

Excerpts from
A LEARNING HANDBOOK FOR JŌYŌ KANJI

pp. 17-22, Radicals and essential components

142 basic components explained in-depth, extremely useful by themselves as a learning base

pp. 25-28, Numbers

first chapter on Numbers and other graphically and etymologically related kanji

pp. 314-315, Writing systems

appendix chapter about kanji stroke order, Hiragana, Katakana and Rōmaji writing

Regarding the formatting adopted in the handbook and excerpts, this legend should be followed:

- **Bold**: the kanji's current meanings. Any line of text that precedes or follows a word in bold, even if quite explanatory, does not fit into the final meanings. If students want to review only the kanji's real meanings, they can simply study words in bold and overlook all the rest.
- Underlining: it emphasizes a certain nuance of meaning, something explicitly or implicitly suggested by the etymology. Although the underlining elements are not part of the kanji's current meanings, they can influence other complex kanji if part of them as components.
- * : the asterisk is placed before radicals that can never be used alone (e.g. *𠄎), before kanji fallen into disuse or archaic ones (e.g. *變).
- >: this symbol suggests a logical connection. It is often used to pass from an etymological explanation to the kanji's current meanings.
- Inside an explanation, a word placed after a kanji stands for its current meaning unless the context suggests otherwise (e.g. ... 火 “fire” ...).
- Inside an explanation, a word placed before a kanji in brackets is not used to express its current meaning but a related one, a nuance, an implicit sense, a phonetic or shape association conveyed in that particular case. Taking for instance 口 “mouth”, we could find: ... opening (口) ...; ... voices (口) ...; ... to say (口) ...; ... to sing (口) ...; ... a box (口) ...; ... a fence (口) ...; and so on.

Hoping that this material will be of help and incentive.

RADICALS AND ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

A list of **radicals** and basic **essential components** follow, which are fundamental for the study of the handbook, as also for a learning base and stand-alone study. The presence of these elements will never be overlooked, but their features, shades of meaning and uses will be given for assimilated.

1. Numbers

一	八、*ノ	九	十
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2. Generic

小、*ノ	白	丸	*勺	*女、*支	*冫	*辶、*辵、*辵	*彳	*厶	己	方	*爻
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3. Human beings

人、*亻、*亻	大	士	女	子、*女	立	*冂、*巳	*疒
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4. Body parts

心、*忄、*小	頁	口	*日	言	目、*四	耳	*彡	力	*歹	*尸	欠
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5. Hands, feet and legs

手、*扌、*扌、*扌	又、寸、*ヨ	*升	*儿	止	足、*足	走	*攴	*廴	*廴
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6. Animals

犬、*犴、*犴	羊、*羊	馬	虫	*卜	貝	肉、*月	*隹
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7. Nature

*艹	生、*圭	木	竹、*竹	水、*氵、*水	氷、*冫、*冫	川、*巛	田	*禾	米	土
*厂	山	*阝	穴	金	石	*业	日	月	雨	火、*灬

8. Things

七、*匕	斗	皿	*一	食、*食	*酉	西	豆	示、*示	*凵、*冂、*冂	辛
玉	糸	*纟	巾	衣、*衤	車	舟	工			

9. Buildings

*广	*宀	*亼	*八	門	戶
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10. Weapons

刀、*刂	戈	弓	矢	斤	*殳
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It should be noticed the existence of recurring graphic elements, used differently from time to time:

- The upper element present in 負, 免, 急, 争, 魚, ... can represent an “open mouth” (see 欠), a “bent person”, or it could be used as a simplification for other elements.
- *灬: generally the result of a simplification: very often of 火 “fire” (e.g. *螢 > 螢 “fire-fly”), but also 口 (e.g. *單 > 單, *嚴 > 嚴). Not to be confused with *扌 “hand”.
- For example, the element in 革 and 庶 often represents an animal’s “head”.
- The upper element of 昔, 散, 黄, ... is most of the time the result of a simplification.

Finally, it is important to know how to use the following symbol:

々	むかしむかし 昔々 long ago, once upon a time、 ひとびと 人々 people、 べつべつ 別々 separately, individually
!	Called <i>kurikaeshi</i> (“repetition”), this symbol is used in Japanese as a non-mandatory substitute for kanji repeated within words. It is common for the repeated kanji to be voiced.

1. Numbers

一	八、 *ㄨ
One. It can be used graphically to indicate a <u>surface</u> (e.g. the water in a plate in 監 “to oversee”) or a <u>precise point</u> (e.g. a tree’s roots in 本 “origin”, the horizon in 旦 “dawn”).	Eight. As a radical, it always indicates <u>separation</u> , well suggested by its shape.
九	十
Nine. Graphical representation of a <u>bent elbow</u> .	Ten. Originally, the pictogram of a <u>needle</u> . It often conveys a sense of <u>completeness</u> or <u>gathering</u> , due to the image of all ten fingers.

