

第三課 (C) [after L-3]

三人行，必有我師

Sān rén xíng, bì yǒu wǒ shī.

three people walk, must have my teacher

For every three people walking about, there is one who has things to teach me.

Confucius, The Analects (Classical Chinese)

Part I

甲. Set 1

名字 叫 個 老師 漢

3+3 3+3

3+2

2+8

6+0 3+7

3+11

个 师 汉

2+1

3+3

3+2

míngzi (zì)
name-character
name

jiào
be named;
be called

gè
(M)

lǎoshī
old-teacher
teacher

Hàn
(name of river)
Chinese

什麼 那 哪 這 幾 兒

2+2 3+11

3+4

3+7

3+7

3+9

2+6

么

1+2

这 几 儿

3+4

2+0

2+0

shénme
what

nà (nèi-)
that

nǎ (něi-)
which

zhè (zhèi)
this

jǐ
how many

ér (-r)
(son)

Notable radicals

	<i>meaning</i>	<i>name</i>	<i>example</i>
口	mouth; opening	kǒuzìpáng	叫, 哪
	man; person	rénzìpáng	什, 個/个
	water	sāndiǎnshuǐ	漢/汉
	an incline	yòu'ěrduō ~ páng	那
广	covering	guǎngzìpáng	麼
	movement	zǒuzhīr	這/这
	cover	bǎogài<r>	字

Notes and hints (select)

- a) 名 contains the element 夕 ‘evening’ (originally a drawing of the moon) together with the ‘mouth’ radical 口; for mnemonic purposes, think ‘moon, low in the sky at evening, so you need to call out your name to identify yourself’ – hence ‘name’.
- b) 字 zì ‘character’ contains 子 zǐ (‘child’) as phonetic; think ‘a pupil under a roof, studying characters’. (Míngzì means ‘the characters which form the name’.) Distinguish 子 zǐ from 了 le.
- c) 个, the simplified version of 個, is an old handwriting form elevated to formal status in the new simplified set. 老 (‘old’) is itself a radical (as indicated by the numerical designation, 6+0), though one with very limited incidence. Think ‘elderly person taking a rest under an awning’. For 師, think ‘teacher wearing a mortar-board, standing before a podium’. (Contrast the right-hand element of 師 with 市 shì ‘market; city’.)
- d) The rule of 5: Characters with many layers are sometimes difficult to resolve. Fortunately, for many, the ‘rule of 5’ applies. The rule of 5 (for characters) states that if the character seems to have a lot of horizontal levels, it has five! Boxes count as one layer; boxes with an internal horizontal (日) count as 2, etc. 漢 is an example; the top counts for 2, the box 1 and the lower horizontals count as 2, for a total of 5. The right-hand side of 津 is another example.

e) 麼 is simplified by letting a part of the original stand for the whole: 麼 > 么. In the traditional form, the lower right element has two slightly different variants: 麼 and 麼.

f) The radical assigned to 那 nà ‘that’ is yòu’ěrduō ‘right-ear’ (also called yòu’ěrpáng). Though it is indistinguishable in form from zuǒ’ěrduō ~ páng (seen in 陳), it has a different source: yòu’ěrduō is a combining form of 邑 ‘district’, while zuǒ’ěrduō is a combining form of 阜 ‘mound’. 哪 nǎ, the question word, has kǒuzìpáng as its radical.

g) 這’s central component has the same form as the speech radical, 言, but in 這, it functions neither as a radical nor a phonetic. (Nor, in internal position, does 言 reduce to 讠 in the simplified version.) The element on the left of 這 (sometimes printed with two dots instead of one) is a left-side version of a more complex graph, 辵 whose meaning is ‘stopping and starting’. As a radical, it goes under the name of zǒuzhīr, and appears in graphs such as 迎 yíng ‘welcome’, 進 jìn ‘enter’, 近 jìn ‘near’ and 送 sòng ‘escort’.

h) 幾 (3+9); the radical is the top left cluster of three strokes. 幾 contains 戈 gē ‘spear’, also seen in 國. 兒, originally a picture of a child with a large head, appears in compounds such as 兒子 érzi ‘son’ and 女兒 nǚ’ér ‘daughter’ and has a root meaning of ‘child’. 兒 is one source of the noun-suffix *-r* (seen in words such as nǎr ‘where’, as well as radical names such as zǒuzhīr and bǎogàir).

i) The three characters 几, 这, and 汉 (traditional 幾, 這, 漢) are the products of a process of simplification that involves substituting a simpler character for more complicated one. Thus 几 jǐ ‘a stool; bench’, with similar pronunciation but unrelated meaning, is substituted for much more complicated 幾; 文 wén ‘language’, unrelated in sound or meaning, is substituted for the right-hand part of 這, and 又 yòu ‘again’, also unrelated in sound or meaning, is substituted for the complicated right-hand part of 漢.

