

Long Story of Short Forms

The Evolution of Simplified Chinese Characters

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Tutors and accomplices

This book owes its existence to Bend Bendixen, who advised its author to reshuffle his jumbled notes and transform them into a dissertation. This reshuffle has produced more despair than results and has taken up decades rather than years. This sad performance could not be foreseen by this well-meaning adviser and many would call his idea both sound and proper.

The notes consisted of handwritten characters and interviews with informants from different places in China. More interviews were desirable but travel is tiring. This is what friends are for. The first such to be enlisted was Per Leimar, who hunted up and interviewed informants in Xi'an and Jinyang. The procedure was successfully repeated by Giusi Tamburello in Meixian, Wuming, Bobai and Suzhou, by Laura Newby in Qingdao, Shanghai and Yajiang, by Vikram Seth in Harbin, by Anne Gunn in Guilin and Changsha, by Helena Håkansson in Jingxian and Suzhou, by Philip Wickeri in Changsha, by Magnus Fiskesjö in Shanghai, by Bào Míngwěi 鲍明炜 in Nantong, by Bhavatośa in Hefei, by Inge Hoem in Yumen and Lenghu, by Rune Svarverud in Jinan, by Bertil Lundahl in Guilin and by Torbjörn Lodén in Hefei. Xuē Lín 薛遴 arranged interviews at Nanjing University with students from most parts of Jiangsu. Tomas Nilsson, Lǐ Míng 李明, Gāo Jiànpíng 高建平, Joakim Enwall and Göran Malmqvist sent character questionnaires to far-away friends and relatives, as described in Appendix C.

Back in Scandinavia, I registered at the Department of Chinese Studies of Stockholm University and benefited from the advice and support of Professor Göran Malmqvist and then of his successor, Torbjörn Lodén, who has succeeded in pushing the project to the finishing line. Both professors were instrumental in my obtaining travel grants from the Nordic Institute for Asian Studies in 1986 and The Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities in 1988, giving me a chance to visit the State Language Commission in Beijing, where Fù Yǒnghé 傅永和 and Liú Guǎngbó 刘广博 found me material from the recesses of their cupboards and shelves.

Lin Zhang-Freund, Karin Linder and Jīn Yùyīng 靳玉英 at Östasiatiska biblioteket have helped me far more than duty requires and lent me much more than rules permit. Not even that library is complete, however, so Peter Sivam and Heidi Irgens went to the Beijing Library and the Library of Congress to fetch me necessary books and copies. Hard-to-get material has also been ferreted out by Tollef Ås, Siegfried Behrsing, Luciana Bressan, Ōbayashi Yōgo 大林羊五, Mette

Siggstedt, David Jordan, Halvor Eifring and Ishii Hisao 石井久雄.

Material needed to be crammed into my computer which, sticking to rules, insisted on writing 六 as 戴, 德 as 德 and so on. It took overhauling by experts like Tomas Nilsson, Lars Fredriksson, Nishimagi Shigeru 西間木茂 and Björn Kjellgren to make the machine write the characters properly, and of Erik Halme to make it write with style.

When it finally began to produce texts, Per Leimar, Marja Kaikkonen, Yáng Zhéfēng 杨哲峰, Bert Edström, Håkan Friberg, Stina Jelbring, Grant K. Goodman and Bengt Petterson tactfully pointed out hair-raising flaws and blunders in them, tips of icebergs of which we will certainly see more.

I am lucky to know and exploit all these talents. None, however, compares with my wife Kuramasu Nobuko 倉増信子, a genius at locating titles and articles, who has also provided the patience necessary to make this work proceed and the impatience necessary to bring it to a close.

大都新編關張雙赴西蜀夢全

點燈織履婦能勾做大蜀皇帝非容易官裏口暮朝夕似三江水
濕龍喚了声関張仁弟无言低首泗双垂一會家眼前活見一會家口
内拈提急煎御手頻推飛鳳持撲簌痛泗常淹衣龍衣每日家独上
危楼上望荆州感凉則州傷悲用韻云每日家你念幽関雲長張翠德委
得俺宣限急西川途路受一駝馳每日知它過幾重深溪山谷不曾行十里平
田地恨征腕四隻蹄不這般插翅般疾勇虎軀縱微黃金響果然道心急
馬行遲天下樂緊定葵花鎧折皮鞭催走似飛墜的双滴此腿腿无氣
力揆与处一會兇兇行至契一口兇食无明夜不住地醉中天若到
荆州内半米兇不宜達發送的関雲長向北歸然後向浪州路十驛馳驛
把関張分付在君王手里交它龍虎風雲會金鑿記関將軍但相持无一
个敢欺敵素衣匹马单刀會觀敵軍如兒戲不若土和泥殺曹仁七万軍
刺顏良万威今日被不人将你算暢則為你大膽上落便血醉中天義
赦了嚴顏眾鞭打的督郵當陽楊曷回个曹子殂盛倒大个張車騎今

