

CHINESE THROUGH POETRY

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An Introduction to the
Language and Imagery
of Traditional Verse

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This is a dual-purpose textbook. While the sub-title *An Introduction to the Language and Imagery of Traditional Verse* is a description of the main contents, the main title *Chinese through Poetry* needs some explanation.

It indicates the original motivation behind my approach. It is usual to approach the study of Classical Chinese first through prose and only later (if at all) through verse. I am attempting to reverse this procedure in the hope that approaching Classical Chinese through a preliminary study of verse will be more effective for several reasons. First, the student is given confidence by learning to read complete, self-contained texts with a minimum of vocabulary. Second, the contents are mainly words used in their original concrete meanings rather than in the abstract extended meanings more common in prose. Third, the vividness, colour and emotional content of the poems should assist vocabulary absorption in memorable contexts. Fourth, poetry brings us closer to the essence of the Chinese psyche than the philosophical texts traditionally used for learning Classical Chinese. It is for this reason that script, grammar and vocabulary are taught from scratch, enabling the work to be used as a first introduction to traditional literary Chinese by anyone with no knowledge of the language. The book can of course be used as an introduction to Chinese verse for its own sake, either independently or as part of a more general course.

To be more precise, this book is an introduction to the language and imagery of traditional Chinese lyrical verse, concentrating on the Tang dynasty (618–907) but ranging back to the Han (206 BC to AD 220) and forward to the Sung (960–1279) when appropriate.

The script used is the traditional one (繁體字), not the simplified version (簡體字). The system of transcription used is the standard 拼音 *pinyin*. Its primary purpose is not, of course, to indicate the medieval pronunciation of the Chinese texts but to enable the reader to use the Vocabulary Index and any Chinese-English dictionaries arranged by *pinyin*.

References are given for all Chinese verse texts quoted. Where possible I have given a reference to *The Three Hundred Tang Poems* (唐詩三百首) since it is often used as a source of texts for students.

Though I suppose that this course will be used mainly by students who are already familiar with at least the rudiments of modern Chinese and of the Chinese script, I have made provision for the absolute beginner with no knowledge of any kind of Chinese by including an introductory section on the Chinese writing-system. For such new-comers to Chinese I should suggest that this course be followed by a more advanced work: D. Hawkes, *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*, Oxford, 1967, reprinted 1987. A dictionary in traditional script will also be needed for further study, such as R. H. Mathews, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*..., Harvard UP, 1974.

INTRODUCTION

Layout of the units

The main text of the book falls into two parts: (a) Units 1 to 15 and (b) Units 16 to 40.

The first part is mainly concerned with basic grammar, though some further grammatical topics are treated in the second part. The vocabulary introduced in the first part is based on the nine poems in Units 7, 12 and 15, supplemented with other basic vocabulary required to construct exercise material. The exercises are progressive in that each is restricted to the vocabulary and grammar met so far. A key to the exercises is provided after Unit 40. To provide practice in writing, the written form (*kaishu*) is given before the printed form in the main vocabularies in part one; the nine exercise-poems are also given in written form in case you should want to copy them.

The second part consists of 57 poems for the reader to translate as an exercise; new vocabulary needed for this purpose is given in each unit. Romanization is provided so that previously met but forgotten vocabulary can be looked up in the vocabulary index. A key is provided for all translation exercises. In order to reduce the vocabulary burden, these poems are mainly taken from a restricted range of topics (the moon, separation in springtime, Buddhist temples, reclusion and flower-symbolism). Only the printed form of the characters is used in the second part since by then you should be able to transcribe from printed to written form without too much difficulty.

In both parts, lines and couplets, and occasionally whole poems, are quoted to illustrate features of language and imagery; in these examples four aids are provided *in situ*: romanization, vocabulary not included in the vocabulary index, grammatical analysis, and translations. This should enable linguists to use the material for comparative purposes without having to study the Chinese script. The main vocabularies include information about the radical number and the number of extra strokes for each character to facilitate the use of dictionaries arranged by this system.

Transcription (*pinyin*)

Where modern dictionaries of Chinese disagree over pronunciation I have elected to follow 現代漢語詞典, 香港, 1977, which is arranged in *pinyin* alphabetical order. The words in question are these (pronunciations in older dictionaries are given in parentheses):

壑 *hè (huò)* 寂 *jì (jí)* 期 *qī (qí)* 雖 *suī (suí)* 危 *wēi (wéi)* 微 *wēi (wéi)* 息 *xī (xí)* 夕 *xī (xì)* 暫 *zàn (zhàn)*

I have used modern pronunciations of the following words where some transcribers use the ‘classical’ alternatives given in parentheses:

白 *bái (bó)* 百 *bǎi (bó)* 柏 *bǎi (bó)* 薄 (‘thin’, not ‘approach’) *báo (bó)* 比 (‘next to’) *bǐ (bì)* 車 *chē (jū)* 浮 *fú (fóu)* 黑 *hēi (hè)* 六 *liù (lù)* 綠 *lǜ (lù)* 他 *tā (tuō)* 我 *wǒ (ě)*.

Tang poets sometimes used alternative tones in certain words. I give the modern standard form in parentheses. I shall use the standard tone except where the rhyme or tonal pattern indicates the alternative:

場 *cháng (chǎng)* 過 *guō (guò)* 教 *jiāo (jiào)* 看 *kān (kàn)* 思 (noun) *sì (sī)* 聽 *tīng (tīng)* 忘 *wáng (wàng)*

Quite a large number of characters represent differently-pronounced words with different (but sometimes related) meanings, e.g.

宿 *sù* ‘spend the night’, *xiù* ‘constellation’; 惡 *è* ‘evil’, *wù* ‘hate’; 爲 *wéi* ‘be, do’, *wèi* ‘for’; 重 *chóng* ‘double’, *zhòng* ‘heavy; again’; 曲 *qū* ‘bend’, *qǔ* ‘song’; 將 *jiāng* ‘take, and’, *jiàng* ‘a general, to lead’.

For the names of dynasties I shall use not *pinyin* but the traditional English forms:

秦 ‘Chin’, 晉 ‘Tsin’, 宋 ‘Sung’.

The ‘straight quote’ (‘ ’) is used as a syllable-separator, for example in ‘Chang’e’ and ‘Xi’an’.

