
1380		tread
踐	<i>Wooden leg . . . parade float.</i> [13]	
1381		step
踏	The meaning of this character is virtually identical with that of the last frame. Be sure to come up with distinct connotations suggested by phrases in which each is commonly used. <i>Wooden leg . . . water . . . sun.</i> [15]	
1382		trail
踪	<i>Wooden leg . . . religion.</i> The key word refers to a <b>trail</b> of foot-prints or tracks left behind.[13]	

1394		chink
隙	<i>Pinnacle . . . little . . . sun . . . little.</i> Note that the form of the first element for <i>little</i> given here is the simpler form that has become standard in general-use characters (see FRAME 110). For the time being, until typesetting fonts have made the adjustment, the officially approved drawing is this: 隙. [13]	
1395		follow
隨	<i>Pinnacle . . . possess . . . road.</i> [12]	
1396		auxiliary
陪	<i>Pinnacle . . . muzzle.</i> [11]	
1397		sunshine
陽	Different from the primitive for <i>sun</i> (which figures in the character) and the kanji for <i>ray</i> (FRAME 125), the key word <b>sunshine</b> is meant to convey the meaning of the masculine principle in nature, or “Yang.” (The dark is viewed mythically as the feminine principle; see FRAME 1718.) From there it comes to mean <i>sun</i> also. The elements are: <i>pinnacle . . . piggy bank.</i> [12]	
1398		line up
陳	<i>Pinnacle . . . east.</i> [11]	
1399		ward off
防	<i>Pinnacle . . . compass.</i> [7]	
1400		affixed
附	<i>Pinnacle . . . adhere.</i> [8]	
1401		Inst.
院	This key word, the abbreviation for <b>Institution</b> , represents the use of that word as a suffix affixed to certain buildings and organizations. Its primitive elements: <i>pinnacle . . . perfect.</i> [10]	



1472		affinity
縁	<i>Thread . . . broom . . . sow.</i> [15]	
1473		netting
網	<i>Thread . . . glass canopy . . . animal horns . . . perish.</i> [14]	
1474		tense
緊	<i>Slave . . . crotch . . . thread.</i> [15]	
1475		purple
紫	<i>Footprint . . . spoon . . . thread.</i> [12]	
1476		truss
縛	<i>Threads . . . acupuncturist.</i> [16]	
1477		straw rope
縄	<i>Thread . . . eels.</i> [15]	
*		cocoon
么	The two triangular shapes here and their final stroke are intended as a pictograph of a <b>cocoon</b> , spun in circles and tied up at the end. It is like the character for <i>thread</i> , except that the silkworm's actual product has not yet emerged clearly at the bottom. [3]	
		
1478		infancy
幼	<i>Cocoon . . . muscle.</i> [5]	
1479		behind
後	<i>Line . . . cocoon . . . walking legs.</i> [9]	

1506		cool
冷	<i>Ice . . . orders.</i> [7]	
1507		jurisdiction
領	<i>Orders . . . head.</i> [14]	
1508		small bell
鈴	<i>Gold . . . orders.</i> [13]	
1509		courage
勇	<i>Chop-seal . . . man.</i> [9]	
1510		bubble up
湧	<i>Water . . . courage.</i> [12]	
1511		traffic
通	<i>Chop-seal . . . screwdriver . . . road.</i> By combining the first two primitives into a single image, you will be able to use that image in a few instances later, one of which comes immediately. [10]	
1512		jump
踊	<i>Wooden leg . . . chop-seal . . . screwdriver.</i> [14]	
1513		doubt
疑	<i>Spoon . . . dart . . . chop-seal . . . zoo.</i> [14]	
1514		mimic
擬	<i>Fingers . . . doubt.</i> [17]	
1515		congeal
凝	<i>Ice . . . doubt.</i> [16]	