2. Generic

小、 *ㄨ	白
Small. Derived from the pictogram of a <u>close shave</u> .	White. The pictogram represents a thumbnail. It can sometimes convey the meaning of “ <u>principal-main</u> ” or a sense of <u>purity</u> .
丸	*ㄨ
A <u>person who bends his body</u> > round, circle > complete, perfect, whole . Not to be confused with 九 “nine”.	“ <u>To wrap</u> ”, abbreviation of 包, kanji having the same meaning and graphically representing a fetus in the uterus.
*攴、 *支	*冂
A hand that hits with a <u>stick</u> . The radical can convey a sense of <u>constraint</u> or simply indicate a generic <u>action</u> .	It indicates the act of <u>covering</u> with something. Not to be confused with *宀 “roof”.
*辵、 *辵、 *辵	*彳
Radical depicting a <u>street</u> . It is used almost exclusively in the *辵 variant, always conveying a sense of <u>movement</u> and <u>displacement</u> .	Left element of 行 “ to go ”, representing a <u>crossroad</u> . It always conveys a sense of <u>movement</u> .
*厶	己
A plow . Due to its simple form, this radical is often chosen as a simplification of more complex kanji (e.g. *弗, *黄). For the same reason it can take on different meanings like <u>fence</u> , <u>head</u> , <u>crown</u> , <u>hairpin</u> , <u>target</u> or a certain sense of <u>wideness</u> . Finally, *厶 can also be the abbreviation of 私 “ <u>I, me</u> ”, sharing also the same reading し (phonetically linked to 自 ^{じ/し} and 己 ^き , both meaning “oneself”).	Pictogram of a <u>thread with both ends well in evidence</u> . As a radical, it can suggest “ <u>from beginning to end</u> ”, or be used graphically to represent a <u>snake</u> , a <u>kneeling person</u> or a <u>winding shape</u> . The meaning of oneself is a phonetic loanword.
方	*爻
Kanji derived from the pictogram of two rafts moored <u>next to each other</u> , from which the meanings of direction , side and method-way come from. The meaning of person (formal) comes from the custom of referring politely to someone in an indirect way through his position in space. As a radical, it can also suggest a <u>lateral position relative to something</u> .	To <u>intertwine</u> sticks by matching them together. This image is sometimes associated with the idea of <u>learning by emulation</u> , in particular when combined with the hands depicted in *爻.

3. Human beings

人、 *亻、 *亻	大
Pictogram of a person . As a radical, it can also appear on the side (e.g. 信) or on top (e.g. 每).	A 人 <u>person</u> standing with both arms and legs stretched as much as possible > big, large .
士	女
Warrior, samurai, lord-man. The kanji derives from the pictogram of an <u>erect penis</u> and it can sometimes suggest a sense of <u>masculinity</u> . Not to be confused with 土 “earth”, having a longer stroke below.	A kneeling woman with soft shapes.
子、 *ㄨ	立
Child. It sometimes indicates something <u>small</u> . The upside-down variant *ㄨ indicates a child in <u>cephalic position</u> at <u>birth</u> .	A person standing up . As a radical, it can convey a sense of <u>verticality</u> .

*卍、*卍	*疒
A <u>kneeling person</u> .	A <u>sick</u> 人 person lying on half of a wooden trunk (片) used as a bed > <u>sickness</u> , <u>disease</u> , <u>illness</u> .

4. Body parts

心、*忄、*小	頁
Heart. It is related to anything akin to <u>feelings</u> , <u>emotions</u> and <u>mind</u> .	A <u>head</u> . As a radical, it can convey any related meaning such as <u>face</u> , <u>forehead</u> and <u>mind</u> . The meaning of a page is a loanword.
口	*日
Mouth. As a radical, it can indicate anything related to the mouth such as <u>speeches</u> , <u>words</u> , <u>voices</u> , <u>statements</u> , <u>verses</u> and <u>laments</u> . From the graphic point of view it can represent any kind of <u>cavity</u> and <u>opening</u> , as well as <u>containers</u> , <u>fences</u> , <u>walls</u> and things surrounding others (e.g. 囚 “prisoner”).	Combination of 口 “mouth” and 一, indicating the tongue or symbolizing “ <u>a sound in the mouth</u> ”. As a radical, it generally suggests “ <u>saying</u> ” and “ <u>speaking</u> ”, always simplified identical to 日 (“sun”).
言	目、*目
To say. As a radical, it can imply anything related to the <u>enunciation</u> , <u>speeches</u> and <u>words</u> .	Eye. The variant *目 can equally represent an eye or the graphic stylization of a <u>net</u> .
耳	*彡
Pictogram of an <u>ear</u> .	Stylization of <u>fine hair</u> or the <u>tuft of hairs on a brush’s tip</u> . As radical it often suggests “ <u>detailed</u> ”, “ <u>finesse</u> ” and “ <u>elegance</u> ”.
力	*歹
<u>Arm muscles flexed</u> , symbol of strength and power . As a radical, it can suggest <u>effort</u> and <u>commitment</u> .	A <u>dead person</u> whose only <u>bones</u> remain.
*尸	欠
A <u>lying corpse</u> . This <u>lying position</u> is sometimes used to indicate “ <u>body</u> ” or “ <u>buttocks</u> ”. Inside some kanji *尸 can be the abbreviation of 屋 “ <u>home/shop</u> ”, that is a place where to arrive and stop (至) for resting (*尸 “lying body”). Not to be confused with 尺.	A <u>yawning</u> 人 person. The <u>mouth’s opening</u> symbolically suggests a lack or an absence > lack of a piece > to be chipped , gap .

