

# TYP@GRAPHY

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## Typography in Publication Design

### Chinese Typography Study

Training for cultural awareness and sustainability

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to present the unique quality of Chinese letterforms & characters, and to discuss our approach of teaching Chinese typography as a tool of nurturing cultural awareness and sustainability. Through in-depth research of traditional literature, study the philosophy from past, examine the visual symbols and tangible artifacts in the surrounding at present-day to enable students' to translate and transform the materials into experimental typographic designs for modern communication. We believed that this is a good method for our future creative talents to engage with traditional value and essence sustainability through typography design practice.

*Key words: cultural awareness, Chinese aesthetics, letterform appreciation, iconic architectural elements, pictogram, philosophy, cultural identity*

#### 1. Introduction

Movable types have contributed a major way of communication since the invention of printing. Today, the existence of digital media has drove typography design to a formulaic nature. For Chinese typography, the unique human philosophy contained in writing system enriched our life and soul since it's developed by ancestors and scholars. However, the reliance of digital media made this distinctive philosophy being disregarded by many design students in Hong Kong.

Since ancient time, human civilization reflected and recorded cognition towards their living environment by direct imitation to produce imagery or drawings, for example cave paintings, monumental carving and primitive written symbols. However the direct copying of objects and forms had its limitation when it came to abstract association of ideologies. During civilization development, languages were formulated and gradually migrated into two different streams: one headed to the direction replacing pictographs with phonetic system all together. Pictographs were soon replaced by alphabets; which the meaning of

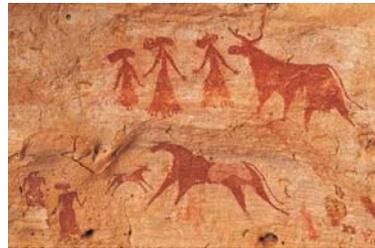
words were constructed by combinations of different sound, later developed into language system with enormous amount of words. Another different direction was extension from pictograph with phonetic component and the additional association from pictographs. The former was well adopted by western world to become roman alphabets whereas the latter was Chinese characters for Chinese culture.

AaBbCcDdEeFfGg 馬魚日月江河鯉鮭從相武信上下凹凸

Chinese typography constituted a major way of communication for literature and culture sustain. Unlike roman alphabets, the meaning of Chinese characters comes with the unique combination of ancestor's artifacts, activities, space and sounds in daily life. Even though the representation of Chinese letterforms changed according to human civilization, this unique way of writing system (漢字 Kanzi) still transmit in today's Chinese characters since oracle bone script been found.



Horse 馬



Herd 牧

Despite the changes and amendment made along the rise and fall of dynasties, Chinese written language is basically retained with the same ancient artifacts and literature and still in used today. In some sense, we are communicating with our ancestors.



In this paper we discuss the nature and characteristics of Chinese writing system with the approach of training aims to revitalize this cultural philosophy on contemporary Chinese typography.

## 2. Design Principles of Chinese Character

### 2.1 Traditional Chinese culture in modern design context

Chinese arts and crafts development reached its peak as early as Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - 8 A.D.). Lots of documents have been found such as the *Kaogong ji* 考工記<sup>(1)</sup> that illustrated and stated rules and dimensions for architecture and decorative ornaments. These information was however more inclined to the technical aspects of construction and production rather than the design principles and thinking in a modern context.



Pages extract from *Kaogong ji* 考工記

The closest attempt to design theory and thinking seems to be embedded in the deepest roots of Chinese culture when our ancestors tried to create the primitive form of communication, the Chinese letterforms. This can be traced in the six categories of Chinese Characters, the 'liùshū 六書'.

## 2.2 Generation of Chinese characters

Chinese characters evolved basically from pictographs that represent objects, actions, events and sounds since 5000BC. This is distinctive from roman alphabets which the meaning of words comes from a combination of alphabets but not from one single alphabet.

Every Chinese character has its own meaning, or even more than one. Various types of character were first classified systematically in Han Dynasty, around 100 AD by the Chinese linguist Xu Shen 許慎, whose etymological dictionary 'Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters, Shuowen Jiezi, 說文解字' divides the script into six categories, the 'liùshū'.

1. Pictographs (象形字 xiàngxíngzì)
2. Pictophonetic compounds (形聲字, Xíngshēngzì)
3. Indicative Characters / Ideograph (指事字, zhǐshìzì)
4. Associative Characters / Logical aggregates (會意字, Huìyìzì)

5. Associate Transformation (轉注字, Zhuǎnzhùzì)

6. Borrowing (假借字, Jiǎjièzì)

We have approximately over 60,000 Chinese characters. Although some strokes were simplified or lost occasionally in the past, Chinese characters are basically is in its stable structure since Qin Dynasty. <sup>(2)</sup>

The 6 categories of Chinese Character (‘liùshū’) mention here is an extreme important knowledge for Chinese for maximizing our communication possibility, to serve as guideline for new letterform creation in coherent logic; this can be discussed as similar as western design principles.