Tone-marks are omitted from personal and geographical names used outside transcribed texts.

For readers unfamiliar with *pinyin* here is a very rough guide to its pronunciation in terms of English sounds. Consonants: *c = ts*, *q = ch*, *x = sh*, *z = dz*, *zh = j*; the other consonants as in English. Vowels and diphthongs: *a* in *ian* or *yan* = *e* in *men*, otherwise = *a* in *father*; *e* after consonant = *e* in *father*, otherwise = *e* in *men*; *i* after *c/s/z* = *z*, after *ch/r/sh/zh* = *r*, otherwise = *ee* in *meet*; *ou = oh*, otherwise *o = aw*; *ü* after *l* or *n* (simplified to *u* after *j/q/x/y*) = French *u* or German *ü*, otherwise *u = oo*. The accents represent the tones, i.e. the musical movements up and down of the voice. All this is valid only for modern standard Chinese, not of course for the original pronunciation of traditional verse.

Grammar

This is a brief outline of my approach to the grammar of Chinese verse.

Grammar is about two things: word-classes (parts of speech) and the relationships between them. The more familiar languages of Eurasia indicate these to a greater or lesser degree, either together or separately, by the following devices:

(a) variations in the form of words, principally by the addition of prefixes such as the Russian perfective prefix *po-*, infixes such as the Latin inchoative infix *-esc-*, suffixes such as the English participial suffix *-ing*, and ablauts such as those of the English *sing, sang, sung, song* type;

(b) the use of separate words as markers of structures, such as the English 'if' to mark the beginning of a conditional clause, or 'the most ... in the ...' to mark the first space (slot) as containing an adjective and probably a following noun as well;

(c) word-order, e.g. 'John saw Bill' versus 'Bill saw John'.

The first of these is used not at all in Chinese (except that occasionally the choice of tone imposed by the tonal pattern of a poem may reveal that the word in question is a noun or a verb); overt markers are used to some extent in prose but not a great deal in verse; this leaves word-order as almost the only grammatical device available to us. But since word-classes are not marked, word-order cannot be discussed in terms of marked word-classes but only in terms of semantic classes. But even here there is little joy for the grammarian, for even if he decides to base his grammar on semantic classes he will still find that rules of word-order elude him; for example, the concept of 'returning to the woods' will now appear as 歸林 *guī lín*, with the action before the destination, now as 林歸 *lín guī*, with the destination preceding the action. It helps little to be told that the former is the normal prose and verse order, and the latter an inversion used only in verse.

I have a suspicion that the wealth of grammatical clues under (a) to (c) above in the highly redundant languages that cover most of the globe outside China and mainland South-east Asia may sometimes blind us to the degree to which we rely on non-grammatical indicators to guide us through a sentence. One of the potential benefits of studying the language of Chinese classical verse is to make us vividly aware of how little we actually rely, or need to rely, on grammar for understanding language. Here we have a language that has long been characterised as 'without grammar' or '*supra grammaticam*' in the first two senses given above, yet one that has been in continuous literary use for at least three thousand years, hence basically comprehensible. The disagreements of Chinese commentators and the sometimes radically different translations of classical Chinese verse made into modern Chinese and other languages do not detract from the likelihood that the meaning of an ancient or medieval poem was perfectly clear to the poet's educated contemporaries.

I cannot help feeling that any attempt to impose a Western-style grammatical analysis upon Chinese verse can in fact be little more than a retrospective

rationalization of something that has been first grasped intuitively by the analyst; in other words we usually decide that such-and-such a phrase is adjectival rather than adverbial only on the basis of how we have understood it using non-grammatical criteria.

This will not deter me from offering grammatical analyses throughout this course as an aid to making the transition from English to the very different language of traditional Chinese verse. A list of the symbols used for this purpose is to be found immediately before Unit 1, though each symbol will be explained and exemplified on its first occurrence.

Dates of authors

The precise dates of birth and death of the majority of Chinese poets are uncertain or unknown. For these, approximate or doubtful dates are usually given by writers on Chinese poetry, with considerable disagreement. In the minority of cases where there seems to be general agreement with no 'c.' or '?' I give the precise dates; otherwise I indicate only the century or part of a century ('early' and 'late' meaning mainly the first or second half respectively), particularly since this work is concerned not with biography but with linguistic features that in the main are valid for the whole imperial period.

THE CHINESE SCRIPT

This section has been included for readers with no knowledge of the Chinese script; it is hoped that it will be of some assistance in acquiring at least a passive (reading) knowledge of the characters.

1. The nature of the Chinese script

The fundamental unit of the Chinese script, at least for the 3,000-odd years since the earliest surviving records, has always been the ‘character’ representing a one-syllable word.

A word is a combination of sound and meaning, unlike a logo, which represents only meaning. Words are part of language, and writing is the representation of language; a logo is not a representation of language since it has no unique sound-value. It follows that the Chinese script, like all writing-systems, represents a combination of sound and meaning.

The world’s earliest known script was Sumerian, used in Mesopotamia around 3000 BC. The earliest known Chinese script uses the same principles as the Sumerian (sound-elements plus discriminatory meaning-elements) but its earliest surviving inscriptions date from around 1300 BC, by which time the Near-Eastern scripts descended from the Sumerian had progressed to the alphabetic stage (North Semitic 1700–1500 BC). Even today, the Chinese script is structurally still at the stage that Sumerian had reached 5,000 years ago. The shapes of the signs have changed but the three basic principles have not.

The first principle is that a sign can represent a word, i.e. a sound with a meaning, e.g. a picture of a dog can represent the word for ‘dog’ in the local language. But this device does not get us very far, for very few words in any language can easily be represented by a picture: try writing this sentence in pictures if you have any doubt about this! So a writing-system, a representation of language, cannot be made using this device alone. Writing cannot come into existence until the phonetic principle is invented.

The second principle is that a word-sign can be used not just for its sound-plus-meaning but also for its sound alone, i.e. to write other similar-sounding words. This is the rebus-principle sometimes used to represent names in coats of arms and book-plates. This principle gives us, in the case of monosyllabic Chinese, a syllabary, where each sign represents a whole syllable, not just a phoneme as in the case of an alphabet. The key word here is ‘similar’, for the syllabic sign will represent not just the sound of the original word-sign but also that of any vaguely similar-sounding word. This by itself will naturally lead to a great amount of ambiguity.