PLATE 1. YUAN BLOCKPRINT OF THE DRAMA *Xīshǔ mèng*. FROM *Fù Yuán qiàn gǔjīn zàjù sānshí zhōng* vol. 1.

Introduction

1. Questions

旅游垠趣 the sign said. 旅游 was read *lǚyóu* and meant ‘travel’ of course, and 趣 *qù* meant ‘interest’. But 垠? Again we ignorant foreigners searched in vain in our dictionaries. Presumably, 垠 was an unofficial short form, like the 芽 and 沆 seen on the menu of a 步馆. In these cases, the uninformed can guess from the context and from the character shape that 芽 reads like 才 *cai* and means 菜 *cài* (dishes), that 沆 reads like 九 *jiǔ* and means 酒 (wine), and that 步 is a 餐 deprived of its 又 and 食 and that the 步馆 is a 餐馆 *cānguǎn* (restaurant).

In this case, however, neither shape nor context was of much help. 垠 consists of 土 *tǔ* (earth) and 人 *rén* (man). The right side often indicates the reading, but we could not think of any word even distantly similar to *rénqù*. But, of course, we foreigners do not know so many words. Chinese readers on the other hand do, and excel at making out characters from their context. We therefore asked our teachers from Nanjing University, who had come with us on this trip to Hangzhou. They insisted, however, that 垠 made no sense and that the sign had been painted by an illiterate.

For good measure, our teachers passed the question on to our Hangzhou hosts. These unanimously identified 垠 as 增 *zēng* (increase). So the sign said “Let us increase interest in travelling” and was an advertisement for a travel agent. The sign painter was not illiterate.

This was puzzling. A character known to everybody in Hangzhou had turned out to be unknown to our, as it had seemed, infallible Nanjing teachers. Was this an accident, or was the use of 垠 an entirely local habit? If so, were there even other short forms which were used only locally? Below we will try to answer that question.

This happened in 1980. Characters had of course been shortened long before that. In the Yuan (1279–1368) edition of the drama *Xīshǔ mèng* (The Dream of Western

Sichuan)¹ reproduced in Plate 1, the dictionary's 聲 (*shēng* sound), 龍 (*lóng* dragon), 獨 (*dú* alone), 處 (*chǔ* place), 歸 (*guī* return) and 箇 (*gè* piece of) are written 声, 龍, 独, 処, 歸 and 个. These short forms are reasonably transparent. 声 is 聲 minus 爫 and 耳. 龍 is 龍 minus 丨 and 二. 独 is 獨 minus 冫. 処 is 處 minus 虍. 个 is 箇 minus 讠 and 固. This simplification technique, to omit a part of a character, is familiar; we have already seen how modern writers shorten 餐 to 步 by omitting 又 and 食. 步 writers are following a tradition of at least six hundred years.

Not all short forms in the text have been coined with that technique. 関 is a 關 with the central part contracted to 关. 見 is 見 with the centre contracted to 丨. 尃 is 龍 with the left and top contracted to 尃. 婦 is 歸 with the left side contracted to 丨. 单 is 單 with the top 田 contracted to 丩. 會 is 會 with the bottom 日 contracted to 冫. In our admittedly sparse contemporary examples such contractions are on the other hand absent.

Even ㄩ type characters has traditions of course. This coining technique was described in AD 100 by Xǔ Shèn in his dictionary *Shuōwén jiězì*, which said the character 增, for one, “is written with 土 [earth], and 曾 [modern *zēng*] denotes the sound.” Xǔ called characters which consisted of one component showing the sense and another showing the sound *xíngshēng zì* (signific-phonetic compounds). These were an old breed already in Xǔ’s time. Signific-phonetic compounds appear already in the oldest inscriptions we have, those on bones and tortoise shells from the Yin (c. 1600–c. 1050) dynasty, written more than a thousand years before Xǔ. We might therefore expect to find examples of shortened signific-phonetic compounds even in our Yuan text. We do not, however. Is this an accident? Or are shortened signific-phonetic compounds a new idea after all?