5. Hands, feet and legs

手、*扌、*扌、又、寸、*扌	
A hand . The variants can suggest a voluntary <u>action</u> , <u>contact</u> , the act of <u>grasping</u> , <u>giving</u> , <u>receiving</u> , <u>pulling</u> , <u>holding</u> and so on. The variant *扌 can be found as it is (e.g. 掃 “sweeping”) or with the central stroke stretched (e.g. 書 “writing”). It is also possible to find a very shortened variant of 手 (e.g. 右 “right”), while *扌 derives from 爪 “fingernail/claw” (e.g. 乳 “milk”). Finally, 寸 indicates a unit of measurement and represents a hand measuring the pulse rate; as a radical, it can imply “ <u>a careful and skillful use of hands</u> ” more than the others variants, often reimagining the little central stroke as a tool in hand used for labor work or as a weapon	
*扌	*儿
<u>Two hands</u> .	<u>Legs</u> . It is sometimes used to indicate a <u>person</u> in its entirety, and other times to indicate a <u>kneeling position</u> .
止	足、*足
To stop, to halt. Pictogram of a left <u>foot</u> . When used as a radical and if combined with kanji of motion 止 acts like a reinforcement, understood as “ <u>footprints left behind</u> ”.	Foot, leg. The lower part derives from 止, while 口 represents the kneecap.
走	*夂
To run. It is formed by 止 and 土 “soil”, but it actually derives from a simplification of *夂 “young and slim person” and 止 “to stop”, in its graphic meaning of “footprints”.	<u>Foot pointing downwards</u> . It often symbolizes a <u>discontinuous pace</u> made up of pausing and resuming.
*夂	*夂
<u>Wide movements</u> covering a <u>long distance</u> .	<u>Feet firmly on the ground</u> .

6. Animals

<p>犬、*犛、*豸</p> <p>Dog. As a radical, *犛 can indicate any kind of <u>animal</u>, while the less common *豸 indicates an <u>animal with claws</u>.</p>	<p>羊、*羊</p> <p>A sheep with two small horns. As a radical, it always conveys connotations of <u>positivity</u>, <u>beauty</u>, <u>abundance</u> and <u>praise</u>, being the sheep considered a precious animal.</p>
<p>牛</p> <p>Representation of a cow's head.</p>	<p>馬</p> <p>Horse. Not to be confused with 鳥 “bird”.</p>
<p>虫</p> <p>Pictogram of a snake with a large hood. Since snakes and insects were formerly considered similar animals, the kanji has taken on the final meaning of insect.</p>	<p>*卜</p> <p><u>Cracks</u> on a turtle shell used for <u>divination</u> purposes. As a radical, the oblique stroke is sometimes straighten (e.g. 占 “shop”).</p>
<p>貝</p> <p>Seashell. As a radical, it is used to indicate <u>money</u> and everything that can be associated with <u>trade</u>, <u>precious</u> objects and <u>riches</u>. In the past, shells were indeed used as an exchange currency.</p>	<p>肉、*月</p> <p>A slice of meat. As a radical, it often appears simplified identically to the kanji of 月 “moon” and it is used to indicate a <u>body part</u>, an <u>internal organ</u> or the whole <u>body</u>.</p>
<p>*隹</p> <p>A small <u>bird</u> in flight seen from the side. As a radical, it sometimes suggests a <u>forward movement</u>.</p>	