### 3. Chinese Typography Training

Today, we are constantly bombarded by excessive visual excitement and information. In the process of coding and decoding visual message, if the origin of Chinese letterform can be well preserved, one can reveal the purest form of visual dialogue for our next generation.

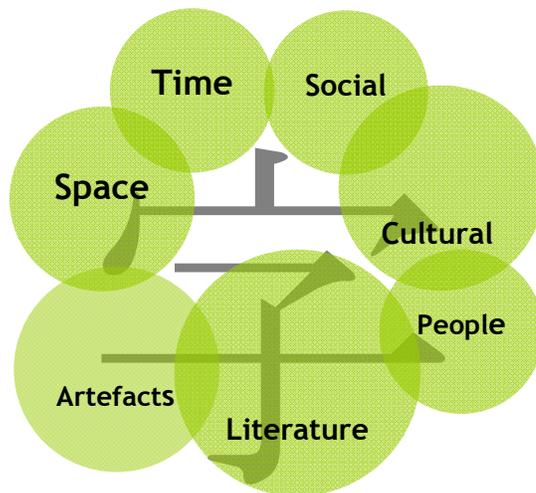
“Communication depends on common principles -assumptions and meanings, purpose and values - but common meanings can be established only by communication and agreement” (Richard McKeon, 1998).

#### 3.1 The consequence of traditional and modern Chinese characters

Although the unique combination of symbolic marks still exists in modern Chinese letterform, a major problem is modern fonts design concentrate very much on modification of geometrical shapes to relatively simple structure for the needs of digital media. Hence, we see the large gap between the combination of symbolic marks and cultural meanings obtained within. In order to sustain the unique literate and cultural traditions, we believe the co-existing of symbolic marks and geometrical structure should not be overlooked.

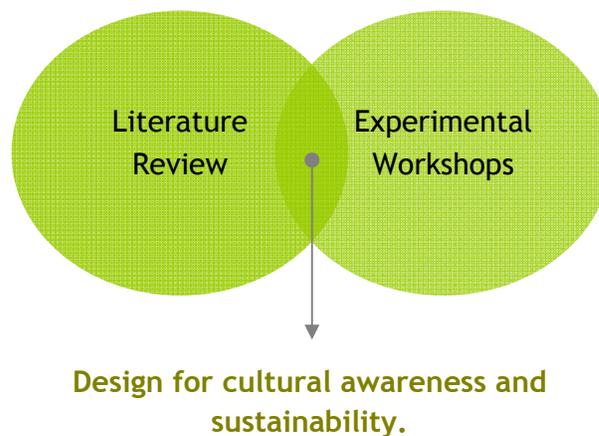
Pictogram 象形文字	Oracle Bone script 甲骨文	Bronze script 金文	Seal script 篆書	Clerical script 隸書	Regular script 楷書	Cursive script 草書	Movable type 活字	Digital font 電子字
								

Same as many western typography design, our practical guide to Chinese typography training is a combination of origin and new, involved literature review and experimental workshops. Along with our four years coaching experience gone through with the application and interpretation of philosophical notion of Chinese calligraphy emerged with theoretical, aesthetic and contextual approaches.



### 3.2 Cultural sustainability

Chinese letterform composed of symbolic marks for linguistic and visual communication. It is a significant medium to connect Chinese culture and social ideologies. In this regard, we obtain Chinese typography as perfect channel to facilitate student's creativity as well as literature and cultural knowledge.



### 3.3 Teaching and learning strategy

Our training method consist two main stages:

#### 3.3.1 Literature review

It is our essential stage to buildup theoretical and methodological brought from ancient Chinese intellects, a practical based training leading students to translate and transform the Chinese calligraphy philosophy into new visual dimensions.

#### 3.3.2 Experimental workshops

Another approach to learn typography is to forget about typography. By employing experimental graphic treatments, materials and imagery, we hope to further enhanced audience's emotional and spiritual responds in reading. Through serious of experimental workshops, we facilitate students to explore and experiment new visual codes.

Through our practice-based research project fused with theory and medium in all kinds, we established new aesthetic perspective and approach that manifests the fusion of cultural and functional qualities for contemporary Chinese typography design. Eventually, increase the awareness of cultural sustainability.



To demonstrate the idea how we embrace literature and cultural knowledge as well as facilitating students' Chinese typography creativity, our learning contents and work examples will be further discussed. Student's examples will be show to demonstrate our academic achievements including the awarded projects in national competition.