1. Phrases (without punctuation)

名字	漢字	老師	漢人	哪個	叫什麼
幾個	哪兒	這個	那個	三個	姓名
今天	幾月	日本	姓馬的	是誰	她姓王
明天	天津	南京	上海	昆明	北京

2. Comment-response

- 一 六個人嗎？ / 是，六個人。
- 二 叫什麼名字？ / 叫三國。
- 三 今天幾月幾日？ / 六月三日。
- 四 姓什麼？ / 姓伍。 / 伍? / 是, 伍!
- 五 一個老師嗎？ / 是，一個老師。
- 六 幾個男的？ / 三個男的，一個女的。
- 七 幾個漢字？ / 三個。
- 八 三個男的嗎？ / 不，四個。
- 九 她是誰？ / 她是她的老師。
- 十 老師是中國人嗎？ / 是，是中國廣州人。

- 十一 名字叫什麼？ / 名字叫三國。
- 十二 叫什麼名字？ / 叫李廣國！
- 十三 是哪國人？ / 是中國人。
- 十四 這是我的老師。 / 是嗎？
- 十五 四個字的名字？ / 是，她是日本人。

乙. Set 2

大 很 都 也 你 在

3+0 dà be big	3+6 hěn very	3+8, 2+8 dōu all	1+2 yě too; also	2+5 nǐ you	3+3, 1+5 zài be at
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美 英 (臺) 學 多 生

6+3	4+5	(6+8)	3+13	3+3	5+0, 1+4
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英 台 学

měi beautiful [USA]	3+5 yīng hero [England; UK]	3+2 tái platform [Taiwan etc.]	3+5 xué study; learning	duō many; much	shēng be born; pupil
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Notable radicals

	<i>meaning</i>	<i>name</i>	<i>example</i>
	an incline	yòu'ěrduō ~ páng	都
彳	a step	shuāngrénpáng	很, (得 dé)

		shuānglǐrén pair-stand-person	
艹	grass	cǎozìtóu grass-characters-head	英/英
子	child	zǐ child-character	學/学

Notes

a) the right-hand side of 很 is ‘phonetic’ (cf. 狠 hěn, 跟 gēn).

b) Despite the disparity in pronunciation, 者 zhě is, in fact, the root element of a phonetic that includes 都 dōu; cf. 煮 zhǔ ‘to boil’ and 堵 dǔ ‘to obstruct’, which show exactly the same shift in initials.

c) Although 也 yě is the same shape as the right-hand elements of 她 and 他, it has a different provenience, and given the differences in pronunciation, it cannot be considered a phonetic element. A nonsense account of 你: 人, ‘person’, plus 尔, ‘an image of the addressee (‘you’), with hair parted, a nose and eyes’.

d) 美 is a compound made up of 羊 ‘sheep; goat’ (with its stem truncated) and 大 ‘big’, and the usual ordering of its strokes (with 大 beneath truncated 羊) reflects that. 美 obeys the ‘rule of 5’ only if the top two strokes are made to count as a horizontal.

e) 英 contains 央 yāng as phonetic; the radical, cǎozìtóu, is a combining form of the graph 艹. Both 美 měi ‘beautiful’ and 英 yīng ‘hero’ are selected for the country names of Měiguó and Yīngguó both for sound and for meaning. Students have observed the incidental similarity of 英 to the shape of Britain (cǎozìtóu representing Scotland, etc.)

f) Simplification is not a new process; it has been going on since the creation of the writing system. And it continues in the traditional set. The first character of 什麼, for example, is an older simplification of 甚 that substitutes the phonetically close 十 for the more complicated original. And the 台 of 台北 is another substitution that has gained currency in the traditional font as an alternative for original 臺 (the latter containing the inner element of 周, ie 吉). Both simplifications have a long history, and have now gained acceptance in Taiwan and traditional communities.

g) More nonsense etymologies. (a) 學: ‘a child looking at a blackboard on a stand; the backboard has two x’s, each registered on both sides’. (b) 多: ‘two setting moons (夕) –

too *many*’; (c) 生 ‘be born; pupil’: ‘three horizontals represent the three stages of life – youth, maturity, old age, with the first marked (with a piě) as the time of education’.