The third principle is an attempt to remove this ambiguity by adding distinguishing signs. These are chosen for their class of meaning. The resultant combination will mean ‘the word that sounds a bit like A and means something to do with B’. But this is only a kind of mnemonic: the whole character still has to be learned as meaning ‘the word that has the precise sound X and the precise meaning Y’. But this principle was not used systematically: sometimes a meaning-element was added, sometimes not; sometimes a whole character was used to write a new word either as it was or else with the addition of a new meaning-element, but without removing the old meaning-element.

In order to demonstrate and discuss these three principles I shall use the following abbreviations:

‘W’ stands for ‘word-sign’, a sign having its original sound and meaning;

‘S’ stands for ‘sound-element’, a sign used purely for its sound-value;

‘M’ stands for ‘meaning-element’, a sign added to indicate the class of meaning;

‘*’ before a meaning indicates that it is unattested, i.e. that the sign has not been found with this meaning in any text and that this meaning has been deduced from what the sign seems to depict and/or from its sound-value;

‘<’ means ‘developed from’ and ‘>’ means ‘developed into’;

‘OB’ means ‘oracle-bone script’ (c. 1300–1000 BC);

indented items are extended uses or developments of the head-item.

In principle, any primary sign can be used in any of these three ways, but in actual practice the largest number are used as an S, usually with the addition of an M, and only a minority of characters are used as a W or M.

Before illustrating the way these principles were applied to the Chinese script I should like to invite you to imagine the problems confronting the script-devisers in the ancient world, whether in the Near East or in the Far East. They were officials in city-states that needed to keep records of stores (food, weapons, tools, etc.), of land-tenancy and taxation (a city-state was dependent on rents and taxes from the surrounding cultivated countryside), of employees, etc. Their city’s wealth attracted the envy of neighbours, especially the nomadic herdsmen from beyond the cultivated area, so they needed to keep in contact with their armies on the borders. These were but a few of the record-keeping and message-writing requirements of a city-state.

Where do they begin? Let us see what would have happened if their language had been English and they had needed to record that a tenant farmer, a Mr Arthur Jones, had been assessed for 85 bushels of grain in land-tax. This will require as a minimum ‘Arthur Jones 85’. Since there is no obvious pictorial representation available either for the name or for the number (apart from 85 strokes!) their only solution will be to find something depictable that will sound something like them. What depictable object can they find that sounds vaguely like ‘Arthur’? A drawing of a hearth might do, though that might also be taken as a depiction of a grate and so representing a name sounding something like

'grate', e.g. 'Graham'. For 'Jones' the best I can come up with is a picture of a pair of longjohns, though that might equally suggest 'Long' or 'Johnson'. For the sound of 'eight' we might find nothing closer than a picture of a gate or even of a hat, and a fife would seem to be the closest phonetic depiction we could find for 'five'. The latter two, being numerals, would be in constant use, so would quickly become abbreviated for ease of writing.

The sad fact is that phonetic distance is essential for any language: communication would become very difficult if too many words sounded alike or very similar. This means that finding similar-sounding words is already a difficult task, one which is made even more difficult if one is looking for a word which both sounds similar and also stands for a simply and unambiguously depictable object or activity. The rebus-method is a very unpromising start for a script.

It is only against this background that one can truly appreciate the enormous leap represented by the invention of the alphabet in the ancient Near East: the Semitic unvowelled alphabet and the Greek vowelled alphabet. Suddenly any word that can be distinguished in speech can be written down unambiguously. The Chinese have been aware of the existence of Indian alphabets for two thousand years but have never switched to alphabetic writing. This is not the place to go into the reasons for this conservatism since we are concerned here only with the structure of the traditional Chinese script.

Now, since our imaginary English-speaking bronze-age scribes never have occasion to write about hearths, longjohns, gates (or hats) or fifes in their official records and correspondence, there will be no possibility of ambiguity: the picture of a hearth no longer means 'hearth', but only 'Arthur', and similarly with the other signs. When their distant descendants begin writing down their oral literature and wish to write the word for 'hearth', they will have to add the sign for 'fire' to distinguish it from 'Arthur'. This is the kind of problem all early script-makers must have had. Now let us see what traces of this process survive in the Chinese script. In the following, the ancient characters preceded by '<' are oracle-bone script unless otherwise stated.

(a) Word-signs

Let us begin with some characters used as W:

人 < 亻 *rén* 'person'

木 < 朩 *mù* 'tree'

林 < 𣏟 *lín* 'a wood, forest'

鳥 < 𪇑 *niǎo* 'bird'

日 < ☐ < ☉ *rì* 'sun, day'

月 < ☾ < ☾ *yuè* 'moon, month' (90° rotation to the left)

山 < 𡵓 < 𡵓 *shān* 'hill, mountain' (90° rotation to the left)

水 < 𡵑 *shuǐ* 'water, river' (a winding river with splashes of water)

雨 < 雨 *yǔ* 'rain' (rain falling from the ☐ sky)

竹 < 𥵓 *zhú* 'bamboo' (bamboo leaves hanging down: not OB but a later form)

The shapes of these characters have changed a great deal in the past 3,000 years and so of course have their sounds, but their original meanings have remained intact and they have not been used for other purposes as words, but only (in some cases) to write foreign names (e.g. 𡵓 *shān* was once used to write the third syllable of 'Alexandria' and 林 *lín* is used to write the first syllable of 'Lincoln').

(b) Word-signs doubling as sound-elements

Some primary signs were used both as W and as S, though not necessarily in that order (see (g) below):

W 云 *yún* 'cloud' (< ☁ a cloud hanging from the ☐ sky)
S 云 *yún* 'say'

W 耳 *ěr* 'ear' (< 耳)
S 耳 *ěr* 'only'

W 烏 *wū* 'crow' (a bird without an eye: the crow's dark eye does not show up against its black plumage)
S 烏 *wū* 'how?'