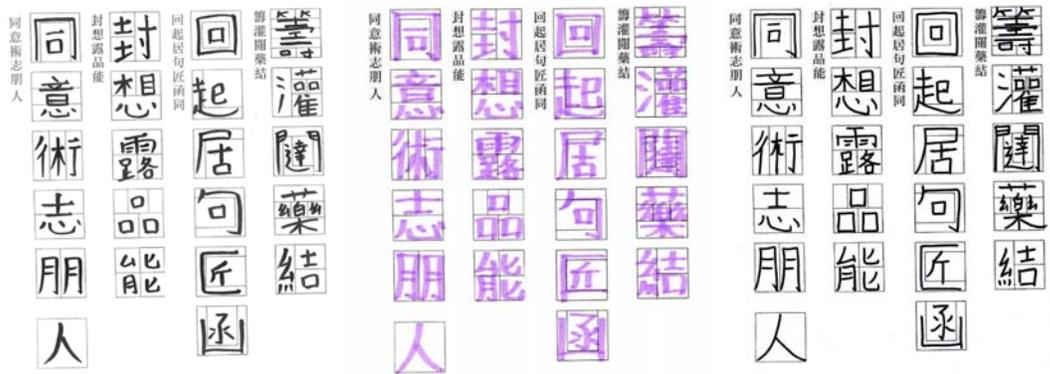
### 3.4 Learning Contents

#### 3.4.1 Fundamental Principles of Chinese Letterform

Chinese calligraphy is an expression of innermost spirit of one's well-being. Calligraphy appreciation enriches viewers experience through acknowledge of one's expressive

strokes, shapes and structure. In the past, painter and calligraphers has a common practice to developed skills begun by imitating works from great masters.

The exercise shown here was intended to revisit, rethink and embrace the very fundamental principles of Chinese writing system. By respecting the origin to establish new forms, and be free to give personality to that form.



**Exercise:** Calligraphy in practice

**Knowledge:** principles of writing order, 8 strokes theory, 34 grid systems, origin of Chinese calligraphy, personality, express, control.

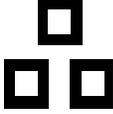
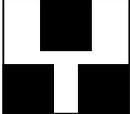
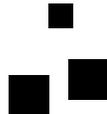
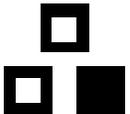
**Technique:** structure, strokes, form, shapes, and grid.

**Learning process:** Origin

### 3.4.2 Letterform and Chinese Philosophy

Chinese Yin-yang philosophy used to describe how polar opposites or seemingly contrary forces are interconnected and interdependent in the natural world, and how they give rise to each other in turn. The Yin-yang concept is not opposing force, but complementary opposites that interact within a greater whole, as part of a dynamic system of equilibrium. Chinese typography consists of Yin-yang philosophy within. Elements of each letterform are in placed within a grid system of 34 different formats. Everything is organized in a right position of perfect balance.

Yin-yan	Examples of Chinese letterform				
	人	朋	會	典	乾

Symmetrical Balance			Asymmetrical balance			
						
Stability Visible & invisible			Spacing Fullness and emptiness		Balance and sense of space	Balance and hierarchy

In this content, students were asked to learn historical knowledge of Chinese calligraphy and principles of Chinese letterform design. Through extensive exploration and experiments to develop, translate and transform the principles into modern typography design. The training is to nurture the appreciation of aesthetic quality of Chinese letterform.

### 3.4.3 Simplified type strokes and forms

Although there are straight structure and format for standard characters, designers still have flexibility during actually implementation of Chinese characters (Junior school teachers may disagree with this). Since Chinese characters are the graphic representation of what we see in real world, there is no absolute right or wrong composition of letterform. In fact the development of script has reflect this flexibility: pictographs → metal script → seal script → clerical script → regular script, not to mention the drastic change from Traditional Chinese to Simplified.

Letter strokes and composition are continuously morphing and altering over time. Historically, it is a visual game which artists play around with the forms and strokes for visual interest such as 黃金萬兩, 招財進寶, 唯吾知足. Today, these phrases are still in use in our ordinary life such as paper cut, red banners for blessing; embroidery, furniture and architecture for decoration... So, almost every character has its own meaning or a story to tell.

The following examples demonstrated how Chinese characters can be read as graphic forms with an intentional to remove strokes and emerge two or more forms together to become new composition.



Viewers are amused by the tricks, and enjoy the process of reading and decoding the design. And we believed that this can be a good appetizer for students to start off the feast of Chinese Typography.

For this content, students were asked to play with their own Chinese names by simplifying strokes and forms. They may find it confusing in the beginning but soon discover the fun of “being wrong”. Strokes were removed deliberately but the principle is that the characters could still be read and be understood. The process includes reduce strokes → add weight → use counter space → align grid → create style.

