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Communication with Chinese Language

文六、簡化字之構造 Article #6 "The Rules for Making Simplified Chinese Characters"

本文摘自乾隆華文信函教材 **"認識學習華文特色 15 函"** 中之第十四函：**認識中華文字之繁化與簡化**，第八節：<mark>大陸新制簡化字法令法則</mark>。The Rules for Making Simplified Chinese Characters is an abridged version from CJ Guidance's Educational Letter #14, Section 8: China's Law - New Simplification of Chinese Characters.

簡化字自古即有，但簡化過程並不減少中國字庫，反而不斷的在增加。Simplified forms used in writing or printing have always existed, though early attempts at simplification actually resulted in more characters being added to the lexicon. 然新中國建立，鑒於全國文盲佔人口比率過高，為了消除文盲，提升識字率，乃於一九五六年推行口語文字簡化方案，又於一九八六年先後發佈三個文字簡化表，合計簡化基本字 569 個，共衍生簡化字 2,235 個，如扣除草書楷化 1,445 字，古死字復活者 17 個，古有俗體字及白字真除者 220 個，取輪廓近似或特徵以替全字者 80 個外，則所餘 553 字，即大陸所謂基本簡化字，於 1993 年公佈第一批異體字整理表，列有 1,027 個異體字。除此常用異體、簡體字外，餘皆仍為繁體字。Since the establishment of a new China, the People's Republic of China (PRC) officially adopted Simplified Chinese, in 1956, as an effort to reduce illiteracy. However, China's Simplification initiatives have been aimed at eradicating characters entirely and establishing the *Hanyu Pinyin Romanization* as the official written system of the PRC. After the retraction of the second round of simplification, the PRC has stated that it wishes to keep Chinese orthography stable and does not appear to plan any further reforms in the future, nor restore any characters that have already been simplified. The authorities promulgated *Jianhuazi zong biao* (簡化字總表), the final list of simplifications in 1986, which contains 569 singly simplified characters, whose simplifications can be generalized to other simplified characters, totaling 2,235 characters. They are categorized as the following:

1. 1,445 simplified characters that are Regular script from the Cursive written text, including 14 simplified radicals, which can all be generalized to other characters. The chart 3 is a non-exhaustive list, so a character that can be simplified in accordance with Chart 2 should be simplified, even if it does not appear in Chart 3.
2. Adopting 220 ancient colloquial forms that are simpler variants and with same pronunciation.
3. Reviving 17 dead ancient characters.

4. 80 newly created simpler characters by omitting all occurrences of a certain components use only the outline or its trait - a simpler variant.
5. Within simplified characters, there are only 553 simplified characters ("*basic* characters") that cannot be generalized with other characters.

查今之簡化字構造，乃以下列八法而成: The following eight methods are the rules of making the Simplified Chinese characters:

一、自古有俗體、異體字之筆劃少者，使其扶正，如：淚 → 泪；網 → 网；傑 → 杰等；同音合併，如：餘 →余；穀 →谷；佈 →布等，不免字義混淆。**1.** Adopting ancient forms that are in simpler shapes, such as: 淚→泪; 網→网; 傑→杰 etc. Merging one character into another that sounds the same or similar and also is simpler in shapes, such as 餘 → 余; 穀 → 谷; 佈→ 布 etc. This type of the simplified characters causes the major confusion of the meanings.

二、取草書中，普通易識之字形為簡字：大陸簡化字中，凡取 14 個草書楷體化之部首偏旁，如此移花接木，殊失草韻美感。本法除大量用於部首偏旁外，間亦用於字體中間，如：書 → 书；長 → 长；馬 → 马等。**2.** Cursive written text or grass script usually includes character simplification. Many simplified Chinese characters consists of systematically applying easily recognized cursive forms to certain components of the corresponding characters in the form of the regular script --- i.e. 14 radicals that occur in many characters. Writing in cursive style using Regular script works just as well, but it loses its flowing beauty of strokes and looks odd, such as 門→门; 閉→闭; 問 → 问 etc. (The exception to this type of simplifying is the word "開" (means open) → 开, where the radical「門」is entirely omitted.) Besides the simplified radicals, there are components or characters also applying their cursive writing in the form of Regular script, such as 書→书; 長→长; 馬→马 etc.