W 女 *nǚ* 'woman' (< 女 a woman kneeling with arms crossed to cradle baby)
S 女 *rǔ* 'you'

W 且 *zǔ* 'male ancestor' (< 且 phallus)
S 且 *qiě* 'also'

W 然 *rán* 'burn' (does not occur in OB: consists of 'flesh', 'dog' and 'fire')

S 然 *rán* ‘thus’



(c) Meaning-elements

The signs used as M run into several hundreds. They largely overlap with the 214 ‘radicals’ used to classify characters in traditional dictionaries (see the ‘Table of radicals’ at the very end of this introduction to the script). These meaning-elements may occur anywhere in a character, but especially on the left (e.g. 舟 in 船, 木 in 杜, 人 in 住). Some occur mainly or exclusively on the right (e.g. 鳥 in 鴻, 力 in 動) or on top (e.g. 艸 in 草) or underneath (e.g. 皿 in 盅), even split between left and right (e.g. 行 in 衙) or between top and bottom (e.g. 衣 in 衷).


Their class-indication is sometimes very vague, e.g. 木 ‘tree’ may indicate a kind of tree or something made of wood; 氵 ‘water’ may indicate a body of water, or actions performed by or with water, or qualities associated with water; 心 or 忄 ‘heart’ is used to mark all kinds of mental activities and emotional states.

(d) Sound-plus-meaning combinations


These form the bulk of the Chinese character-set. One S may be used to write a large number of different words, which may or may not be distinguished by the addition of Ms.

W 皮 *pí* ‘skin’ (< , later than OB, depiction unknown, but seems to be seated figure with mouth open upwards as in  (> 祝 *zhù* ‘pray’), with a hand added)


S 皮 + M 氵 ‘water’ > 波 *bō* ‘wave’

W 𠂔 **chuáng* ‘bed’ (<  the original picture rotated 90° to the right)

S 𠂔 + M 士 ‘knight’ > 壯 *zhuàng* ‘strong, heroic’

W 介 *jiè* ‘armour’ (<  man with armour around him)

S 介 + M 田 ‘field’ > 界 *jiè* ‘boundary’

W 古 *gǔ* ‘ancient’ (<  unknown depiction)

S 古 + M 艸 ‘grass, herb’ > 苦 *kǔ* ‘bitter’

(e) Irrelevance of meaning-elements

Do not expect the M in an 'S+M' combination always to indicate the current area of meaning, because the whole character may subsequently have been used as an S to write an unrelated word.

W 勺 *sháo* 'ladle' (no OB form but depiction is clear)
 S 勺 + M 白 'white' > 的 *dí* 'target' (with white bull's-eye)
 S 的 *dí* 'indeed' ('white' now irrelevant)

W 女 *nǚ* 'woman' (< 𡚦)
 S 女 + M 氵 'water' > 汝 *rǔ* 'River Ru'
 S 汝 *rǔ* 'you' ('water' now irrelevant)

W 隹 *zhuī* 'kind of bird' (< 隹)
 S 隹 + M 忄 'heart' > 惟 *wéi* 'think'
 S 惟 *wéi* 'only' ('heart' now irrelevant)

(f) Accumulation of elements.

The processes of phonetic loan (using a character as S) and determination (adding M) may be repeated a number of times, leading to an accumulation of irrelevant Ms, so that a character may have been built up as S+M+M+M, where only the last M is relevant to the current meaning; but of course even the last one may be irrelevant to the current usage, as we saw under (e).

W 欠 *qiàn* 'yawn' (< 欠 kneeling figure gaping)
 S 欠 + M 二 'two' > 次 *cì* 'second, next'
 S 次 + M 艹 'grass' > 茨 *cí* 'thatch' ('two' now irrelevant)

W 生 *shēng* 'grow' (< 生 plant growing out of ground)
 S 生 + M 目 'eye' > 相 *xiàng* 'observe'
 S 相 + M 雨 'rain' > 霜 *shuāng* 'hoarfrost' ('eye' now irrelevant)

W 鳥 *niǎo* (< diào) 'bird' (< 鳥)
 S 鳥 + M 山 'hill' > 島 *dǎo* 'island'
 S 島 + M 扌 'hand' > 搗 *dǎo* 'beat' ('hill' now irrelevant)

W 工 *gōng* 'artisan' (< 工 unknown depiction)
 S 工 + M 氵 'water' > 江 *jiāng* 'river'
 S 江 + M 鳥 'bird' > 鴻 *hóng* 'swan-geese' ('water' now irrelevant)

W 古 *gǔ* 'ancient' (< 古 unknown depiction)
 S 古 + M 肉 'flesh' > 胡 *hú* 'dewlap'
 S 胡 + M 氵 'water' > 湖 *hú* 'lake' ('flesh' now irrelevant)

(g) Possible primary sound-elements

Some signs have perhaps only ever been used as S, never as W. In the examples that follow, this doubt is indicated by the ‘?W’ and the asterisk.

First, some characters whose conjectured original meaning is not found in texts but which occur as S with the addition of M in later spellings of the original word:

?W 西 *qī ‘to nest’ (< 巢 a bird’s nest, seen also on a tree in 巢 chāo ‘a nest’)

S 西 xī ‘west’

S 西 + M 木 ‘tree’ > 栖 qī ‘to nest’

?W 七 *qiē ‘cut’ (< 十 a vertical stick cut by a horizontal line)

S 七 qī ‘seven’

S 七 + M 刀 ‘knife’ > 切 qiē ‘cut’

?W 樂 *lì ‘oak’ (< 樂 a tree surmounted by twists of silk thread (the wild silkworm (*Antherea pernyi*) lives on oak-leaves); later with the addition of 艹 an acorn)

S 樂 lè ‘joy’

S 樂 + M 木 ‘tree’ > 櫟 lì ‘oak’

?W 永 *yǒng ‘swim’ (< 永 a person enclosed in water)

S 永 yǒng ‘always’

S 永 + M 氵 ‘water’ > 泳 yǒng ‘swim’

?W 又 *yòu ‘right hand’ (< 又 a right hand)

S 又 yòu ‘again’

S 又 + M 口 ‘mouth’ > 右 yòu ‘right hand’

The above examples take two stages to come full circle, but this process may involve three stages, with or without M being used at each stage:

?W 亦 *yè ‘armpits’ (< 亦 a person with a mark under each arm)

S 亦 yì ‘also’

S 亦 + M 夕 ‘night’ > 夜 yè ‘night’

S 夜 + M 肉 ‘flesh’ > 腋 yè ‘armpits’

?W 丁 *chéng ‘city’ (< 丁 outline of a square walled city)

S 丁 dīng ‘4th day of decade’

S 丁 + M 戊 ‘military’ > 成 chéng ‘victory’

S 成 + M 土 ‘earth’ > 城 chéng ‘city’

?W 十 **zhī* ‘twig’ (< | a stick)

S 十 *shí* ‘ten’

S 十 + M 又 ‘right hand’ > 支 *zhī* ‘support’

S 支 + M 木 ‘tree’ > 枝 *zhī* ‘twig’

?W 凵 **kū* ‘pit, hole’ (< 凵 still pictorial!)