The experimental exercises show below demonstrated how students examine the equilibrium philosophy with strokes from Chinese name. Through practicing the principles as first step, several techniques were employed (Diagram 1-5). Next, students were asked to come up with a suitable idiom or phrase that can well express the visual quality from previous design, finally translate and transform the visual approach and ordinary letterform to new image structure (Diagram 6).



**Exercise:** Type structure

**Knowledge:** structure, strokes, grid, form, shapes, space, yin-yang philosophy.

**Technique:** eliminate elements, graphic treatment, Visible & invisible space, positive & negative association, counter space, form and deform, distortion, grouping, illusion, 簡化與判讀, positive and negative space, fullness and emptiness, visual balance in strokes, counter-space, the subtle interchangeable black and white marks

**Learning process:** Origin > Translate > Transform

朝 琴 州 華 志 業 黎 詩  
 黎 詩 詩 阿 阿 阿 阿 阿 阿

尊  
 道

### 3.4.4 Characteristics from materials

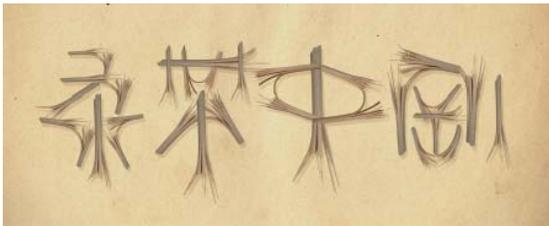
Chinese characters are pictogram compose with symbolic marks of artifacts to become the foundation of our culture, however people today are often ignore the beauty and stories behind. The beauty of such simple geometrical form revealed the culture, activities, space, sound or motion of daily life at the time. Each letterform build within a grid contained a story, a connotation or more. If Chinese characters are originally invented by our ancestor with an instinct to be survive, why can't we create typography from ignoring everything about typography?

Psychologists suggested that human being is capable of internally organizing and representing aspects of his environment, and this representation or *map* is subject to continuous change and revision. Each time this cognitive map is changed or reinforced that can be said to have 'learned'. (Kerry J. McGarry, 1981).

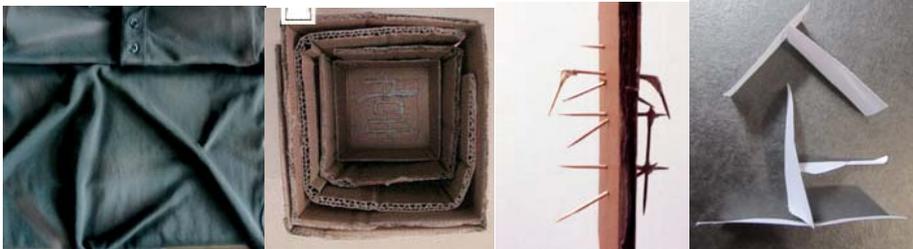
Our following exercise requires students to examine the properties of various materials and explore the possibility to create Chinese characters which convey message in both visual and language. Through the assignments, students were asked to keep repeat testing by manipulating materials.

Our workshop for this particular topic consists of two stages:

1. By playing with physical materials to examine and explore the possible appearances or performance
2. Observe to discover the human physiological reaction against the experimental work



Softness within hardness explores the physical property of bamboo stick 剛中帶柔



Cloth 衣, surround 圍, penetrate 穿, stand 企,



Rise 起, transparent 透, roll 卷

The above works demonstrated our process to obtain human physiological reaction through materials. The collected information and experiments such as textual elements or visual appearance will be transformed and developed into typography that can convey a message with physiological response.