三、文字同音異體，部份合併：合併即以白字代正字，如以「后」代「後」而減「後」，殊失古字原義本質，令人莫知辯證，而有迷亂之失，如：髮、發 → 发；儘、盡 → 尽等。 **3.** Some replace the phonetic element of the traditional character with a mispronounced character which is simpler or merging a character either into another one that is pronounced in the same or in a similar way, such as 後→后 and then「後」is totally turned obsolete. This type of the simplification attempts to define a relatively smaller set of characters for common usage than the traditional Chinese. It is absolutely confusing their originality and meaning, such as 髮＆發→发; 儘＆盡→尽 etc.

四、改變或省略楷體左旁部首，如：體→ 体；塵→ 尘；竈→ 灶等。**4.** By deleting or creating new radical-radical compounds, such as: 體 → 体; 塵 → 尘; 竈 → 灶 etc.

五、將古字之筆簡「死字」復活，以爲新字，此類古字，唐宋以來在楷行書法中已不用，所謂「死字」是也，如説文解字中有而今不用之字，皆屬之，今通常於字典筆劃字後附記之。今大陸將此等字從康熙字典中選出以爲簡字、正字，故謂死字復活今用。**5.** Reviving those ancient simpler forms as the new characters. Those characters are useless since Tang and Song dynasties and are called "dead characters". Some dictionaries will list them in the index by stroke number. China's simplification adopts those dead characters from the Kangxi 康熙 dictionary to substitute the traditional ones – the modern resurrection.

六、自正楷字之部份特徵，或輪廓代替全部，取以為簡化字。此法本是象形字造字法之一，亦即古簡體字，其字由觀察者所處位置，對所觀察物體角度不同，如仰觀日月作 ○ ☽，俯觀水作 ⺌，後視車作 ⊞，正視山作 ⺲，側視馬作 馬。**6.** Omitting entire components or substituting the whole with only the outline or its trait - a simpler pictograph, such as 廣 → 广; 寧 → 宁; 滅 → 灭 etc. Changing the view point was an ancient way to create pictographs or to simplify some characters, i.e. looking above, looking down, rear view, front view and side view. For example, the upward view of sun & moon 日月→ ○ ☽, the downward view of water 水 → ⺌, the rear view of wagon 車 → ⊞, the front view of mountain 山 → ⺲, and the side view of horse 馬 → 馬.

七、改變或省略楷字右旁音母，以同音簡字體替代，潔 → 洁；鄰 → 邻；極 → 极，或者同時改變楷字左旁部首及右旁音母，以同音簡字體替代，如：護 → 护；驚 → 惊；膚 → 肤；等。**7.** Changing only the phonetic component of a character with a same pronunciation and a simpler character, such as: 潔→洁; 鄰→邻; 極→极 etc; or creating a new radical-phonetic compounds, such as：護→护; 驚→惊; 膚→肤 etc.

八、符號造字：此乃本無其字，特意以符號造之，或本有其字，特以符號損之，皆無中生有，出於六書法之方便體。如：對 → 对; 觀 → 观；風 → 风；鄰 →∞；累(通纍)→ ⺅等。**8.** Replacing complicated components with a symbol such as 乂 , 又 etc. Some simplified characters are new radical-phonetic compounds, such as 對 → 对; 觀 → 观; 風 → 风; 鄰→∞; 累(used as纍)→⺅ etc. 首先以符號代替字中筆劃重複部份，始見於東周(476 BC)古老子經 [1] （見附圖一）及戰國「行氣玉銘」，（見附圖二）其次多行之於南北朝人「寫經手卷」，今甚于昔。Using symbol to represent the repeated characters or strokes was first seen on the copy of Eastern Zhou東周 *(476 BC)* period's "Laotse's 5,000 Words" 古老子經 [1] (See Figure 1) and on a column-shape Jade parcel, called *Xíng-Qì Yù-Míng*行氣玉銘, (See Figure 2) dated Warring States period *(475~221 BC)*. *(This is a proven document for Taoist Qi Guidance* (*Pinyin: Qì Dǎoyǐn*). (See Figure 3) Later, during Southern & Northern dynasties, the symbols were also frequently

used in those hand-written copies of Buddhism documents 「寫經手卷」. At present, this type of symbolized simplification has the widest spread of uses.

[1] 古文老子經集字說明To illustrate the ancient script of classical literature "Laotse Scripture"：

漢許慎說文解字敍、漢劉向漢書藝文志，皆稱：「周史籀大篆與古文或異，與孔壁中文字亦異體」。 In accordance with Han Shuowen-Jiezi by Xu Shen and Han, Han-Shu (Western Han History) literary arts by Liu Xiang, both mentioned: Zhou Shizhou, large seal script are different from those analects writing found in wall of Confucius' house.