S 凵 + M 止 ‘foot’ > 出 *chū* ‘go out’

S 出 + M 尸 ‘sit still’ > 屈 *qū* ‘bend over’

S 屈 + M 穴 ‘hole’ > 窟 *kū* ‘hole’

?W 戊 **wǔ* ‘military’ (< 戠 a hand holding a kind of halberd)

S 戊 *wù* ‘5th day of decade’

S 戊 + M 止 ‘foot’ > 武 *wǔ* ‘big toe’

S 武 *wǔ* ‘military’

?W 來 **mài* ‘wheat’ (< 來 a plant with ears of wheat hanging down)

S 來 *lái* ‘come’

S 來 + 夊 ‘arrive’ > 麥 **lái* ‘come’

S 麥 *mài* ‘wheat’

Sometimes the process is halted and begun again with a different S:

?W 自 *bí* ‘nose’ (< 自 a nose with a mysterious triangle across it)

S 自 *zì* ‘from’

Replacement:

W 畀 *bì* ‘give’ + M 自 ‘nose’ > 鼻 *bí* ‘nose’

?W 余 **chú* ‘hoe’ (< 余 a hoe held by a hand, later replaced by 木 ‘wood’)

S 余 *yú* ‘I’

Replacement:

W 且 *zǔ* ‘male ancestor’ + M 力 ‘strength’ > 助 *zhù* ‘help’

S 助 + M 金 ‘metal’ > 鋤 *chú* ‘hoe’

It is not known whether these ‘?W’ signs were ever actually used as W or whether they were only used as S from the very beginning: ‘armpits’ at least is unlikely to have been a basic vocabulary-item in early administrative records!

(h) Word-families

These include words of two kinds:

(1) extended meanings of the same word, e.g. ‘spring’ (jump, arise), ‘spring’ (season when plants rise) and ‘spring’ (water rising out of the ground); or ‘fall’ (descend) and ‘fall’ (autumn, when leaves fall);

(2) words which share a common root, e.g. ‘fall’ and ‘fell’ (a tree); or ‘breath’ and ‘breathe’; or ‘sit’, ‘seat’, (bishop’s) ‘see’, ‘siege’, ‘session’ and ‘sedentary’.

Words with identical or similar sounds may belong to the same word-family or else the similarity may be coincidental or arise from a prehistoric kinship that can only be a matter of conjecture. Chinese characters sharing a sound-element may represent either related or unrelated words in the underlying language. In a minority of cases the choice of the same S may indicate an awareness (or presumption) of kinship on the part of the script-makers. Let us look briefly at one S which has been used to write both related and unrelated words.

?W 才 *cái ‘cut timber’ (< 𠄎 the top of a tree cut by a horizontal line)
 W 才 + M 木 ‘wood’ > 材 *cái* ‘timber’
 W 才 + M 戈 ‘halberd’ > 戕 *zāi* ‘to wound’
 W 戕 + M 衣 ‘clothes’ > 裁 *cái* ‘cut out garments from cloth’

The ‘W’ above indicates that these characters are used to write extensions of the same word meaning ‘cut’; in the following examples the ‘S’ indicates words that are apparently unrelated:

S 才 + M 土 ‘earth’ > 在 *zài* ‘be at’
 S 才 + M 川 ‘river’ > 灾 *zāi* ‘flood disaster’
 S 戕 + M 口 ‘mouth’ > 哉 *zāi* ‘indeed!’ (exclamatory final particle).

(i) Notes on the above

The above examples illustrating the principles underlying the structure of the Chinese script may give the impression that the history of any character can be fully explained, but this is far from the truth. All that can be said of the majority of characters is that the meaning of the latest M is usually explainable, whereas the S is of uncertain or unknown origin. Most of the characters in the oracle-bone script are of unknown depiction or structure, though a great deal of guesswork has gone into trying to interpret the inscriptions. My own feeling is that what we see in this earliest known form of the Chinese script is the end-product of a long period of development involving simplification and corruption, and that little further light can be shed upon it without the discovery of much older documents either in the Yellow River valley or perhaps in the south of China, from which agriculture and perhaps also civilisation spread northwards in prehistoric times. Only further archaeological discoveries can tell us more about this.

The figures given in the vocabularies represent the radical number of the character followed by the number of extra strokes, e.g. ‘72.5’ means ‘consisting of radical 72 (𠄎) with five additional strokes’. This will enable you to find the character in the index of any traditional dictionary using this

system, e.g. *Mathews*; but be warned: some more recent dictionaries have their own classification systems to match the ‘simplified’ reformed script.

These figures are followed in the vocabularies by an indication of the etymological type of the character, viz. ‘W’, ‘S’, ‘M’ or ‘X’, where ‘M’ means ‘S+M’ followed by the actual M, and where ‘X’ means ‘of unknown or uncertain structure’. Of the first 400 characters in the vocabularies of this course 14% are W, 13% are S without the addition of M, 58% are S+M, and 15% are X.

2. Variants of script-elements

A few script-elements take variant forms in different positions within the character but are treated as identical for the purpose of radical-classification in dictionaries. In the groups of characters given below the first character is the isolated form occurring as a complete character; the second is the form occurring (usually as M) in the position indicated; and the third is an example of the use of the second in a character. The ‘R’ stands for ‘radical number’.