7. Nature

<p>*艹</p> <p>Derived from the pictogram of *艸 “grass”, it can refer to any <u>plant</u> or <u>vegetation</u> in general. In few kanji *艹 represents a bird's <u>crest</u> or <u>tuft</u> (e.g. *藿).</p>	<p>生、*圭</p> <p>Sprouts <u>coming out</u> of the ground > life, birth.</p>
<p>木</p> <p>Tree. It is also used to indicate <u>wood</u>.</p>	<p>竹、*𥯲</p> <p>Bamboo. It sometimes implies <u>bamboo tablets</u>.</p>
<p>水、*氵、*氷</p> <p>The rippling current of a river > water. As a radical, it can also be found in the variants *氵 and *氷 (“<u>water drops</u>”), which can refer also to any other kind of <u>liquid</u></p>	<p>氷、*冫、*凵</p> <p>Combination of 水 “water” and *冫 “ice” > ice, frozen. As a radical, it is usually found as *冫 or *凵.</p>
<p>川、*巛</p> <p>A river that flows between its banks. As a radical, it can suggest “<u>going around</u>”, due to its graphic meaning and the homophony with 旋^{せん} “going around, rotation”.</p>	<p>田</p> <p>Paddy, rice field. As a radical, it can indicate a generic cultivated <u>field</u>. More rarely 田 is used only for graphic purposes as a simplification of other kanji (e.g. *囟 “newborn's head”, simplified with 田 in 思 “to think”).</p>
<p>*禾</p> <p>An <u>ear of wheat</u>'s <u>round</u> head. The kanji can be used to indicate <u>rice plants</u>, other <u>plantations</u> or the entire <u>crop</u>. The shape of the ear with its head can also suggest “<u>flexuosity</u>” and “<u>hanging down</u>”.</p>	<p>米</p> <p>Rice grains taken from a plant. As a radical, it is sometimes used to simplify more complex kanji, generally suggesting something <u>small and/or hidden</u>.</p>
<p>土</p> <p>A heap of earth on the ground > soil, land. The kanji can also refer to a <u>territory-area</u> and similar. Not to be confused with 士.</p>	<p>*厶</p> <p>A <u>cliff</u>. As a radical, it can suggest other similar meanings. Not to be confused with *廾 “large building”.</p>
<p>山</p> <p>A mountain range.</p>	<p>*阝</p> <p>When found on the left side *阝 indicates a “hill” (e.g. 隱 “hidden”), while on the right it indicates a “village” (e.g. 郵 “post”).</p>
<p>穴</p> <p>To dig a hole (“to separate” 八) and cover it (*宀 “roof”). Initially, it referred to a primitive dwelling; then, the kanji has taken the general meanings of hole and opening.</p>	<p>金</p> <p>Shiny metals (suggested by the two little strokes) content (*亠) of 土 soil. The main meaning is gold, but as a radical, it can suggest any kind of <u>metal</u>. It often indicates money within words.</p>

石	*业
Stones and pebbles fallen from a cliff.	An empty <u>pit</u> .
日	月
Pictogram of the sun > day, Japan . As a radical, it can also suggest <u>light</u> , <u>brilliance</u> and <u>heat</u> . At times it has the sole graphic purpose of simplifying other elements (e.g. a container). Note that the radical-component *日 “to say” is always simplified identical to 日.	Moon . Note that the kanji of 肉 “meat” and 舟 “ship” are often simplified identical to 月 when used as radicals.
雨	火、*灬
Rain falling from the clouds. When used as a radical, it can refer to any <u>atmospheric phenomenon</u> .	Fire .

8. Things

匕、*匕	斗
A spoon . The shape suggests something <u>bent</u> or the image of a <u>person bending over and collapsing on the side</u> . The *匕 variant is often used graphically to suggest a <u>stick</u> .	Pictogram of a ladle . The kanji is often used to indicate a <u>unit of measurement</u> .
皿	*冫
A plate > dish .	A <u>lid</u> .
食、*食	*酉
Simplified from *倉, composed of a *皀 container full of <u>food</u> and a covering (*亼) > to eat .	A <u>jar of wine</u> . Not to be confused with 西 (“west”).
西	豆
The pictogram of a <u>wine press</u> whose pressed grapes <u>drip down from above</u> . West is a loanword, perhaps suggested by the sun’s descending movement as it sets to the west. Graphically speaking, as a radical, 西 is associated also to a “bird’s nest”, conveying in the same way the idea of a place <u>above</u> , and it can be found simplified with *罍. *罍 is also the same simplification used for *罍, depicting a <u>container turned upside-down</u> . Not to be confused with *酉 “jar of wine”.	Pictogram of a <u>raised table vessel</u> to place food on. Bean is a loanword supported by the idea of a vessel with food in. In compounds 豆 takes on multiple shades of meaning: something <u>small</u> (from the vessel’s shape smaller than normal) or <u>tall-high</u> (from the raised shape), a <u>base</u> for something (from the support function) and consequently a <u>pedestal</u> .
示、*示	*匚、*冂、*匸
Pictogram of an altar with a sacrifice to the gods on top. The two side strokes represent drops of wine poured over the sacrifice as they flow down. As a radical, it often appears as *示; it maintains the meaning of <u>altar</u> and can imply the idea of <u>divinity</u> or <u>religion</u> . The kanji has taken on the main meanings of pointing out , displaying , showing and demonstrating , in part related to the sacrifice displayed on the altar, in part to the divine reaction that will result.	<u>Boxes and containers</u> . *匚 puts focus on the container itself, while *匸 on the content. *冂 suggests an enclosed space, or it is seldomly used to graphically symbolize a support or a dwelling.
辛	玉
Pictogram of a tattoo artist’s <u>needle</u> . The kanji suggests the painful and penetrating sensation caused by a needle used <u>to torture and tattoo a slave</u> . The meaning of spicy comes from the idea of a “sharp flavor”. As a radical, it can appear shortened with only the upper part (e.g. 章). Not to be confused with 幸 (“happiness”).	Kanji derived from the pictogram of a jewelry necklace > spherical shape. The central stroke was added to distinguish the kanji from 王 (“king”); however in its use as a radical, that stroke is often omitted again (e.g. 球).
糸	*彡
A raw silk thread . As a radical, it can indicate similar meanings such as <u>spinning</u> , <u>mending</u> , <u>ropes</u> and more rarely <u>fabrics</u> and <u>clothes</u> , while in abstract terms it can imply a <u>bond</u> , a sense of <u>unity</u> or <u>control</u> .	<u>Small threads</u> .