故孔子論語、左氏春秋，當時必皆為古體文，今孔、左之古文字，因隸楷興而亡之矣。幸梁陶弘景尋得古文老子，四傳至唐司馬承禎，以三體書呈唐玄宗，賜名「老子真本」，Therefore, at that time of Confucian analects and Zuo Spring & Autumn Annals (latter Han renamed Zuo Zhuan) must be in ancient script. But it perished after standard scripts became official and popular. Fortunately, Liang Tao hong-jing found the classical scripture of Laotse and the 4th pass onto Tang Sima Chengzhen who wrote this Scripture in 3 different scripts and presented to Emperor Xuan-zong in Tang dynasty. The emperor bestowed the name "Laotse True Scripture". 承禎晚隱天台桐柏宮，建經幢漆書古文老子經為鎮宮之寶（禁不外傳）。During his later years he secluded in Tientai Tongbo Palace. He constructed the temple to treasure and protect the scripture (the scripture was forbidden to pass onto outside). 迄北宋鄭國公夏竦，好古文奇字及文學，著古文四聲韻五卷，奉敕錄得古老子經真本單字，保存至今（藏台北故宮博物院），誠民族文化瑰寶也，It was until Northern Song Dynasty Xia Song who was fond of classical Chinese literature and ancient script. He wrote "Classical Chinese Literature Four Sounds/tones", Five Volumes. He took the imperial order to record individual characters of the ancient true scripture of Laotse. It is preserved until now (currently, stored in Taipei, the Palace Museum). It is a true national culture treasure. 今摘錄其單字數十個為插圖，用徵古文字演變與韻趣，其中「鄰」字作 ∘∘、「纍」字作 ⸱⸱，為華文有同音符號代替字之祖，較戰國行炁玉銘猶早 300 年，如果這個「〇」和公元前 2650 年之青海樂都陶文化上之「〇」，同亦作計數之「〇」，則世界創造「〇」者是中華民族，而不是後來之阿拉伯人了。又卍、卐 亦見樂都文化陶片中，故卍非印度佛教於公元前 500 餘年所創造。凡此均足証中華文化源遠流長，獨步領先于世界文化古國也。Hereby, presenting dozens of its individual characters to illustrate how they transformed from the ancient writing to the current standard script also showed their calligraphical charm and interest.「鄰」,「纍」are simplified as ∘∘, ⸱⸱. These are the evidences that Chinese characters use the homonym/unison symbol to substitute the character. It is 300 early than Column-shape Jade parcel, called 行炁玉銘*XíngQì Yù Míng*, dated back to Warring States period (475~221 BC). Furthermore, if proving the "o" in Qinghai Le-du pottery Culture (2650 BC) are both used as counting number, then it is Chinese created the number zero instead of Arabian. 卍, 卐 symbols in pottery shard of Le-du Culture are another evidences that prove卍is not imported from Indian Buddhism at 500 BC. All above are sufficient enough to prove that Chinese civilization is rooted deeply and has long history. Our culture is unrivalled and leads all other ancient cultural civilizations.

又：象形文字，以今觀昔，多為符號文字，而同音符號代替字，應在「有字而異體同音」之

後，故其生也晚于西周。To look at pictogram according to the standard of current script, most of them are graphs or symbols. The homonyms or substituted symbols should be after creation of the character then replaced with unison variant form. Therefor, it got happened after Western Zhou dynasty (1046 BC~771 BC).

The simplified characters existed in the copy of ancient "Laotse's 5000 Words" by *Sīmǎ Chéngzhēn* 司馬 承禎, Tang dynasty *(618~907 AD),* for example, ºº for鄰, ౙ for 累 (used as 纍) … etc.

附圖一　　Figure 1

除常用異體、簡體字外，餘皆仍為繁體字，由於此不足千數新字體，捨古人作簡字法，遂盡失繁體字特有之效果，上列八法中又以下列三法最為人詬病，並造成與固有歷久不變之原字間，字體變形，字義混淆、訛誤、差失，舛愆等缺失。Besides commonly used variants and simplified characters, the rest are still traditional characters. Because these newly, less than a thousand characters did not adopt the ancient simiplification rules, they totally lost their inheritant phonetic and semantic meanings of their traditional character. The following three methods out of above listed eight ways of simplification are denounced most by the people. Those several hundreds simplified characters cause all sorts of difficulties such as the error use, confused meaning and the most - mis-communication.

