

212. 淡〔淡〕 *dàn*, Bland

Equivalents

bland; bland flavor; pale, apathetic

Significs and Stroke Counts

simplified 讠 3 + 8; complex 讠 (水) 3 (4) + 8



Character Composition

Signific-phonetic compound.

On the left is the signific component 水 (讠) *shuǐ*, water. On the right is the phonetic component 炎 *yán*.

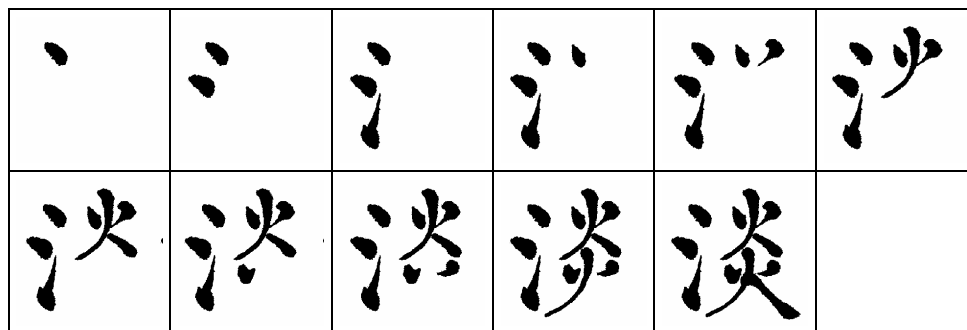
Explanation

The *Shuō Wén* suggests that 淡 *dàn* originally meant “mild flavors.” It was extended to mean bland flavor in general. By metaphorical extension, it came to mean “pale” in the context and “apathetic” in the context of emotional states.

Combinations

淡竹叶	淡竹葉	<i>dàn zhú yè</i>	lophatherum (Lophatheri Herba)
面色淡白	面色淡白	<i>miàn sè dàn bái</i>	pale white facial complexion

Stroke Sequence



213. 当〔當〕 *dāng*, Must

Equivalents

must; pawn

Significs and Stroke Counts

simplified 小 3 + 3; complex 田 5 + 8



Character Composition

Signific-phonetic compound.

On the top is the phonetic component 尚 *shàng*. On the bottom is the signific component 田 *tián*, field.

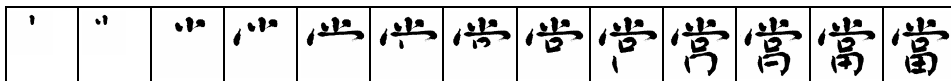
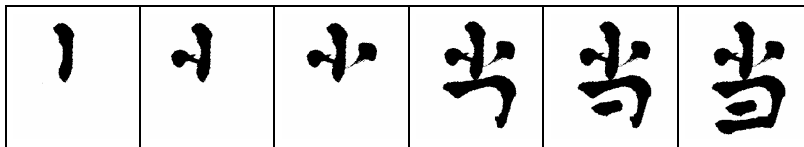
Explanation

In the *Shuō Wén* 當 *dāng* originally meant crop fields of equal value. It was extended to mean “equality” and “face to face.” The idea of “facing each other” give rise to the meaning of “resistance,” which later came to be represented by 擋. It also allowed 當 to be used in the sense of 在 *zài*, to be located (in a certain place), e.g., 當臍痛 *dāng qí tòng*, pain in the umbilicus. The notion of equality or correspondence explains how 當 (pronounced as *dàng*) came to mean pawning. Pawn shops in Taiwan and Chinatowns across the world usually display a large single character 當 on their shop fronts. It is probably from the same notion of “equality” that the character came to mean “must,” since “must” is where reality is expected to correspond to someone’s command or desire. An example of this is found in 當歸 *dāng guī*, literally, “must return,” which is the Chinese name for Chinese angelica (so called because in ancient China this plant was offered to people setting out on a journey as a token of hope that they would return home safely). From the idea of “must” it is not hard to see how 當 gained the meaning of “appropriate.” In this latter sense it is pronounced in the fourth tone *dàng*, as in 恰當 *qià dàng*.

Combination

当归 當歸 *dāng guī* Chinese angelica (*Angelicae Sinensis Radix*)

Stroke Sequence



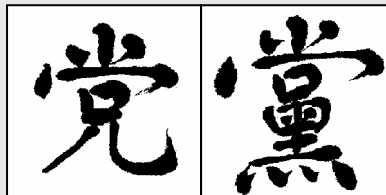
214. 党〔黨〕 *dǎng*, Party

Equivalents

party; biased, partial; kinship

Significs and Stroke Counts

simplified 小 3 + 7; complex 黑 12 + 8



Character Composition

Signific-phonetic compound.