(a) On the left

R. 9, <i>rén</i> ‘person’	人 亻 估	R. 61, <i>xīn</i> ‘heart’	心 忄 忙
R. 64, <i>shǒu</i> ‘hand’	手 扌 扣	R. 85, <i>shuǐ</i> ‘water’	水 氵 汊
	江		
R. 94, <i>quǎn</i> ‘dog’	犬 犴 狂	R. 96, <i>yù</i> ‘jade’	玉 王 珀
R. 113, <i>shì</i> ‘revelation’	示 礻 祝	R. 130, <i>ròu</i> ‘flesh’	肉 月
	肝		
R. 145, <i>yī</i> ‘clothes’	衣 衤 袒	R. 170, <i>fù</i> ‘hills’	阜 阝 阻

(b) On the right

R. 18, <i>dāo</i> ‘knife’	刀 刂 别	R. 163, <i>yì</i> ‘city’	邑 阝 郢
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(c) Separated on left and right

R. 144, *xíng* 'travel' 行 彳 and 亍 衙

(d) On the top

R. 87, *zhǎo* 'claw' 爪 𠂇 爭
筴

R. 118, *zhú* 'bamboo' 竹 𥵹

R. 122, *wǎng* 'net' 网 罟 罟
苜

R. 140, *cǎo* 'grass' 艸 艸

R. 173, *yǔ* 'rain' 雨 雩 雲

(e) On the bottom

R. 86, *huǒ* 'fire' 火 灬 烈 R. 130, *ròu* 'flesh' 肉 冎 背

(f) On the bottom beneath 冫

R. 61, *xīn* 'heart' 心 小 忝
泰

R. 85, *shuǐ* 'water' 水 水

(g) Separated on top and bottom

R. 145, *yī* 'clothes' 衣 亠 and 衣 衷

(h) Notes

Distinguish 衤 (示) from 衤 (衣).

As a left-hand element 月 may be 月 *yuè* 'moon' or (more often) 肉 *ròu* 'flesh'.

阝 on the left is R. 170 阜 *fù* 'hills' and on the right is R. 163 邑 *yì* 'city'.

As a top or bottom element 冫 may either be R. 73 冫 *yuē* 'say' or (more often) R. 72 日 *rì* 'sun'.

3. Written stroke forms

Whereas the font used in the greater part of this book is a normal printed style, the font used in this section and the following two is *kaishu*, based on brush-written characters. I have chosen this in case you wish to write Chinese characters as part of this course, in addition to reading them. The printed form is normally never used in writing. One of the most noticeable differences is that a printed square, 口, is written as three strokes: 凵, the left-hand side as one stroke, the top and the right-hand side together as one stroke, and finally the bottom. In the vocabularies of part one (Units 1–15) you will be able to compare the written and printed forms; here are some points to look out for:

- (a) the printed form does its best to fill a square, whereas the written form is much freer in this respect;
- (b) the printed horizontal strokes are truly horizontal, whereas the written horizontals are tilted slightly upwards from left to right;
- (c) the printed verticals are noticeably thicker than the horizontals, whereas the written form makes no such distinction;
- (d) some elements are quite different in the two styles, e.g. (printed form first) the lefthand side of 情情, the top of 草草, the lefthand side of 遠遠, and the top of 曾曾.

The basic element of Chinese writing is the stroke, a straight, curved or bent line with or without a final hook. In the writing of a stroke the pen does not leave the paper.

(a) There are five initial directions:

- (1) → = horizontal from left to right;
- (2) ↗ = slightly upward from left to right;
- (3) ↓ = vertical from top to bottom;
- (4) ↙ = left-oblique, i.e. simultaneously leftward and downward;
- (5) ↘ = right-oblique, i.e. simultaneously rightward and downward.

(b) Excluding final hooks, a continuous stroke may have zero, one, two or three corners (changes of direction of 90° or more).

(c) A final hook (>) is clockwise on a straight stroke but is placed on the inside of a curved stroke or corner.

Strokes are modified in shape, size and direction to fit in with the overall composition of a character, so the following list cannot be complete in terms of such detail. You will notice that because of this my categories shade into one another. They are not meant to be watertight classes, merely a rough guide to get you initially familiar with the kind of shapes you will be dealing with.

Each of the stroke-types below is illustrated with one or more examples to show you how they are combined with other strokes and modified in the process. If you are using a Chinese brush or Japanese brush-pen you will be able to match the varying thicknesses but if you are using a pen or pencil this refinement will not of course be possible, nor is it necessary for legibility. Do not attempt to write the characters in this section until you have studied stroke-order in the next section, otherwise you may develop bad writing-habits.

(a) Horizontal

- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | 一 | 二 | 三 | 土 | 十 | 門 | 事 | 干 | 壽 | 佳 |
| (2) | 一 | 疋 | 皮 | 冖 | 宀 | 冥 | 宀 | 宀 | 宮 | |
| (3) | フ | 又 | 久 | 夕 | 各 | 癸 | 五 | 令 | 互 | 丑 |

Note that the end of this stroke tapers and curves when free (except

for 今), but is straight when blocked at a T-junction.

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (4) | 丁 | 司 | 門 | 巾 | 月 | 永 | 冂 |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Note that the hook is omitted when blocked by a T-junction: 且.

- | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---|---|---|------------------|---|
| (5) | フ | 刀 | 力 | 勹 | 勿 | 母 |
| (6) | フ | 气 | 虱 | 𠂇 | 飛 | |
| (7) | フ | 几 | 凡 | 九 | | |
| (8) | 乙 | 乞 | | | | |
| (9) | フ | 及 | 及 | 及 | (printed form 及) | |
| (10) | フ | 乃 | | | | |

(b) Upward

- (11) 一 七斗
 (12) 丿 子 丿 扎 功 坡 玨

Note that bottom or intersecting horizontals in left-hand elements are often

tilted up in anticipation of the right-hand element.