**Exercise:** Play with materials

**Experiments:** materials, texture, objects, etc.

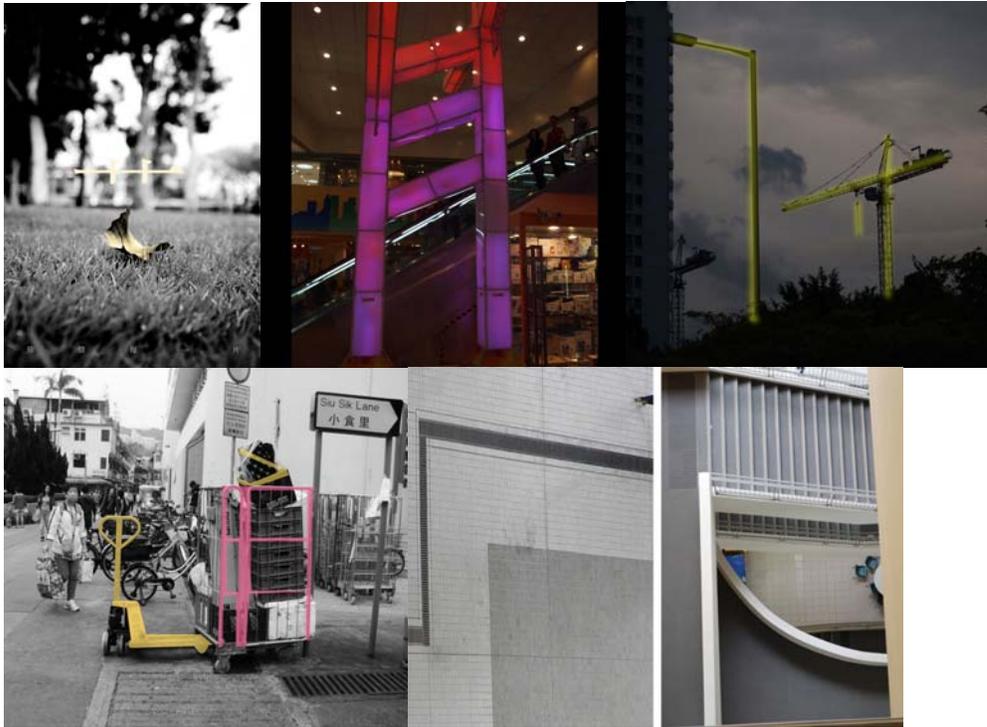
**Techniques:** flat laying, top-up, layering, reduce/destroy, add on or attach, transparent, marks or scare, positive & negative space, lighting & shadow, 2D or 3D, physical & chemical reaction, interaction, alternation, etc.

**Learning process:** Explore > Experiment

### 3.4.5 Artefacts

This is another experimental workshop attempted to challenge the functional aspect of letterforms. If Chinese characters concealed imagery of artefacts for functional communication for humane society, we doubted if this communication still serve effectively? Would this be a communication gap between ancient time and modern world? Can this problem be fixed by rediscovering the elements consisted in our present time?





In this exercise, students were asked to discover their own letterform story through image capture. Students were asked to capture the expressive cultural artefacts or physical environment, with those elements found from existing place and time, a contemporary letterform is possibly formulated.

**Exercise:** Type finding

**Exploration:** cultural artifacts, icon, architecture, humanity, society.

**Technique:** photography, discover, observation.

**Learning process:** Explore > Experiment

#### 4. Type design inspired by 'liùshū'

##### 4.1. Pictographic Characters (象形字 xiàngxíngzì): Strokes and structure VS iconic elements and symbols

Pictograph, also known as pictogram to convey its meaning through pictorial illustration of a physical object. The forms of these Chinese characters can be linked and associated directly to the physical objects such as Horse, Fish, Sun and Moon (馬魚日月).



As highly simplified graphic representation of objects, motion and stories, a scene of drama all frozen into a still frame, all these dialogue, props, lights and textures are condensed into graphic strokes. The beauty of culture is locked into the visual codes of each letterform. When we believe that Chinese characters are frozen images of drama/stories, the best way to unfreeze them is by placing them back to the physical/material world. There has no necessity to create additional visual elements if they are already out there in the real world. Perhaps all we have to do is to re-discover them again.

In this exercise, students were asked to create their typeface through captured image of iconic structures and cultural artifacts of architecture, temples, street scenes, Chinese restaurant, local tea shops, road signs, ritual materials, and any thing relates to our heritage and culture. Students will then ask to identify the patterns and images until the basic visual elements can be revealed. A new letterform will be formulated and developed with those elements they found. Students were also encourage to study the pictorial origins and stories of Chinese characters, experiment to decode all underlining meanings, almost like an archaeologist interpreting the prehistoric world of life with unearthed fossils.



(Left to Right) Light 光, Hole 洞, Bamboo Scaffolding 竹棚

**Light 光:** It depicted the simplest form of light beam that created the strokes radiated from the center point.

**Hole 洞:** There had no stroke in the word. The form was generated with layers of corrugated boards that created the depth of a hole.

**Bamboo Scaffolding 竹棚:** The student studied thoroughly the materials and structure that construct the unique characteristics of the bamboo scaffolding. All elements were reduced to their basic forms such as the bamboo sticks, tying strings, broken pieces, dirt and objects around the building site. Viewers could associate the visual structure of the typeface with the context of the design immediately.



(Left) visual elements (Right) Temple 廟宇

**Temple 廟宇:** The student took a lot of photos at an old temple to grasp the detail of the ancient architectural style of Chinese buildings such as censer, stone carving lion and pagodas that reflected not only the life style of ordinary people, but also their religious beliefs. With these unique visual elements, student was able to formulate the letterform of primitive, simplicity of rich textural quality typography.