If that is so, it may be possible to figure out the age of a short form by looking at its structure. Below we will try to find out if that is so.

Confusing as our Yuan print may look, it does contain some familiar characters, like 声, 单, 独 and 个, which we know as official forms in the People’s Republic of China since 1956. In use since the Yuan dynasty, these forms must have been well known to the public even before the script reform. Such forms were of course easier to promote than newly created, unfamiliar ones. The reformers in the *Zhōngguó Wénzì gǎigé wěiyuánhui* (Script Reform Committee of China) were therefore keen to demonstrate that the characters they proposed were “established by custom”.² Publishing its Character Simplification Scheme, the committee asserted

1. Character forms of Chinese and Japanese names and terms are shown in the Glossary.

2. The expression “Established by custom” (約定俗成 *yueding su cheng*) comes from *Xun zi*: 正名, which says: 名無固宜約之以命約定俗成謂之宜 (As for the names of things, there is no such thing as inherently appropriate ones. It is when we agree on one that a thing gets a name. And it is when the name has been agreed on and even has become a custom that it is

that “the overwhelming number of these simplified characters is already in common use”.¹ The committee member Zhèng Zhǐdōng has indicated the size of this “overwhelming number”:

The more than five hundred simplified characters of the first Character Simplification Scheme were all, apart from the character 灭 which was provided by the editors of the *Zhōngguó dà cídiǎn* [Comprehensive Chinese Dictionary], selected according to the established-by-custom principle, from the short, running and cursive forms in age-old use among the people.²

One of five hundred is 0.2 %. This implies that 99.8 % of the characters in the scheme were already in use and 0.2 % were introduced to the public by the committee.

A non-member named Zhào Tàijùn has come to a different result.

The characters in the first table are all old and new short forms in common use, so they have been enthusiastically welcomed by the broad masses. [...] The second part of the scheme, however, is of a different type. Since there were not enough short forms already in use, this part contained 31% characters not seen before, or newly created forms.³

The first part of the Character Simplification Scheme consisted of 230 characters and the second of 285, so the total number was 515. The 31% of the second part referred to by Zhào thus corresponds to 17% of the total number of 515 simplified characters. Zhào is thus saying that 83% of the characters were traditional and 17% were new.

The committee member’s ratio of 0.2% new characters is incompatible with the non-member’s 17%. It seems we must make our own count after all.

Not only China has simplified its characters. The *Kokugo shingikai* (Japanese Language Council) simplified one batch of characters in 1946 and another in 1949. Many characters came to be simplified identically in both countries, like 独 and 声. Others became different, like 單 (*dān* single) which became 単 in Japan but 单 with one point less in China. The Japanese committee wrote 関, 処, 児 and 婦 like our Yuan scribe, while its Chinese counterpart shortened these characters further to 关, 处, 儿 and 归. The Japanese committee left 飛, 層 and 廠 alone, while the Chinese one shortened them to 飞, 层 and 厂 as suggested by Zhào above.

called appropriate.)

1. Zhongguo wenzi gaige weiyuanhui 1955, p. 2.
2. Zheng 1990, p. 33. The running style 行書 is a handwritten style in which forms like 爲 and 專 are contracted to 爲專. In the cursive style 草書 they are contracted further to 为 and 专.
3. Zhao 1958, p. 24.

Many lament these discrepancies. If the Script Reform Committee of China and the Japanese Language Council had acted less rashly and given their task a little more consideration, it has been said, the two scripts could have been more similar today.

Below we will try and see whether there was any room for such cooperation, or whether the two committees actually had compelling reasons for their differing choices.