巾	衣、*衤
A hanging <u>fabric</u> > towel . The kanji can also indicate <u>cloth</u> and similar meanings.	From the pictogram of a garment that covers the body depicted with the collar at top and sleeves below > clothes, dressing . Not to be confused with *衤.
車	舟
Car . Derived from the pictogram of a <u>wagon</u> .	Ship . As a radical, it can be found simplified with 月.
工	
Pictogram of a <u>large ax</u> used to chop wood > <u>work tool, manual labor</u> > craft, construction .	

9. Buildings

*广	*宀
A <u>large building</u> . Not to be confused with *厂 “cliff”.	A <u>roof</u> . It can indicate any covered <u>building</u> by association.
*人	*八
The <u>roof of a primitive dwelling</u> . As a radical, it can suggest a generic <u>covering</u> , a <u>lid</u> , “ <u>matching up</u> ” or “ <u>putting together in the same place</u> ”.	A <u>covering</u> or a <u>covered place</u> .
門	戸
A gate .	A door (formerly *戶).

10. Weapons

刀、*刂	戈
Pictogram of a sword > katana . As a radical, it can suggest any <u>cutting tool</u> , the act of <u>cutting</u> or <u>engraving</u> , often appearing shortened as *刂.	A hand holding a <u>spear</u> .
弓	矢
Pictogram of a taut bow .	Pictogram of an arrow .
斤	*攴
Pictogram of an ax with a curved handle. It was used to indicate a kin ’s amount (about 600 grams).	A <u>hand (又) equipped with an ax</u> . As a radical, it often suggests the act of <u>hitting</u> .

1.1 NUMBERS

一	二	三	四	五	六	七	八	九	十	百	千	万
	仁			互		切		染	計	宿	年	勵
				*吾		窃		軌	針	縮		
				語		叱			汁			
				悟					叶			
									丈			
									杖			

一	いち ひと 一、一つ、一日 <small>いちにち ついたち</small> one day、一日 <small>いちじ</small> the first day of the month、一時 <small>いちじかん</small> one (o'clock)、一時間 <small>いちじかん</small> one hour、 いちど 一度 one time, once、一か月 <small>いっ げつ</small> one month、一月 <small>いちがつ</small> January、一人 <small>ひとり</small> alone, one person、第一 <small>だいいち</small> first、一桁 <small>ひとけた</small> one digit
I	The number one , derived from the pictogram of the index finger used to count.

二	に ふた 二、二つ、二日 <small>ふつか</small> two days, the second day of the month、二人 <small>ふたり</small> two people、二十歳 <small>はたち</small> twenty years old、二分 <small>にぶん</small> di- vided into two、二の足を踏む <small>に あし ふ</small> to hesitate, to think about something twice、一石二鳥 <small>いっせきにちょう</small> “kill two birds with one stone”
I	Two.

仁	じんぎ 仁義 morality、におう 仁王 <i>Niō</i>
VI	A *イ person with his back bent by the burden he carries. 二 conveys the reading and the concept of “burden” by phonetically calling up 任 <small>にん</small> “to entrust, responsibility”. The current meanings are humanity and benevolence , derived phonetically from 忍 <small>にん</small> “to endure, to resist”.

三	さん みっ 三、三つ、三日 <small>みっか</small> three days, the third day of the month、再三 <small>さいさん</small> repeatedly、三部作 <small>さんぶさく</small> trilogy
I	Three.

四	し よん 四、四、四つ、四日 <small>よっか</small> four days, the fourth day of the month、四時 <small>よじ</small> four (o'clock)、四角 <small>しかく</small> square、 四季 <small>しき</small> the four Seasons
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I	*三 symbolizes the four fingers of a hand excluding the thumb. 四 has originated from the combination of 口 “mouth”, 气 “spirit” and 舌 “tongue” in order to suggest “breath”. Subsequently, 四 has replaced *三 due to homophony and the resemblance with the four fingers of the hand collected in a fist.
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五	ご 五、五つ、五日 <small>いつか</small> five days, the fifth day of the month、五感 <small>ごかん</small> the five senses
I	Five was initially represented by the pictogram of five lines, one for each finger. That was then replaced by 五, the pictogram of a <u>hand with a ball of yarn rolled around</u> , still indicating the hand’s five fingers.

互	たが 互い、お互い様 <small>たが さま</small> both、互角 <small>ごかく</small> parity, same level、相互理解 <small>そうごりかい</small> mutual understanding
/	Pictogram of a particular reel used to weave the threads in a precise and symmetrical way > mutual . In some way, the kanji’s shape could have been influenced by 五, considering its graphical meaning of hand-wrapped ball of yarn. The two kanji also share the same reading.