- (13) ㇇ 水
 (14) ㇇ 也

(c) Vertical

- (15) 丨 川 十 中 丫 土 半
 (16) 丿 川 井 月 厂 儿 判 升 介 户
 (17) 丨 事 于 寸 刈 小 乎 手
 (18) 丨 七
 (19) 丿 丿 口 山 出 凶 匚 巨
 (20) 丨 以 民 改 卯 衣 比 叫
 (21) 丨 扎 匕 己 毛 兆 心
 (22) ㇇ 丐 焉 与 弓

(d) Leftward

- (23) 丿 人 八 杉 生 爻 少 必 心
 (24) 丿 千 禾 采 斤 舌
 (25) 丿 丿 厶 糸 互 鄉 至 亥 母
 (26) ㇇ ㇇ ㇇ 女
 (27) ㇇ 攷 兮 (Not the same as two-stroke 勺)

(e) Rightward

- (28) 丶 丶 丨 六 刈 益 矩 心 冫 州 然 寒
- (29) 丶 人 八 衣 疋 豕
- (30) 丨 弋 氏 戈 成
- (31) 丨 了 子 狗 豕

4. Stroke- and element-order

If you intend to learn to write Chinese characters it is a sensible idea to write the strokes in the standard order from the very beginning. This will make the writing of a character a mechanical habit that will leave your attention free for other things. On the whole all Chinese write the strokes in the same order, though there are variations in some cases.

Fortunately the stroke-order of the majority of character-elements can be reduced to a few simple rules.




(1) ‘Left before right’

The order of the three strokes of the element 川 is left-to-right. This rule applies however complex the elements, e.g. in the character 擲 the three elements 扌 奠 卩 are written in left-to-right order. ‘Left before right’ also applies to the individual strokes of 心 and 必 (丶 丨 丶 丨 丶). A major exception to this rule is the order of strokes in elements of the 厂 type, which is top-before-left; other elements of this type are 广 尸 户 虍 疒 (in this last element the two dots on the left follow the 广).


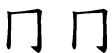

(2) ‘Top before bottom’

The order of the three strokes of 三 is top-to-bottom, and in 蕙 the three elements 艹 田 心 are written in top-to-bottom order.


(3) 'Major division first'

This principle applies when three or more separate elements are not arranged in a straight line. A major division is a real or potential gap extending right across a character from left to right or from top to bottom. For instance, in the character **盟** there are three elements **日 月 皿** arranged as  but only one major division, viz. the horizontal one between **明** and **皿**. The vertical division between **日** and **月** is blocked by the **皿**, so it is not a major division. So the overall rule is 'top before bottom', i.e. **明** before **皿** across the major division. The **明**, of course, is 'left before right' across the minor division, so the order for the whole character is **日 月 皿**. The order of the character **萌** () will be **艹 日 月**, and that of **昭** () will be **日 刀 口** (vertical major division).

(4) 'Arch before contents'

The 'arch'  consists of two strokes, **丨** and **丿** in that order, like a Roman 'n', and the 'contents' are anything beneath the arch. Here the rule of 'top before bottom' applies, with the arch being treated as a top element. This means that **口**, **日** and **目** consist of an arch above **一**, **二** and **三** respectively. The rule is applied twice to **回**, which is written . In Chinese schools the arch-rule is illustrated with the character **囚**, meaning 'prisoner': first you build your prison , then you put your prisoner **人** inside, and finally you shut the door **一**. Examples of other arches: **門 向**. The arch-principle applies also to partial arches, e.g. **句 司 式 寸 厄 鹿 尼 病**.

(5) 'Contents before pit'

Just as the top and right side of the arch form one continuous stroke, so do the left side and bottom of the 'pit':  consists of the two strokes **丿** and **丨**

丨 and resembles the Roman ‘u’. Here the contents precede the pit according to the top-before-bottom rule, e.g. in 山 the central 丨 comes before the 凵. A bottom left-hand corner element is usually treated as bottom, not left, i.e. as a partial pit, e.g. 辶 in 過, 廴 in 建 etc. This applies also to 止 (卜 | 一), 匕 (ノ | 一) and 也 (冫 | 一).



(6) ‘Horizontal before vertical’

This applies only to intersecting lines, i.e. crossroads, not T-junctions, so that in 十 the 一 is written before the 丨. The rule applies however many lines are involved: 井 is 二 | 丨, and in 事 the 丨 comes last of all. But an upward-tilted horizontal stroke crossing a left-hand vertical element is written *after* the vertical, e.g. in 扣 孤.

(7) ‘Left-oblique (/) before intersecting right-oblique (\)’

Examples: 爻 父 文 交 又 (/ \ two strokes). When the strokes are separate the normal rules of ‘left before right’ and ‘top before bottom’ apply, e.g. 丫 平 彳 彳. An exception to this rule and also to the previous one is 女 (/ \ 一). The same applies to the related character 母 (/ \ 一 丶 丶).

(8) ‘A T-junction has a gap’

As mentioned under (4) above, if a line merely touches another line but does not cross it, there is always a theoretical gap between them that can allow a division to pass between them. In other words, 丁 consists of two strokes, 一 and 丨, separated by a notional gap (), so that the ‘top before bottom’ rule applies since we are dealing with the arrangement . Similarly with 天, where the top 一 precedes the bottom 大; this in turn involves

an intersection, so the middle horizontal 一 precedes the ‘vertical’ element 人, which follows the ‘left before right’ rule (✓ before \). More examples of T-junctions: 土 王 山 出. This last character is like the first of the four except that the two horizontals are replaced by pits, five strokes in all.

(9) ‘Arms before body before legs’

By ‘arms’ I mean symmetrical elements on either side of a vertical near the top, and by ‘legs’ I mean the same feature near the bottom. An example is 坐, consisting of the ‘arms’ 人 人, followed by the ‘body’ 土. Another is 木, consisting of a ‘body’ 十 followed by the ‘legs’ 丿 ㇇. The character 米 has both arms and legs. The element 火 can either follow this rule or else the ‘left before right’ rule (丶 冫 丿 ㇇). ‘Limbs’ in central position are usually treated as ‘legs’, e.g. 小 水 (冫 ㇇ 丿 ㇇), but 忄 is usually treated as ‘arms before body’ (丶 丶 丨). In most cases of a ‘double body’ the order is ‘left body, left limbs, right body, right limbs’: 非 (冫 三 丨 三), 兆. But the ‘limbs’ of 亦 are treated as ‘legs’ added after the double ‘body’.

(10) ‘Top right-hand dot comes last’

Examples: 犬 戈 戈 甫.