#### 4.2 Indicative Characters / Ideograph (指事字, zh shizi)

The indicative characters are used to express things that are abstract in meaning. They may be purely abstract symbols that indicate directions, or symbols will be added to pictographic characters to indicate abstract nature of matters. Examples are Chinese words indicating above, beneath, concave and convex. (上下凹凸)

In this content, students will have to experiment with different materials with textual properties, conditions and mood to see how they can be connected to represent the meaning of Chinese characters. In the history of Chinese painting, there is a famous saying of “One will be enlightened in inner-self if one can learn from the greater nature in one’s surrounding.”<sup>(3)</sup> It is to get rid of the computer table and go out to discover the origin and beauty of nature.

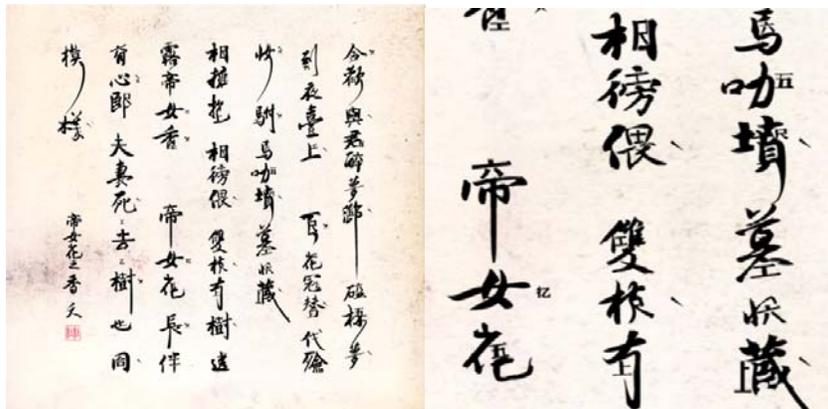


(Left to Right) Trapped 困, Diffuse 化, Concave 凹, look 看

#### 4.3 Pictophonetic compounds (形聲字, Xíngshēngzì):

Another category of character is a pictophonetic compound, which is to have one component to indicate the type or meaning of word, named as radical, while the other component to indicate the pronunciation of the word. (江河鯉鮭) This increases largely the possible combination of words, and nearly 90% of Chinese words used nowadays are created as pictophonetic compounds. This category can sometimes indicate the relationship between words with the same radical, and makes classification of characters very efficient.

he si yi shang che gong fan liu wu yi shang che  
 合 四 一 上 尺 工 凡 六 五 亿 仕 伋  
 so la ti do re mi fa so la ti do re



Here is an interesting student's experimental work for lyrics design of Chinese Opera (Cantonese Opera). Traditional Chinese music notes is embedded into the lyrics characters. Music notes become the strokes of the letterform, and the length and distance between characters indicate the rhythm of the song. The design integrates the sounds

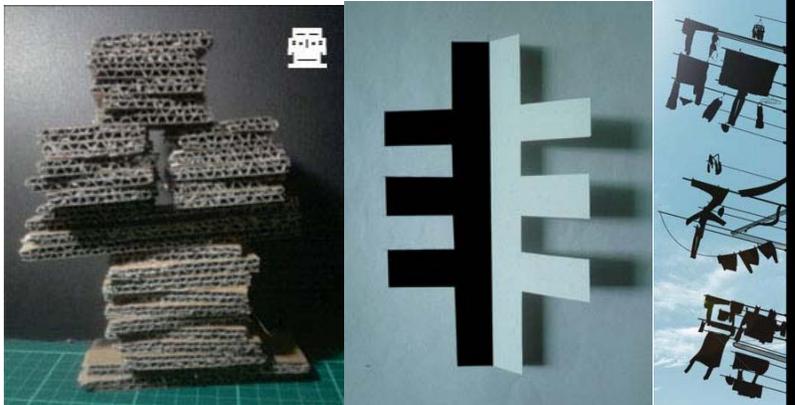
with the meaning of characters, and reveals the aesthetics of traditional Chinese calligraphy.

#### 4.4 Associative Characters / Logical aggregates (會意字, Huiyizi)

Pictograph is a very effective medium of communication for indicating physical objects and visual materials, but it has its own limitation when comes to abstract concepts and ideologies. Instead of switching completely phonetic system, our ancestors created flexible manipulation of the formation of letterforms so as to enrich the complexity of Chinese and allow broad dimensions of communication. To express abstract concepts, they created the associative characters that put two or more pictographic characters together to describe an action, or something abstract. (從相武信明) For example the character “illuminate” is the combination of two pictographs of sun and moon, which are obviously the biggest illuminating objects at that time.



The character ‘从’ is the pictographs of one man after another showing the meaning of follow / by.



(Left to Right) Stack 壘, Wrong 非, Sun-drying of Clothes 晾衫體

The students' works above show the creativity of making logical aggregates through objects and letterforms.

**Stack 壘:** by piling up a stack of corrugated boards, the form and appearance of the material associate the image with the meaning of the word ‘stack’.