On the top is the phonetic component 尙 *shàng*. On the bottom is the signific component 黑 *hēi*, black.

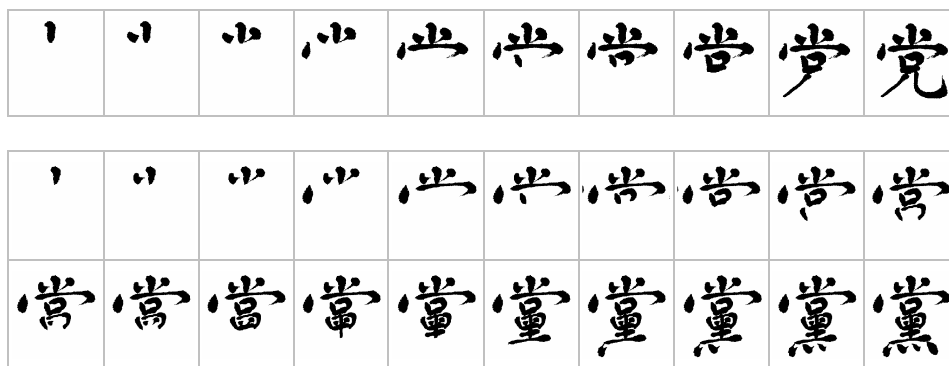
Explanation

The *Shuō Wén* suggests that the original meaning of 黨 *dǎng* was “dim,” “dark,” or “obscure,” as is suggested by its signific component, 黑 *hēi* black. However, it was also used to denote a kind of ancient Chinese community that was consisted of 500 families. From this it has been extended to mean “group” or “clique.” Today, it is used to mean “political party.” Today, “party” has become the primary meaning of 黨. Another extended meaning from “community” is “consanguinity” or “kinship.” As a verb, 黨 *dǎng* means to be biased or partial. 黨 *dǎng* is also a Chinese surname. 黨 *dǎng* in 黨參 *dǎng shēn* is part of the name of a location called 上黨 *shàng dǎng* in 山西 *Shān Xī* Province .

Combination

党参 黨參 *dǎng shēn* codonopsis (Codonopsis Radix)

Stroke Sequence



215. 冬 [冬] *dōng*, Winter

Equivalents

winter; cold, frozen

Significs and Stroke Counts

simplified 冬 3 + 2; complex 冬 2 + 3



Character Composition

Associative compound.

On the top is signific component 夂 *zhōng*, end. On the bottom is the signific component 冫 *bīng*, ice.