1587		decorate
飾	<i>Food . . . reclining . . . towel.</i> [13]	
1588		feed
餌	<i>Food . . . ear.</i> The sense of the key word here is that of bait or <b>feed</b> for animals.[14]	
1589		Bldg.
館	The abbreviation of <b>Building</b> suggests that this kanji is used in proper names, as indeed it often is. Keep your connotation distinct from <i>Inst.</i> (FRAME 1401) when working with the elements: <i>food . . . bureaucrat.</i> [16]	
1590		<i>mochi</i>
餅	<i>Mochi</i> is the glutinous rice the Japanese pound into cakes. Its primitives are: <i>food . . . puzzle.</i> [14]	
1591		foster
養	<i>Sheep . . . food.</i> The key word has the sense of promoting the development of something, especially in a psychological or spiritual sense. [13]	
1592		sated
飽	<i>Eat . . . wrap.</i> [13]	
*		waitress
𠂇	This primitive is too simple to draw to bother with looking for other primitive elements hidden inside it—except perhaps for the last stroke that forms the second of two <i>human legs</i> . From this we give it its meaning of a <b>waitress</b> (who should not be confused with the <i>waiter</i> back in FRAME 1050). Oddly, the element on its own is drawn with four strokes but with five strokes when it appears in another kanji. [4]	
		一 (𠂇) 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇

1646		block up
塞	<i>House . . . celery . . . animal legs . . . soil.</i> [13]	
*		grass skirt
蓑	This unusual looking <b>grass skirt</b> is composed of a <i>top hat</i> and <i>scarf</i> , and <i>eight celery</i> sticks. [13]	
	一 六 傘 蓑	
1647		brew
釀	<i>Whiskey bottle . . . grass skirt.</i> [20]	
1648		defer
讓	<i>Words . . . grass skirt.</i> [20]	
1649		lot
壤	<i>Ground . . . grass skirt.</i> The <b>lot</b> of this key word refers to a portion of land. [16]	
1650		lass
嬢	<i>Woman . . . grass skirt.</i> [16]	

## Lesson 40

THE REMAINDER OF PLANT-RELATED primitives are built up from combinations of vertical and horizontal lines, representing respectively plants and the earth from which they spring. Accordingly it would be a good idea to study the remaining elements of this section at a single sitting, or at least so to review them before passing on to the next grouping.

1689		enroll
籍	<i>Bamboo . . . Christmas tree . . . once upon a time.</i> [20]	
*		bonsai
夫	The element for <i>bushes</i> has an extra stroke added (drawn <b>down from the middle of the second stroke</b> when it “encloses” something beneath, otherwise from the point where the <b>third</b> and <b>fourth</b> strokes intersect) to give the image of the crutches Japanese gardeners use to hold up a tree that is being bent into shape. From there it is but a short leap to the small <i>bonsai</i> plants that imitate this art in miniature. [5]	
	一 = 三 夫 夫	
1690		springtime
春	<i>Bonsai . . . sun.</i> [9]	
1691		camellia
椿	<i>Tree . . . springtime.</i> [13]	
1692		peaceful
泰	<i>Bonsai . . . grains of rice.</i> [10]	
1693		play music
奏	<i>Bonsai . . . heavens.</i> [9]	
1694		reality
実	<i>House . . . bonsai.</i> [8]	
*		cornstalk
丰	The element for <i>bushes</i> extended the vertical stroke beneath the final horizontal stroke; the <b>cornstalk</b> omits that final stroke altogether, leaving only the <b>stalk</b> and the leaves bursting forth on all sides. [3]	

2146		captive
虜	<i>Tiger . . . man.</i> [13]	
2147		skin
膚	<i>Tiger . . . stomach.</i> [15]	
2148		void
虚	<i>Tigers . . . row.</i> [11]	
2149		frolic
戲	<i>Void . . . fiesta.</i> [15]	
2150		uneasiness
虞	<i>Tiger . . . give.</i> [13]	
2151		prudence
慮	<i>Tiger . . . think.</i> [15]	
2152		drama
劇	<i>Tiger . . . sow . . . saber.</i> [15]	
2153		tyrannize
虐	<i>Tiger . . . box with a one in it (or a backwards broom, if that makes it easier).</i> [9]	
2154		deer
鹿	<p>Drawn on the walls of a complex of <i>caves</i> near Niaux in southern France are a number of animal likenesses dating from the Upper Paleolithic period. Among them we find pictures of <b>deer</b>, some of them showing men in <b>deer</b> masks. By <i>comparing</i> their drawings to real <b>deer</b>, Stone Age people hoped to acquire power over the animal in the hunt; and by <i>comparing</i> themselves to the <b>deer</b>, to take on that animal's characteristics. But time has locked with a "double-key" (the extra stroke through the ele-</p>	