

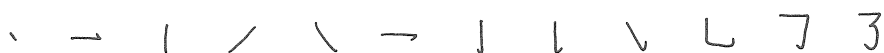
INTRODUCTION TO THE CHINESE LANGUAGE

I. SCRIPT AND TRANSLITERATION

1. Characters

In this primer we use only the modern simplified characters, since these have now been officially adopted not only in the People's Republic of China but also in Singapore.

The characters of the Chinese script were originally painted with a brush. Each of the following parts of a character is considered to be one brush stroke:



Here are some examples of characters, with their respective numbers of brush strokes:

一	七	力	上	也	计	边	限	商
1	2	2	3	3	4	5	8	11

In the *Index* all characters occurring in the primer are ordered according to the *total number of strokes* (with the numbers of the word lists in which they appear displayed on their right). By scrutinizing some of these, the reader will soon be able to determine the number of strokes in any character, perhaps with an initial error of one stroke more or less.

This method of arranging the characters is practicable here merely because of the limited number of characters in our lists. Ordinarily, to 'look up' a character in a Chinese-English dictionary, when the corresponding spoken sound is unknown, one determines first its *radical* or *fundamental part*. Characters with the same radical are then listed according to the number of *additional strokes* needed to build up the entire character. There are just over 200 recognized radicals.

In a number of cases the radical is the left-hand component of the character. For example, the characters

论 代 阶 没 性 过 换 行 线

have the radicals:

讠	亻	阝	冫	亻	辶	扌	彳	纟
(10)	(21)	(33)	(40)	(41)	(47)	(55)	(62)	(77)