**Wrong 非:** The symmetric image of the character is created by a strong contrast of 'black & white' colour. This also depicts the meaning of 'right & wrong' carried by the Chinese character. (是非黑白)

**Sun drying of clothes 晾衫體:** The design captures very common street scenery in Hong Kong where people dry their laundry outside public estates. The clothes form the shape of Chinese characters. Viewers can understand the meaning of the words even they do not understand the Chinese words.

## 5. Pictogram with Chinese Aesthetics and Chinese Philosophy

Traditional Chinese intellectuals enrich one's literate spirit through practicing calligraphy and painting. It is an expression of innermost beauty of one's integral soul of balanced lifestyle. Calligraphy enriches the intellectual capacity of viewers through appreciation of expressive quality of strokes, shapes and structure that extends to acknowledgement of one's well being.

Chinese painters spent their life to reveal their spirit and emotion through the use of ink, washes and impressionistic brushstrokes. Both components of black and white shared the same level of importance. Realism is never their aim, and sometimes the negative space is the message. Like landscape painting, masters drew their landscape freely with changeable perspectives, and white space is used to suggest distance. "The nature is an entity as ONE, and then separated into wind, rain and four seasons. The brightness and darkness, high and low, close by and far away, the peak of imitation is between alike and unlike." (Shi Tao, 1642-1718) <sup>(4)</sup> The surrealistic and impressionistic nature of Chinese arts provides a perfect laboratory for student's exploration of Chinese typography.

Below example shows how Chinese calligraphy reflects Chinese philosophy of yin-yang - positive & negative, fullness & emptiness to works hand in hand with another significant art form carried from Chinese painting. Through the necessary process from studying literature and ideologies of the ancient time, he attempted to extract and translate those beliefs and principles into graphic rules and visual principles. The exercise offered students a good opportunity to test extensively if the rules and principles are versatile and applicable.



(Left) Typographic poster of a Chinese poem (Right) Traditional Chinese Landscape Painting

It is human instinct to gain knowledge from the past for the needs of improvement. When we learn that *iùshū* is the traditional ways of creating meaningful and comprehensive characters, we start to think that maybe we can employ similar principles to create new characters for things that do not exist in the past. Or maybe we can take advantage of the constructional nature of Chinese character to create new letterforms through imagination. For words or objects with more than one meaning, or with ambiguous meaning, they will lead to subjective interpretation. (Paul Rand, 1985) Nowadays young generation is so used to the 'Martian language' online which is a new language based on traditional Chinese. The principle of creating that language is amazingly similar to those developed from *liùshū*. A good example is the borrowing of a long-term unused character 囧 for a helpless facial expression. Seemingly, the principle of character creation developed over long period of time is already embedded in our DNA and influence every move we make.

In the last session, we are going to present our student's contributions on typography design with their enthusiasm on cultural phenomenon. The essential and efficiency for adapting typography principles into contemporary of representation were successfully demonstrated.



**Night Street:** With highly developed and sophisticated transport network in Hong Kong, paved highways and roads were built to serve the needs of busy local economy 24 hours a day. No other place would witness this unique energetic transportation, bustling bridges and highway nightlife on earth. Street lamps and vehicle lights mark the night and become the energetic strokes that reveal the scenic impression of a cosmopolitan city.

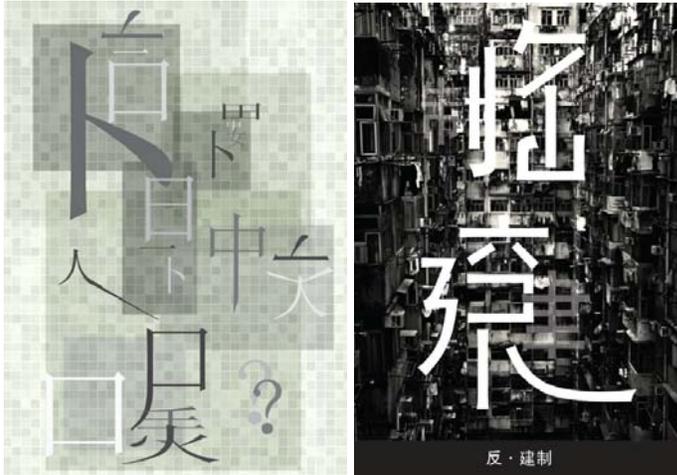


(Left) Joss paper 陰司紙. (Right) Awful Taoist incantation 鬼劃符

**Joss paper 陰司紙:** Paper offering is a common tradition in Hong Kong during funerals, festivals and special occasions to ensure the well being of the deceased and ancestor. Joss paper, also known as ghost money, a traditional handmade paper product, which is decorated with seals, stamps, engraved designs or other motifs. The type was created by the rich texture and quality of the ritual paper products with visual elements interacting with original strokes to unfold this cultural distinctiveness in a contemporary approach.