The Script Reform Committee had a host of short forms to choose between. Already our small Yuan sample shows an abundance of alternatives. The scribe, one single person, wrote 關 as either 関, 関, 関 or 関, 龍 as either 龍, 龍 or 龙, 會 as either 會, 會 or 會. At the eve of the script reform six hundred years later, alternatives were no less abundant. A proofreader named Zhào Xī complained about this in *Zhōngguó Yǔwén* (Chinese Language):

Many characters which were originally one character have now, because people have simplified at will, developed into many different short forms. For example, some write the character 飛 [*fēi* fly] as 飞, others as 𨺠. The character 歸 is written by some as 归, by others as 逄. The character 層 [*céng* layer] is already written 仄, 厶 or 层. The character 礦 [*kuàng* ore] is also written 卝, 矿 or 砒. The character 廠 [*chǎng* factory] is written 厂, 广, 反 or 厰. All this puts us at a loss as to which example to follow. With a unified norm for short forms, this confusion can be avoided.¹

The Script Reform Committee chairman Wú Yùzhāng made the same point:

There is another view which says that the adoption of short forms can create confusion. It is true that, for historical reasons, there is much confusion around our present characters, and that this increases the difficulty of learning and using them. However, when we adopt short forms, we select one simple and easy form among many different ones and do away with all the others. This way we can, both in print and in handwriting, reduce the confusion and diversity regarding the form of many characters, and reach our aim of gradual standardization.²

The committee further said the reform could

create a norm for the short forms, and if everybody writes according to this norm, we can prevent people from making up short forms at will and creating confusion.³

1. Zhao 1955.

2. Wu Yuzhang 1955, p. 4.

3. Zhongguo wenzi gaige weiyuanhui 1955, p. 2.

Here the committee makes two predictions, one that the reform will do away with alternative short forms and one that it will prevent people from creating new short forms.

The committee has laid some claim to fulfilling the first prediction. In 1964, the linguist and Script Reform Committee member Lǚ Shūxiāng declared:

But there were some characters which you simplified as you liked and I as I liked, with the result that we did not understand each other and all was confusion. That was not good. But since the publication and approval of the List of Simplified Characters in 1956 and the subsequent implementation of it, the confusion has in the main been eliminated.¹

On the second the committee has not commented, unless we count the above statement. Others have touched on the subject, however. In 1957 the writer Wáng Báixiāng complained that

some create and shorten characters indiscriminately and this has created a virtual ‘erroneous character craze’ or shall we call it a ‘character creation craze’ all over the country.²

Others expressed the same sense in less expressive terms. Some have dated the craze later, like Professor S. Robert Ramsay:

These limits [of correctness] again became obscure, however, with the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Character simplification had been represented all along as a kind of Marxist, proletarian process; as a consequence, coining and using new characters became a popular way to show that one’s writing was done in the right spirit. Wall slogans, signs, and mimeographed literature of all kinds began to be embellished with abbreviations never seen before.³

The periodical *Hànzì wénhuà* (Chinese Character Culture) places the blame still later:

As everybody knows, the confusion in the use of characters in society has, since the ‘Cultural Revolution’, become more and more serious day by day. [...] This writer thinks the reason for the confusion in the use of characters in society lies in the following points. The first is an inherited malady from the “Cultural Revolution”. In the course of ten years, primary and secondary school education was seriously damaged. This caused a decline in the cultural level of the people. After the fall of the Gang of Four, education has been hard to restore, since there for a long time has been a lack of qualified teachers [...]

1. Lü 1982 (1964), p. 4.

2. Wang Baixiang 王白祥 in debate 27 May 1957. “Wenzi gaige zuotanhui” 1957, p. 19.

3. Ramsay 1989, pp. 146–147.

and this vicious circle has lasted until now. The second is the publication Scheme on 19 December 1977 of the *Rénmín rìbào* (People's Daily) editorial "Increase the pace of the script reform" and of the [later abolished] Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme, which created new and man-made confusion. The reason that all kinds of irregular simplified characters appear in society today, especially from the pens of primary and middle school students, is to be found in this.¹

Every age claims to be the peak of confusion. To find out whether this confusion increased or decreased after 1955, we must make our own count of forms. We will do so in Chapter II.

We have encountered five problems:

1. Are particular simplification techniques typical for particular periods?
2. Are some short forms used only in limited areas?
3. How many of the short forms in the 1956 Chinese Character Simplification Scheme were in use before the reform and how many were invented by the Script Reform Committee?
4. Could official Chinese and Japanese characters have been less different today if authorities in the two countries had cooperated?
5. Did the number of short variants in use in society decrease after the reform?