*吾	Initially, the kanji was formed by two identical balls of yarn (五), suggesting <u>equality and balance</u> . This idea was then associated with the concept of people each one equal to the other, generating the meanings of me and self . The lower 五 has been simplified with 口 “mouth”, suggesting the idea of “ <u>responding appropriately to a question</u> ”.	
語	^{かた} 語る to tell, to narrate、 ^{かた} 語らう to speak with someone、 ^{げんご} 言語 language、 ^{ものがたり} 物語 novel、 ^{にほんご} 日本語 Japanese language、 ^{えいご} 英語 English language、 ^ご イタリア語 Italian language、 ^{けいご} 敬語 honorific language	
II	言 “to say”: it emphasizes the concept of adequate communication implied by *吾 > telling, speaking, language .	
悟	^{さと} 悟る to realize, to comprehend、 ^{さと} 悟り enlightenment、 ^{かくご} 覚悟 determination, resolution	
/	An enlightened heart in perfect balance > enlightenment > to perceive, to realize .	
六	^{ろく} 六、 ^{むっ} 六つ、 ^{むいか} 六日 six days, the sixth day of the month	
I	The pictogram of a house. It was chosen as a substitute for the “clenched fist” pictogram indicating the number six .	
七	^{しち} 七、 ^{なな} 七、 ^{なな} 七つ、 ^{なのか} 七日 seven days, the seventh day of the month、 ^{しちじ} 七時 seven (o'clock)	
I	A vertical line <u>cut</u> by another. Seven is a loanword. The reading was linked to ^{せつ} 切 “cut”.	
切	^き 切る to cut/to disconnect/to complete thoroughly (often as a suffix)、 ^き 切れ piece、 ^き 切れる to be sharpened/to stop working/to run out/ruining/being skilled、 ^{きって} 切手 stamp、 ^{きっぷ} 切符 ticket、 ^{しんせつ} 親切 caring, attentive、 ^{たいせつ} 大切 important、 ^{せつぱく} 切迫 urgency、 ^{いっさい} 一切 everything	
II	The graphic meaning of 七 is emphasized by the addition of 刀 “sword” > to cut . In some words, 切 acts as reinforcement.	
窃	^{せつとう} 窃盗 theft、 ^{せつとうざい} 窃盗罪 theft (the crime)、 ^{せつとうだん} 窃盗団 gang of thieves、 ^{ひょうせつ} 剽窃 plagiarism	
/	> originally, 窃 used to contain the kanji of 米 “rice”, while 切 “cut” phonetically referred to 執 “catch” and 撰 “to take in itself” > to steal rice stored by someone in a hidden place (穴 “hole”) > to act furtively .	
叱	^{しか} 叱る	
//	A sharp 口 mouth > to scold .	
八	^{はち} 八、 ^{やっ} 八つ、 ^{ようか} 八日 eight days, the eighth day of the month、 ^や お八つ snack、 ^{はつほう} 八方 all directions、 ^{やおや} 八百屋 <u>greengrocer</u>	
I	Two separated lines. Eight is a loanword. In some words, the kanji suggests a large number. As a radical, it is widely used to indicate “ <u>separation</u> ”. It can also be found upside-down as *ㄨ.	
九	^{きゅう} 九、 ^く 九、 ^{ここの} 九つ、 ^{ここのか} 九日 nine days, the ninth day of the month、 ^{くじ} 九時 nine (o'clock)	
I	Pictogram of a <u>bent elbow</u> . Nine is a loanword.	
染	^そ 染める (tr.)、 ^そ 染まる (intr.)、 ^{しみ} 染みる absorb、 ^{しみ} 染み stain, spot、 ^{でんせん} 伝染 infection	
VI	Here 九 represents a bent person who dips plants (木) in a liquid (*彡) > to dye > to absorb, stain .	
軌	^{きどう} 軌道 orbit、 ^{きどう} 軌道に乗る to be in orbit/to go according to plan、 ^{じょうき} 常軌を逸らす to talk nonsense	
/	Grooves left by the passage of a wagon (車) that hits the ground > path > model . 九 symbolizes the grooves’ shape.	

