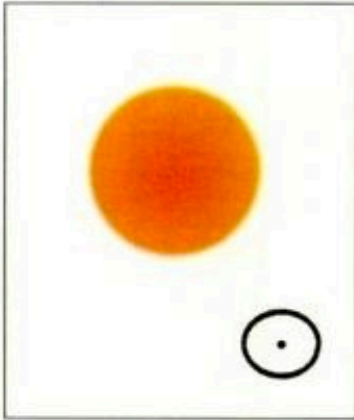
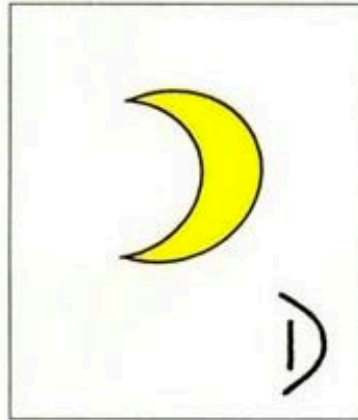


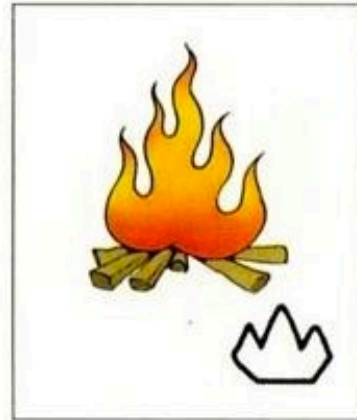
Introduction To Chinese Writing



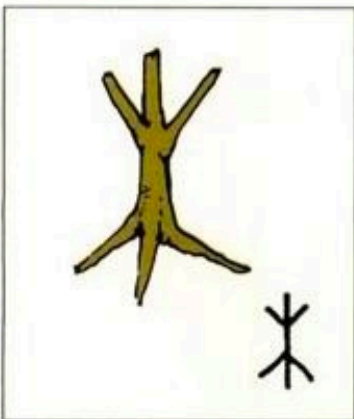
rì
日



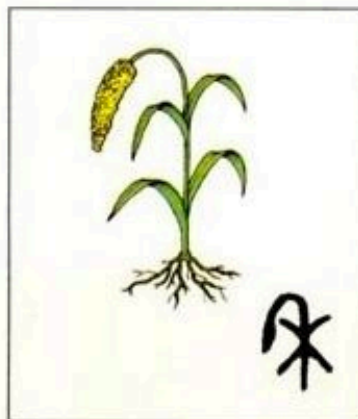
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月



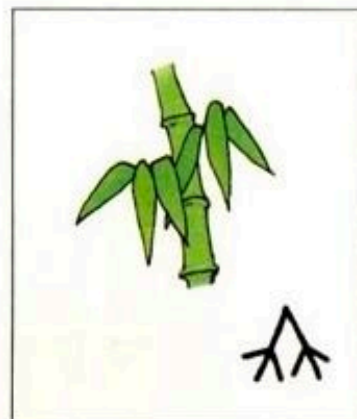
huǒ
火



mù
木



hé
禾



zhú

Rowayton Rocks Reading: *The Cricket In Times Square*

Ancient Chinese Writing

Chinese was the first written East Asian language. The earliest evidence of Ancient Chinese writing dates back to the early 20th century B.C.E. (over 4,000 years ago) and was found on cattle bones and turtle shells, which were unearthed in China. Priests or holy men used the bones to tell future events. The bones or shells were inscribed with both a positive and negative outcome and then heated over fire until cracks appeared. Depending on where the cracks were made, the future was told. Hundreds of thousands of these “oracle bones” have been uncovered in China. They are inscribed with future topics such as, the weather, would a baby be a boy or a girl, battles and health issues.

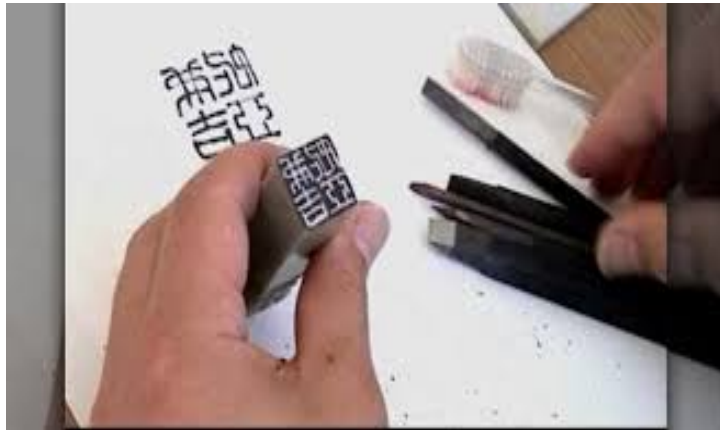
Evolution of Chinese Writing

Chinese writing has changed over time and the evolution is marked by several distinct styles as seen in the chart below. However, it's clear that aspects of the original ancient writing still persist in today's written Chinese.

Small Seal (aka: Lesser Seal) Script is the style of writing that has inspired our “Rowayton Rocks Reading” art project today. It is not only considered beautiful by many, but has cultural significance. It was introduced around 200 B.C.E. by the first Qing Emperor, who not only unified China into a single empire, but also helped create a single writing system. Many of China's important ancient poems and literature are written in Small Seal Script. The most common places to see seal script writing are in museums and Asian paintings.

	Small Seal or Lesser Seal Script							
	oracle bone <i>jiaguwen</i>	greater seal <i>dazhuan</i>	lesser seal <i>xiaozhuan</i>	clerkly script <i>lishu</i>	standard script <i>kaishu</i>	running script <i>xingshu</i>	cursive script <i>caoshu</i>	modern simplified <i>jiantizi</i>
rén (*nin) human	人	人	人	人	人	人	人	人
nǚ (*nra?) woman	女	女	女	女	女	女	女	女
ěr (*nha?) ear	耳	耳	耳	耳	耳	耳	耳	耳
mǎ (*mrā?) horse	馬	馬	馬	馬	馬	馬	馬	马
yú (*ŋha) fish	魚	魚	魚	魚	魚	魚	魚	鱼
shān (*srān) mountain	山	山	山	山	山	山	山	山
rì (*nit) sun	日	日	日	日	日	日	日	日
yuè (*ŋot) moon	月	月	月	月	月	月	月	月
yǔ (*wha?) rain	雨	雨	雨	雨	雨	雨	雨	雨
yún (*wan) cloud	云	云	云	云	云	云	云	云

Small Seal Script is used in modern times for chops (Chinese name stamps) or poetry written for ascetic purposes.



Chinese chops are traditionally carved in soft stone with a person's name. It is used like a rubber stamp and when applied to a document it serves as a person's signature.

This is an example of the Small/Lesser Seal Script form of writing being used in modern times.



Seals are found on many Chinese scrolls or artwork. They can indicate either who executed the painting or who owned it.

The design or layout of the words by the seal carver has evolved into an art form in itself.

Thanks for being a part of Rowayton Rocks Reading program.

Can't wait to see all of your artistic creations!