1. Phrases

大學	大人	大國	很大	很多	都不大
也很多	不多	也不大	美人	很多	英國
台北	在那兒	在美國	你的嗎	學生	中學
在這兒	在他那兒	台南	生日	月台	昆明

2. Comment-response.

Comment

Response

一	美國人嗎？	/	不，是中國人。
二	北京在中國。	/	南京也在中國。
三	上海在哪兒？	/	上海在中國。
四	他是不是日本人？	/	不是，他是中國人。
五	漢人是中國人嗎？	/	是，漢人是中國人。
六	中國人不都是漢人。	/	中國人很多是漢人。
七	她們生在英國。	/	都是英國人嗎？
八	台北在中國嗎？	/	台北在 <u>台灣</u> 。
九	毛老師在哪兒？	/	他不在這兒。
十	他姓什麼？	/	他姓周，叫周英。
十一	她不姓白。	/	他姓林嗎？
十二	姓李的是誰？	/	姓李的是我的老師。

- 十三 姓王的是男的嗎 / 不是男的，是女的。
 十四 她姓王，是上海人。 / 姓白的也是上海人。
 十五 北大，日本學生多不多？ / 日本學生很多。
 十六 她是人大的學生。 / 人大在北京嗎？

Exercise 1

a) Practice reciting the data in the table, along the following lines:

Dì-yī, xìng Wáng, nán de, shì Nánjīng rén, Nánjīng Dàxué de lǎoshī;
 xìng Lǐ de, nǚ de, Yīngguó rén, shì Rén Dà de xuéshēng, Rén Dà zài Běijīng.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|----|----|-----------|
| (一) | 王 | 男 | 老師 | 南京 | 南京大學 (南大) |
| (二) | 李 | 女 | 學生 | 英國 | 人大 |
| (三) | 白 | 女 | 學生 | 日本 | 京大 |
| (四) | 周 | 女 | 老師 | 台北 | 台大 |
| (五) | 毛 | 男 | 學生 | 美國 | MIT |
| (六) | 林 | 女 | 老師 | 北京 | 北京大學 (北大) |

b) Using the data in the table above, practice asking and answering the following questions so that you can do the same fluently in class.

1. 姓周的是不是老師？
2. 姓林的是女的嗎？
3. 誰是北大的老師？
4. 王老師是中國人嗎？
5. 哪個人是英國學生？
6. 姓李的是日本學生嗎？
7. 周老師是南京人嗎？
8. 誰是美國人？
9. 人大在台北嗎？
10. 誰是日本學生？
11. 他們都是中國人嗎？
12. 南大的是誰？
13. 姓白的是哪個大學的？

丙. Simplified characters

1. Phrases

大国 学生 大学 英国 是吗 男的吗

中国 三个人 什么 是谁 三国 几个

老师 叫什么 在这儿 几个男的 美国人 很多吗

2. Six characters

1. 姓王的是中国人，是个南京大学的老师。南京大学也叫南大。南大是不是在南京？

2. 林老师，女的，是北京人，北京大学的老师。林老师，美国学生很多，中国学生也很多。

3. 姓李的是谁？姓李的是英国学生。是个女的。在人大。人大在北京。人大，日本学生，台湾学生，美国学生都很多。

4. 美国学生是 MIT 的。他姓毛，是个男的。他叫大为 [Dàwéi].

5. 周老师不是美国人，也不是英国人，她是台北人。台北在哪儿？在台湾。台湾是不是中国？

6. 姓白的是个女的。生在日本，是个学生，是个北京大学的学生。

Exercise 2

Write the following pinyin words in characters (either simplified or traditional); as you do so, cover up what you have already written.

dōu shì > hěn duō > xìng Zhōu > Guǎngzhōu > jiùshi > lǎoshī > jǐ ge > qī ge > něi ge >
nèi ge > nǐ de > Nán Dà > nǚde > nánde ma > Měiguó > něi guó > zài zhè > míngzi

Part II Creating new characters

Characters, as we have noted, represent words. And since words are constantly being added to spoken languages, there needs to be some way for them to be represented in the writing system. In all languages, new words can be formed from old, by processes such as extension (as in English, when ‘shuttle’ is extended from ‘weaving tool’ to ‘reusable spacecraft’), compounding (‘spaceship’), coinage (‘blooper’), borrowing (‘sputnik’), or sound symbolism (‘screech; blip’). In alphabetic languages, these can easily be represented in writing. But in logographic scripts, the process is more contrived. In Chinese, where new characters are needed, they are almost always formed on phonosemantic principles: an element chosen for suitable sound is combined with a radical of appropriate meaning. We can illustrate from the graphic representation of two types of words: onomatopoeia and terms for chemical elements in the periodic table.