To find answers, we must make a survey of short forms used in China and Japan before and after the reforms. We will do this in Chapter II. In Chapter III we will summarize Chapter II and see if it holds the answers.

2. Works on variants and short forms

Old forms have been more thoroughly surveyed than new ones. Xú Zhōngshū's *Jiǎgǔwén zìdiǎn* (A Dictionary of Shell and Bone Script) from 1988 hardly misses one Yin bone variant. Yin and Zhou (c.1050–221) bone and bronze forms were listed in 1959 by Róng Gēng in *Jīnwén biān* (On Bronze Script), in 1980 by Gāo Míng in *Gǔwénzì lèibiān* (Variants of Old Script), and in 1981 by Xú Zhōngshū in *Hànyǔ gǔwénzì zìxíng biāo* (List of Character Forms of the ancient Chinese Script). Quite a few Zhou and Han (206 BC–AD 220) seal script variants are also found in Xǔ Shèn's *Shuōwén jiězhì* from AD 100. Han variants in seal inscriptions were listed in 1730 by Luó Fúyí in *Gǔxǐ Hànyìn wénzì zhēng* (Collected Seal Forms from the Han Dynasty), on stone steles in 1989 by Fushimi Chūkei in *Reisho daijiten* (Comprehensive Dictionary of the Clerk Script) and on wood slips in 1991 by Sano Kōichi in *Mokkan jiten* (A Dictionary of Wood Slips).

Collections of post-Han forms are more selective. Variants on monuments from

1. Li 1993, p. 25.

the Wei (386–557), Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907) dynasties were collected by Luó Pēinán in the 1894 *Bēibiézi* (Irregular Characters on Steles), by Luó Zhènyù in the 1928 *Zēngdìng Bēibiézi* (Enlarged and Revised Irregular Characters on Steles) and by Luó Fúbǎo in the 1939 *Bēibiézi xùshí* (More Irregular Characters on Steles). These works were reedited and reprinted in 1975 by Kitagawa Hirokuni in *Henrui hibetsuji* (Collections of Variants of Stele Characters). Another survey was prepared in 1980 by Sano Kōichi in *Kinseki itaiji jiten* (A Dictionary of Character Variants on Metal and Stone) and in 1985 by Qín Gōngjí in *Bēi biézi xīn biān* (A New Dictionary of Stele Character Variants). “Vulgar” (俗), “common” (通) and “correct” (正) Tang variants were collected by Yán Yuánsūn (d. 714) in his *Gānlù zìshū* (A Dictionary for Employment Seekers). Needless to say, the latter forms were what he recommended for the employment exams. This classification was adopted in the 776 *Wǔjīng wénzì* (The Script of the Five Classics), the 837 *Jiǔjīng zìyàng* (Character Forms of the Nine Classics) and later handbooks and dictionaries.

Short forms found in twelve vernacular blockprints from the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279) to the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) were recorded in 1930 by Liú Fù in his *Song-Yuan yǎnlái sùzì pǔ* (Index of Vulgar Characters from the Song and Yuan dynasties onwards).

Liú’s book was published in 1930, during a vogue for short forms. In 1927, Fāng Yì and Mǎ Yíng added a list of contemporary “divergent forms”, mostly short forms, to their *Píngmín zìdiǎn* (The Common People’s Dictionary). The following year, Hú Huáichēn published “vulgar characters” and “ancient characters” in *Jiǎnyìzì shuō* (On Short Forms). In 1934, the Shanghai journal *Lúnyǔ* published “550 sùzì biǎo” (A List of 550 Vulgar Characters), short forms compiled by Xú Zémǐn, who had scrutinized manuscripts, mimeographs, students’ notes, informal letters and old and new dictionaries, and the similar “Lùn sùzì” (On Vulgar Characters) by one Hǎi Gē. In 1936, the paleographer Róng Gēng issued a *Jiǎntǐ zìdiǎn* (Dictionary of Short Forms), the school-teacher Ōuyáng Zhēn *Jiǎntǐzì kǎozhèng* (Research on Short Forms) and the script reform activist Chén Guāngyáo *Chángyòng jiǎnzì biǎo* (Table of Common Short Forms). In 1950 the Shanghai *Wénhuì bào* (Culture Digest Daily) published a “Chángyòng jiǎntǐzì huì” (Register of Short Forms) by Huáng Ruòzhōu. This list consisted of “short forms often seen here” and was later published as a book. The following year a list of *Jiǎnbǐzì* (Shortened Characters) was published in Shanghai. The authors pledged: “We have not created any characters ourselves, but collected short forms which are already popular in society.” In 1955 the still active Chén Guāngyáo published a *Chángyòng jiǎnzì pǔ* (Index of Common Short Forms), and the following year, *Jiǎnhuà hànzì zìtǐ shuōmíng* (Explanation of the Forms of Simplified Characters), which classed the characters of the 1956 simplification scheme as “ancient”, “established by custom” or “newly created”. After the publication of the Character Simplification Scheme, publication of unofficial lists of short forms was not