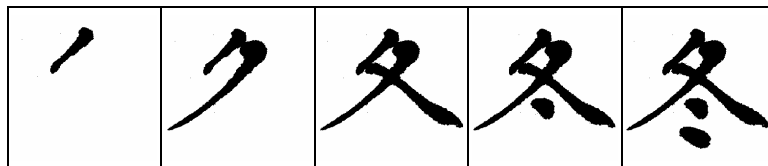
Explanation

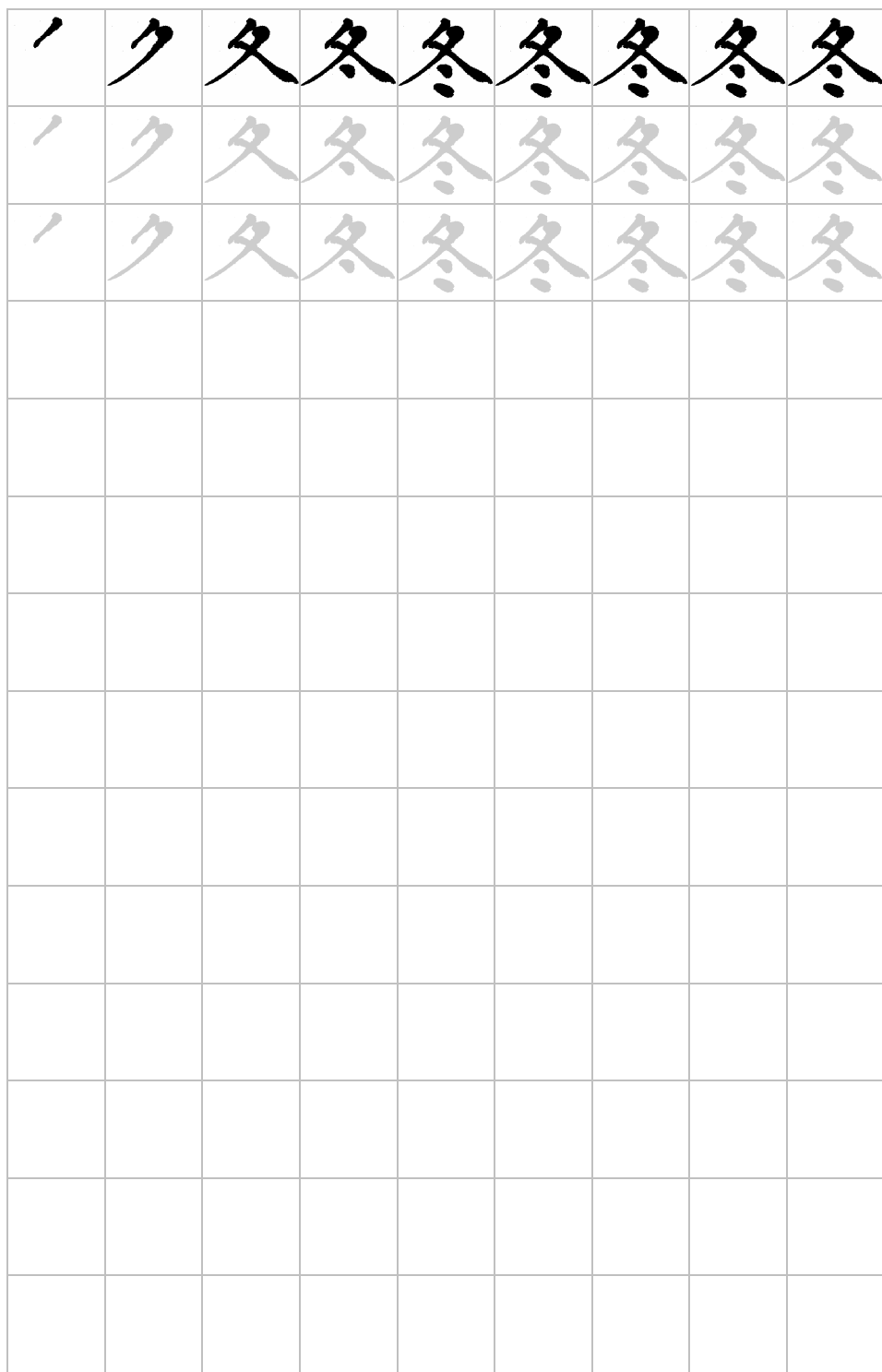
The oracle bone script of 夂 *zhōng* is a depiction of a skein of thread tied at one end. Metaphorically it symbolizes the idea of “the end.” It was specifically used to denote winter, the final season of the year. This is why the *Shuō Wén* defines 冬 *dōng* as “the last of the four seasons.” From the notion of winter, it also came to mean “cold” or “frozen.”

Combinations

款冬花	款冬花	<i>kuǎn dōng huā</i>	coltsfoot (Farfarae Flos)
冬花	冬花	<i>dōng huā</i>	coltsfoot (Farfarae Flos)

Stroke Sequence





216. 豆〔豆〕 dòu, Bean

Equivalents

bean

Significs and Stroke Counts

simplified 豆 7 + 0; complex 豆 7 + 0



Character Composition

Pictograph.

The oracle bone script of 豆 dòu depicts a slender tall utensil with a round shaped base used for food.

Explanation

The *Shuō Wén* suggests that 豆 dòu originally meant an ancient utensil for meat. Later the character was borrowed to denote “bean,” and lost its original meaning.

Combinations

白豆蔻	白豆蔻	bái dòu kòu	cardamom (Amomi Fructus Rotundus)
赤小豆	赤小豆	chì xiǎo dòu	rice bean (Phaseoli Semen)
黄豆	黄豆	huáng dòu	soybean
大豆	大豆	dà dòu	soybean
肉豆蔻	肉豆蔻	ròu dòu kòu	nutmeg (Myristicae Semen)
草豆蔻	草豆蔻	cǎo dòu kòu	Katsumada's galangal seed (Alpiniae Katsumadai Semen)

Stroke Sequence