1. *Representing sounds – onomatopoeia.*

A good source for onomatopoeia is *manga* style comics. [Incidentally, the word *manga* is a Japanese rendition of the Chinese màn huà ‘comic; cartoon (unrestrained-drawing)’.] The list below contains a selection of sounds, together with their graphic representations, found in two comics published in Hong Kong in the late 20th century. Though the comics are written in Mandarin, the language – and particularly the onomatopoeic expressions – may have been influenced by Cantonese, so some Chinese speakers may find items on the list strange or non-standard. Northerners, for example, might be more prone to use the expression pāchā (啪嚓) for ‘splash’ (as well as ‘crash’) than pāle. But the point is that comics represent not only a genre in which the written language converges on the spoken, but one that is less subject to the usual prescriptions and constraints associated with writing and publication. Authors of comics (particularly in a place like Hong Kong in the late 90s) are free – or freer – to create their own words, and use the resources of the written language to represent them. The fact that many of the graphs used to represent sounds in these comics are not found in dictionaries (nor on word processors) shows how productive the process of character formation is.

As befits the genre of anime, onomatopoeia are usually drawn in highly stylized animated graphs whose very size and shape adds to the effect. All graphs are formed on the phonosemantic model, with the phonetic element providing a conventionalized representation of the sound and a radical element classifying it as ‘conversational’ or ‘onomatopoeic’. The radical element is consistently the ‘mouth’ radical, 口. (Boxes 嘞 appear where a version of the character with 口 is unavailable in the standard character font; in some cases, the tone of the onomatopoeic graph may vary with speaker.)

<i>graph</i>	<i>phonetic element</i>	<i>equivalent English noise, or event</i>
啪 pā	拍 pāi	bang
啪嘞 pāle	拍, 勒 pāi, lè	exploding noise
嚓 cā	察 chá	screech
唧 jī	即 jī	spurt
彭 pēng	彭 péng	popping noise
叮 dīng	丁 dīng	light metallic noise; ping
噹 dāng	當 dāng	heavy metallic noise; bong
嘞 lóng	隆 lóng	reverberating noise; boing;
boom		
嘞 fū	伏 fú	swishing noise
嘞 shā	夏 xià	hissing or whizzing noise
嘞 kǎ	卡 kǎ	enormous crashing noise
破 bō	波 bō	heavy downpour hitting the ground

2. Atomic elements

Characters also have to be created for more formal genres of writing. The periodic table of elements, for example, contains names of elements long known to Chinese science, such as mercury, 汞 gǒng, and lead, 鉛 yán. But there are also many more recently discovered elements for which names have had to be provided. Both are formed on the traditional pattern of phonetic and radical. Below, the first set (all gasses) are formed with phonetic elements combined with the gas radical (气); the second set (all metals) are formed with the metal radical (金), and the third set (all stony or sandy elements) are formed with the stone radical (石).

	<i>graph</i>	<i>phonetic</i>	<i>radical</i>
Helium	氦 hài	亥 hài	气 gas
Neon	氖 nǎi	乃 nǎi	气 gas
Argon	氩 yà	亞 yà	气 gas
Thorium	釷 tǔ	土 tǔ	金 metal
Palladium	鎳 pú	業 pú	金 metal
Uranium	鈾 yóu	由 yóu	金 metal
Silicon	硅 guī	圭 guī	石 stone
Phosphorus	磷 lín	鄰 lín	石 stone
Sulphur	硫 liú	cf. 流 liú	石 stone

Notice that, unlike the graphs for onomatopoeia, those for the elements are formed with complete regularity so that a reader unfamiliar with the name of a particular element can read off the pronunciation in terms of a common word with which s/he is sure to be familiar. The phonosemantic principle of character construction not only reduces the number of graphic elements needed to write the language, but it also provides phonetic cues for rare words or words only encountered in written language.

Note that while the compound construction of characters may be useful for native speakers encountering highly specialized words in written texts, or for language learners trying to find useful connections between characters that will allow them to retain them, the way a character is, or has been, constructed is unlikely to bear directly on the process of reading. Regardless of how they came to have their current (or earlier) form, characters are processed as words or parts of words, and even if the eye occasionally comes to rest on a character and sees the aptness of its form, such actions are – with the possible exception of certain kinds of poetry – a lapse from reading rather than part of the process.