十	じゅう とお とおか 十、十、十日 ten days, the tenth day of the month、 はっか 二十日 twenty days, the twentieth day of the month、 じゅうじ 十字 cross
I	Pictogram of a sewing <u>needle</u> . It has been chosen as a substitute for the more complex 拾 ^{じゅう / しゅう} , showing “*才 hands 合 together” > the ten fingers of the hands. As a radical, it often conveys ideas of “ <u>completeness</u> ” and “ <u>be collected</u> ”.
計	はか 計る to design、 とけい 時計 clock、 めざ 目覚まし時計 alarm clock、 けいかく 計画 plan, project、 ごうけい 合計 total、 せつけい 設計 project、 とうけい 統計 statistics、 けいさん 計算 calculation、 よけい 余計 superfluous、 おんどけい 温度計 thermometer
II	To count on fingers (十) aloud (言) > to take measurements > to design .
針	はり 針、 ししん 指針 needle-hand (e.g. clock)
VI	A metal needle (金). The reading is linked to 辛 ^{しん} (“painful/spicy”), also derived from the pictogram of a needle.
汁	しる みそしる 汁、 味噌汁 ^{みそ} soup、 かじゅう 果汁 fruit juice
/	Liquid (*彡) collected in a bowl > soup, juice .
叶	叶 かなう to come true, to become reality (e.g. desire, dream)、 かなえる to be granted
//	Voices (口) joined in a supplication that will be granted .
丈	じょうぶ 丈夫 resistant, robust、 だいじょうぶ 大丈夫 to go well, all right、 せたけ 背丈 height-stature
/	The kanji combines “hand” (又) with 十, used for its graphic shape similar to a <u>stick</u> > to use a stick for performing a rough measurement > unit of measurement . It currently indicates a generic measurable height .
杖	つえ 杖
/	The addition of “wood” (木) emphasizes the original meaning of 丈 > walking stick .
百	ひやく ひやつかじてん 百、百科事典 encyclopedia、 ひやつかてん 百貨店 department store
I	白 “white” refers to its graphic meaning of “thumb nail”. The thumb was anciently used to symbolize the concept of “hundreds”, further emphasized by the addition of 一 “one” > hundred .
宿	やど やど 宿、宿る to stay-lodge/to dwell、 やど 宿す to keep (e.g. a guest/a virus/a baby in the womb)、 あまやど 雨宿り shelter from the rain、 しゅくだい 宿題 homework、 せいしゅく 星宿 constellation
III	Numerous (*百) *イ people <u>close together</u> inside a building (*宀) > inn, hotel, to stay overnight (e.g. in a hotel). Another theory considers 百 as a simplification of 席 ^{せき} “seat”, linked phonetically to 夕 ^{せき} “evening” > *イ people finding place in an inn for the evening.
縮	ちぢ 縮む (intr.)、 ちぢ 縮める (tr.)、 ちぢ 縮れる to wrinkle, to curl、 あっしゅく 圧縮 compression, abbreviation、 しゅくしょう 縮小 reduction
VI	> a rope (糸) fastened tight (宿) around a certain number of things > to reduce, to contract, to shrink, to scale down > to be rippled .

千	^{せん} 千、 ^{せんさばんべつ} 千差万別 to be extremely varied、 ^{ちぎ} 千切る to chop (also figurative)/to detach-tear
I	In ancient times, the human body symbolized the concept of “thousands”; therefore *イ “person” combined with — “one” returns the meaning of a thousand .
年	^{とし} 年 year、 ^{きょねん} 去年 last year、 ^{ねんまつ} 年末 end of year、 ^{としうえ} 年上 older, senior、 ^{しょうねん} 少年 young person、 ^{せいねんがつび} 生年月日 date of birth、 ^{ねんだい} ～年代 era-date-period、 ^{せいねん} 青年 youth、 ^{ねんれい} 年齢 age、 ^{ねんきん} 年金 pension
I	Kanji simplified from *季, representing the totality (千) of wheat (*禾) produced in the annual harvest > years > age .
万	^{いちまん} 一万 ten thousand、 ^{まんねんひつ} 万年筆 fountain pen、 ^{ばんのう} 万能 almighty、 ^{ばんじ} 万事 all
II	Four zeros. The kanji has its origin in *萬, the pictogram of a scorpion whose segmented tail gave the idea of a long sequence, leading to the concept of <u>innumerable</u> . 万 is the stylization of 卍, the Buddhist swastika, which has replaced *萬 due to its sense of “all-encompassing” and possessing same readings (まん, ばん). In some words, 万 means a great multitude, everything .
励	^{はげ} 励む to strive, to make an effort、 ^{はげ} 励ます to encourage、 ^{しょうれい} 奨励 encouragement-incitement、 ^{げきれい} 激励 encouragement
/	Simplified from *勵. The left element *厲 indicates a “stone” (石, abbreviated with *厂 “cliff”) used to sharpen (suggested by the *萬 scorpion tail’s tip). The simplification with 万 highlights the concept of “innumerable”, from which the idea of “sharpening by vigorously (力) passing a stone innumerable times” comes > to work hard > to encourage by association. The reading could be linked to *搯 ^{らい} “sharpen/to crush, to grind” and *砥 ^{てい} “whetstone, stone to sharpen”.

WRITING SYSTEMS

Four writing systems coexist in Japanese.

1) Kanji

Main topic of the handbook. It is good practice to write them in a precise stroke order which, unless specific exceptions, tends to follow the general rule: **from top to bottom and from left to right**.

Taking the kanji of ^{ひゃく}百 “hundred” (six strokes) as an example:



It starts out at top by tracing the horizontal line from left to right; then there is a small oblique dash descending from top; before tracing the horizontal line it is necessary to give priority to the vertical descending stroke on the left. Tracing now the horizontal line, it does not end immediately but it keeps going vertically down to the bottom without removing the pen from the sheet. At this point, it follows the horizontal stroke in the middle and the last one at the bottom, both written from left to right.