5. Shape-modification

Although quite a few elements are basically symmetrical, absolute symmetry is avoided in calligraphy. This is done by various means. One is a natural product of the Chinese writing-brush: the brush is normally held in the right hand (left-handed calligraphers are rare), so that when the tip of the brush is applied to the paper it produces a ‘dot’ 丶, which is actually a very short ㇇-stroke, the opposite slope from an Italic nib. The effect of this bias may be seen in the two originally symmetrical strokes of 八 or those of ㇇. But most asymmetry is deliberate, for the purpose of injecting life into what would

otherwise be flat and dull. Simple examples of this are 三 and 川, where originally identical strokes have been modified to give the main weight to the final stroke and the least weight to the middle stroke. For more complex examples compare the following to see what happens to the size and shape of some elements in composition: 日 昌 火 炎 立 章

口 中 喉 魚 魯. One very common example of artificial asymmetry that we have seen above is the writing of a square with three strokes, so that top and bottom are not identical, nor are the left and right sides.

In most characters there will be a noticeable difference in size as between left and right constituents or between top and bottom constituents. This is largely a natural consequence of the fact that the last-added M will be simple whereas the S will often be compounded of two or more elements. Most Ms are added on the left, so usually the left side is narrower than the right, e.g. 儒.

Other examples of asymmetry are writing the element 口 above the centre on the left-hand side, e.g. 呱, and the writing of the element 卩 low down on the right-hand side, e.g. 邱.

It is important to integrate the parts of a character into a harmonious whole. Apart from ensuring inequality of the kind we have just seen, mirroring the inequalities of Nature with her hierarchies of dominance and subordination, this means ensuring that the parts are internally cohesive. This in turn means two things: spacing and rhythm.

Spacing means (a) ensuring that the physical distances between the elements inside the character are shorter than those between characters, and (b) adjusting the spacing between and within elements to avoid cramping or gaping but introducing enough variety of spacing to avoid monotony.

Rhythm means making the strokes and elements flow into one another in such a way that as the eye follows the movement of the brush one experiences its varying tempos flowing together in a rhythm like the movements of a dance, strong and confident yet elegant. The great sin in Chinese calligraphy is weakness and uncertainty manifested in feeble strokes and characters that fall apart. One of the things that hold a character together is the network of invisible lines where the brush has moved without making contact with the paper. In more rapid styles the ends of these lines may be minutely visible where the brush leaves and rejoins the paper, and in the most rapid styles they may actually appear as thin connecting lines; but, whether they are visible or not, one is aware of these connecting movements between strokes or elements.

Considerations of spacing and rhythm have led to modifications of shape particularly in left-hand elements. Let us look at these one at a time.

(1) Abbreviation to reduce spacing affects final strokes of two kinds, viz. Nos. 21 (乚) and 29 (ㄨ) above.

(a) 乚 (with or without the hook) is narrowed to No. 20 (丩). Compare the following pairs of characters: 己改 匕比 光輝 鹿廊 七切.

(b) ㄨ as the final stroke is shortened to No. 28 (丶): 木相 禾秋 矢矩 夫規 火煙 皮頗. The tops of the following are similarly affected: 金鋼 舍舒 余斜. In the following the same happens and in addition the penultimate stroke (丿) is omitted: 長髡 食蝕 良郎.

(2) The modification under (1a) not only allows closer spacing but also provides a rhythmical connection by pointing upward toward the beginning of the right-hand element. A similar modification occurs with final (bottom or intersecting) horizontal strokes (一 replaced by 丿): 土坦 工功 王珏 金鋼 且助 丘邱 立站 里野 重動 止此 and also with the last stroke of 足跟. Intersecting final horizontals: 子孤 女如 牛牝.

(3) The left-hand modification we saw in 川 has a similar effect to that of the bold No. 29 (ㄨ) on the right of a character: it gives strength to an otherwise weak structure. We see it also with some other final verticals (丨 replaced by 丿): 羊翔 半判.

(4) Some left-hand elements extend their final 乚 or ㄨ beneath the right-hand element. This kind of unifying embrace may have been modelled on that of the elements 乂 and 彳, e.g. in 建 and 過. Examples are: 走超 鬼魁 是題 麥麵 爪爬 爪踈.

6. Table of radicals

0									
10	儿	一	丨	、	丿	乙	丿	二	勹
20	勺	入	八	冂	冫	乚	冫	刀	力
30	口	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
40	宀	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
50	巾	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
60	彳	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
70	方	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
80	母	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
90	月	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
100	生	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
110	彳	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
120	糸	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
130	肉	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
140	艸	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
150	谷	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
160	辛	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
170	阜	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
180	音	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
190	彳	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
200	麻	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
210	齊	匕	匚	凵	冫	冫	勹	勹	勹
0									
10									
20									
30									
40									
50									
60									
70									
80									
90									
100									
110									
120									
130									
140									
150									
160									
170									
180									
190									
200									
210									

Note: Two radicals have special forms beneath a 冫 shape: 61 冫 and 85

冫

ABBREVIATIONS OF TEXT LOCATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

楚辭	一辭
杜甫詳注	杜甫詳注
古詩箋	古詩箋
漢三國晉南北朝詩	漢三國晉南北朝詩
舊唐書	舊唐書
李太白全集	李太白全集
李論語	李論語
全唐詩	全唐詩
詩經	詩經
宋詞三百首	宋詞三百首
唐詩三百首	唐詩三百首
王摩詰集箋注	王摩詰集箋注
樂府詩集	樂府詩集
資治通鑑	資治通鑑

The final number given with 詩經 references is the 毛 number; otherwise it is the 卷 number.

LIST OF GRAMMATICAL SYMBOLS

a	adverb
A	adverbial
c	conjunction
C	clause
C,C	equal-status clauses
C-C	movement- or resultative compound
C:C	main clause followed by object (clause or predicate) or added description
d	demonstrative
m	measure
n	noun
n2 (etc.)	two- (etc.) syllable noun
n-n	qualifier-head noun-phrase
n&n	additive noun-phrase
N	noun-phrase (uncommitted)
NN	verbless statement
Np	postpositional phrase
O	object
p	postpositional noun
prep	'prepositional' verb
q	quantifier
S	subject
v	verb
V	main verb, predicator
x	word of unspecified class
X	clause-component of unspecified function
1S2VO3 (usually /ASAVOA/)	relative positions within a clause
/.../	slashes enclose any grammatical analysis
/...=.../	word-class analysis followed by phrase-function analysis
[...]	understood element
(...)	attribute (adjectival or adverbial qualifier)
{...}	algebraic grouping of elements that belong closely together