第一為其字獨重拼音而棄形義，以同音字取代或取消相應之繁體字後，如同音代替之以「后」代「後」，以「余」代「餘」，以「里」作「裏」，以「面」代「麵」，以「奸」代「姦」等莫不謬以千里，如此白字扶正，以作簡化，實為減字，於文字學上，難自圓其說。**First**, China's simplification focuses on phonetics approach to simplify the characters and ignor all their shape/graphs or meanings. This homophonic approach such as「后」for「後」，「余」for「餘」，「里」for「裏」，「面」for「麵」，「奸」for「姦」 etc. are colloquial-use or really wrongful-use in traditional Chinese system, but are simpler variants and pronunce same. There are no links for their meaning and use of each other at all. The original characters turn obsolete. The reality of these substitutings are reducing the lexicon of Chinese characters. This can not be justified in the field of Philology.

其次同音合併，如蒙、昷、朱、台等字，各有以做右旁而衍生之十餘字，但合併只併 10 字中 1~2 字，餘皆一仍其舊，(倘學者本此 1~2 字之檢法，同類相推，豈不文字大亂？) 故同音合併，是字不勝併，法又無規之減字法，此乃實為今日白字泛濫之始作俑者。**Second**, some simplifications replace the phonetic element of the traditional character with a simpler one or merging a character either into another one that is pronounced in the same or similar way. Also merging several characters into a newly created and simpler character (variant) attempted to define a relatively smaller set of characters for common usage than had traditionally been the case.   For example, characters with semantic/phonetic graphs - 蒙, 昷, 朱, 台 … etc, each one has ten or so characters in its group. Only merge one or two of them into other character (variant), but left majority of others untouched. Since this method is totally random, if the learners should apply the same rule of the simplified characters to others. There will be a big mess. This is another reason that people criticize mostly the simplified character system. This is also Initiator for all spread unchecked wrongly used characters in Chinese language.

　　最後符號代替，是無中生有，亦以有作無，如「開」字用草書楷化應作开即簡化，而竟再簡之作「开」(此古字原讀音為 *Yán*，今強改為 *Kāi*)，遂成符號字，如此簡而化之，真是匪夷所思，所幸再簡之字不多，否則又起一亂。**Last**, replacing the complicated components of common characters with simpler shapes or symbol - by fabricating either new radical-radical or radical-phonetic compounds. For example, according to the rule of simplification, 「開」should use regular script to write as majority of this group 門 (门), the cursive style is as「 开 」. However, only「 开 」is further simplified to「开」 (This is an ancient script, originally pronounces *Yán*, but now it arbitrarily changed to *Kāi*). It is unthinkable. Luckily, this type of simplification is rare. Otherwise, there will be another mess.

　　大陸於一九九三年國務院明令，異體文字，停止使用，簡化字總表公佈實施。The Series One Organization List of Variant Characters 第一批異體字整理表 contains 1,027 variant characters, deemed obsolete as of the final revision in 1993.   (Refer to the Government document)   PRC State Council, the Central People's Government: the Law of the People's Republic of China on the National Common Language and Characters implies simplified Chinese as the standard script, and relegates Traditional Chinese to certain aspects and purposes *Jianhuazi zong biao*簡化字總表.

「行氣玉銘」銘文
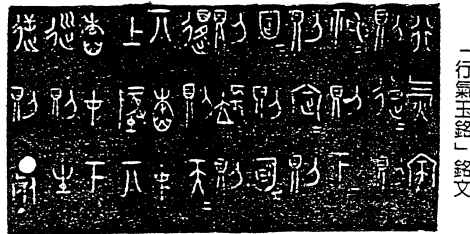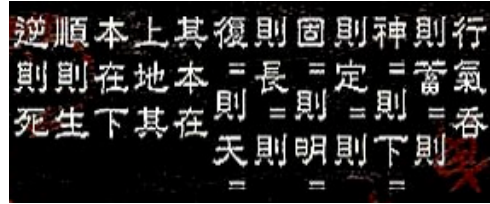
拓本　　　　　　　　　　　　　釋文

戰國「行氣玉銘」十二面稜柱狀，每面三字及符號，共四十五字。(天津博物館藏)

Column-shape Jade parcel, called *XíngQì Yù Míng*行氣玉銘, dated back to Warring States period (475~221 BC), with 12 facets, each side carved 3 characters and some facets with the symbol of repetition characters, totally 45 characters. This is a proven document for Taoist Qi Guidance 炁導引 (Pinyin: *Qì Dǎoyǐn*).

<u>附圖二</u>　Figure 2