A more complex example with the kanji of ^{はし}橋 “bridge” (sixteen strokes):



2) Rōmaji (Roman characters)

Rōmaji is the writing system changing into alphabetic letters the Japanese language through the Roman alphabet. In this book, the *Hepburn* transliteration system is used, summarized as follows:

- ^へへ, ^はは, ^をを (*he, ha, wo*) are respectively transcribed with *e, wa, o*, when they are used as grammatical particles.
- Long vowels **o** and **u** are indicated with *ō* and *ū* (excluding suffixes). In general, long *ō* derives from **ou** and, only in few cases, from **oo** (always check *furigana* above the words to be sure of it). The long **e** and **i** transliterate as they are written in Japanese, that is with *ei* and *ii*. When using *katakana*, the long vowel is indicated by the symbol ー following the vowel, which is always transliterated with ̄ above it.
- The consonant **n** (ん/ン) alone, when put before a syllable starting with **i** or **y**, is transliterated with an apostrophe in the middle in order to better separate the letters (e.g. ^{あんい}安易, *an'i*). Double consonants (indicated with a small つ/ツ) are transliterated with a repetition (e.g. *zutto*), with the exception of **ch** (e.g. *matcha*).

3) Hiragana and Katakana

The first table of “pure sounds” and that of “impure and semi-pure sounds” (bottom-right) should be read from top to bottom and from right to left. The “contracted sounds” table (bottom-left) should be read from left to right. The characters order inside the boxes is *hiragana*, *rōmaji* (Hepburn system) and *katakana*. Correct Japanese pronunciation is a topic that should be tackle separately as most of the sounds vary by small nuances. Very basically speaking, vowels are pronounced sharply: **A** as “ah”, **I** as in “we”, **U** as in “moon”, **E** as in “bed” and **O** as in “old”. Regarding some of the consonants: **TS** is pronounced as in “cats”, **Z** as “dz”, **G** as in “get” or “give”, **H** is aspirated and sounds stronger as in the German “Ich”, **Y** as in “yogurt”, **W** as in “wise” and **KYU** as in “cute”. **U** is almost silent in the syllables **tsu** and **su**, **FU** is something in between “F” and “H” and **R** is something in between “R” and “L”.

	わ WA	ら RA	や YA	ま MA	は HA	な NA	た TA	さ SA	か KA	あ A
	ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	ハ	ナ	タ	サ	カ	ア
		り RI		み MI	ひ HI	に NI	ち CHI	し SHI	き KI	い I
		リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ
ん N		る RU	ゆ YU	む MU	ふ FU	ぬ NU	つ TSU	す SU	く KU	う U
ン		ル	ユ	ム	フ	ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ
		れ RE		め ME	へ HE	ね NE	て TE	せ SE	け KE	え E
		レ		メ	ヘ	ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ
	を WO	ろ RO	よ YO	も MO	ほ HO	の NO	と TO	そ SO	こ KO	お O
	ヲ	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ	ノ	ト	ソ	コ	オ

きゃ KYA	きゅ KYU	きょ KYO	ぎゃ GYA	ぎゅ GYU	ぎょ GYO
キャ	キュ	キョ	ギャ	ギュ	ギョ
しゃ SHA	しゅ SHU	しょ SHO	じゃ JA	じゅ JU	じょ JO
シャ	シュ	ショ	ジャ	ジュ	ジョ
ちゃ CHA	ちゅ CHU	ちょ CHO	ぢゃ DJA	ぢゅ DJU	ぢょ DJO
チャ	チュ	チョ	ヂャ	ヂュ	ヂョ
にゃ NYA	にゅ NYU	にょ NYO	ひゃ HYA	ひゅ HYU	ひょ HYO
ニャ	ニュ	ニョ	ヒャ	ヒュ	ヒョ
びゃ BYA	びゅ BYU	びょ BYO	ぴゃ PYA	ぴゅ PYU	ぴょ PYO
ビャ	ビュ	ビョ	ピャ	ピュ	ピョ

ぱ PA	ば BA	だ DA	ざ ZA	が GA
パ	バ	ダ	ザ	ガ
び PI	び BI	ぢ DJI	じ JI	ぎ GI
ピ	ビ	ヂ	ジ	ギ
ぷ PU	ぶ BU	づ DZU	ず ZU	ぐ GU
プ	ブ	ヅ	ズ	グ
ぺ PE	べ BE	で DE	ぜ ZE	げ GE
ペ	ベ	デ	ゼ	ゲ
ぽ PO	ぼ BO	ど DO	ぞ ZO	ご GO
ポ	ボ	ド	ゾ	ゴ

りゃ RYA	りゅ RYU	りょ RYO
リャ	リュ	リョ

Note that a contracted sound like KYA is different from two syllables written and read separated (e.g. “KIYA”). The sounds ぢ and づ are used only in few words compared to the more common じ and ず with the same pronunciation.