**Awful Taoist incantation 鬼劃符:** The original meaning of the phrase means poor works of calligraphy that is difficult to read and understand. The design employs the traditional

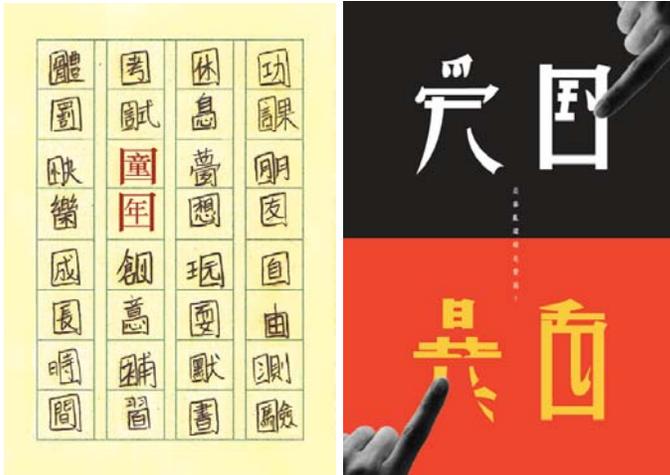
symbol of incantation and combines it with new online languages used by youngster nowadays. This is a good example showing the potential of bringing new life to our tradition especially when we know that we are sharing the common language with our ancestors.



(Left) Chinese Input Method 倉頡輸入法 (Right) Rock'N roll  
against the organizational system 搖滾反建制

**Chinese Input Method 倉頡輸入法:** In modern digital world, unlike using roman alphabets, Chinese have to type in characters with different input methods (Cangjie, Pinyin, Jianyi) They are dictated by the keyboard format and the graphic form of characters, both of which are unrelated to the original meaning of the characters. This design challenges the idea by creating the letterforms with keyboard radicals, and the results are semi-readable, between alike and unlike.

**Rock'N roll against the organizational system 搖滾反建制:** All Chinese characters are the results of different composition with 8 basic strokes. This provides the possibility to decompose and recompose the strokes to generate new letterforms. This design decomposes the strokes of the words 'organizational system' and recomposed into 'Rock & Roll' in Chinese, so as to demonstrate the conflicts between the two forces.



(Left) Suppression in Childhood 童年困擾 (Right) Fourth of June 是愛國還是暴亂

**Suppression in Childhood 童年困擾:** The big rectangular shape in Chinese character always conveys the meaning of trap, surround and block. The design employs this symbol as a metaphor of suppression in childhood where all letters written by the child is surrounded and blocked, no matter they are about study, games, toys, friends, examination, dreams, and etc.

**Fourth of June 是愛國還是暴亂:** The design makes good use of the characteristic of Chinese characters that the combination of strokes is quite flexible and sometimes could be quite ambiguous. The words of ‘Six’ and ‘Four’ are mixed with ‘Patriotism’ and ‘Riot’ intentionally to post a question “Is 4th of June an patriotic action or a riot?”

## 6. Conclusion

If we see typography as a powerful tool of visual communication, the unique visual quality of Chinese typography could definitely empower the creativity of designers, and enrich the communicative value of text. Typography can do a lot more than just providing a comfortable and legible platform for message delivery. By creative manipulation of Chinese character, viewers can firstly look at the visuals at textual material, and then look through the visuals to discover the underlying concepts embedded inside with the clever correlation with culture and information. It can prepare readers by setting the right context and atmosphere, and enhance the meaning and impact of message.

We have described our complete approach for Chinese typography training. Our philosophy of Chinese typography training has been proven effective to facilitate heritage concept and necessary information in typography design. Image and text are the two major

elements in visual communication. For Chinese typography, letterform composes both elements in an entity. With this unique communication quality, Chinese typography is a perfect medium to bridge the traditional Chinese cultural to the modern world of communication. Although it is no easy task for young generation to understand the knowledge in full, with our enthusiastic to embrace heritage and creativity into Chinese typography, students gradually develop and grow themselves from aesthetic appreciation and eventually sustain the cultural identity for Hong Kong.



#### Footnotes:

1. *Kaogong ji* 考工記, sometimes translated as *Book of Diverse Crafts*, is a classic work on science and technology in Ancient China, compiled towards the end of the Spring and Autumn Period.
2. Being pictographs, the graphic forms of characters are good for story telling and readers can “guess” the meaning of words by simply looking into the graphic forms. However Simplified Chinese Style drastically reduced total number of characters by combining words of similar pronunciation, and simplified the letterform by removing strokes, but the characters lost the quality of storytelling because they are not longer pictographs.
3. 外师造化, 中得心源 (唐代 張璪)
4. 天地渾融一氣, 再分風雨四時。明暗高低遠近, 不似之似似之。 (石濤 一畫論, 1642-1718)

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