encouraged in the People's Republic of China. In Sweden the present author was on the other hand welcome to publish *A Dictionary of Nonstandard Simplified Chinese Characters* in 1986.”

Characters from different times and their evolution up to the Han dynasty are described in Bernhard Karlgren's *Grammata Serica Recensa* from 1957 and Shirakawa Shizuka's *Jitō* (The Descent of Characters). Less has been written about later developments. The Qin (221–206 BC) minister Lǐ Sī standardized characters and gave us our dictionary forms, end of story.

The story continued in 1996, however, when Lǐ Lèyì of the State Language Commission published his *Jiǎnhuà zìyuán* (Origins of Simplified Characters), investigating the age and development of short forms. This ought to help us answer our question three above. If we know the age of each short form, we can see which forms were invented in 1955. Lǐ found that 13.05 % of the forms in the 1956 Character Simplification Scheme appeared before the Qin dynasty, 18.43 % in the Qin or Han, 6.14% in the Three Kingdoms (220–280), Jin (265–420) or Northern and Southern Dynasties (220–589), 5.95% in the Sui, Tang or Five Dynasties (907–960), 15.74% in the Song (960–1279), Liao (907–1125), Jin (1115–1234) or Yuan, 10.17% in the Ming (1368–1644) or Qing dynasties, 11.32% in the Republic (1911–1949) and 19.38% in the People's Republic (1949–1956). Alas, Lǐ has avoided the problem by classifying all forms emerging between 1949 and 1956 as “People's Republican”.¹ Lǐ does, on the other hand, help us with question one, figuring out approximate ages of the simplified forms adopted by the Script Reform Committee. He does not, however, deal with characters untouched by the committee, like 酒, 菜 and 餐, which people have shortened to 汎, 芽 and 步 for some time. Nor does Lǐ give us any answer to question five, namely what happened after the reform.

Japanese short forms were collected early, in 1692 by Nakane Genkei in *Itaiji ben* (On Character Variants), about 1705 by Arai Hakuseki in *Dōbun tsūkō* (A Survey of Equivalent Characters), in 1750 by Kondō Saigai in *Seikai roku* (A Register of Correct Square Characters), in 1753 by Daizai Shundai in *Wakai seika* (Right and Wrong in Japanese Square Script), in 1757 by Tanaka Dōsai in *Dōsai suihitsu* (Comments by Dōsai), and in 1803 by Matsumoto Gusan in *Shōbun sankō* (A Compilation of shortened Characters). Fortunately for us, these early surveys were collected and reprinted by Sugimoto Tsutomu in *Itaiji kenkyū shiryō shū* (Collected Materials on Research on Character Variants) in 1974. Unfortunately, the Chinese enthusiasts who published lists of short forms in the twentieth century had no colleagues in Japan. For Japanese short forms from this period we will therefore have to rely more on research in archives which, fortunately, are more

1. Actually Li's “Peoples's Republic” category contains more characters than those created 1949–1956, since he includes even characters invented in the liberated areas before 1949, like 币 (*bi* currency) and 导 (*dao* lead). Below we will try to find such characters in pre-1949 documents and establish more exact dates for them.

accessible than Chinese ones.

3 Methods

To answer questions one, three, four and five, we must search the above sources to see when the different short forms emerged. This will not be sufficient, however. Long periods like the years from AD 200 to 400, 1880 to 1925, 1937 to 1949 and the time after 1955 are not covered by them. For the first of these periods, we must instead rely on inscriptions on wood slips and stone steles, for the second on manuscripts, and for the third on documents from the Liberated Areas which are, sometimes, reproduced in history books.

The last period will be illuminated by documents, chiefly letters and mimeographs. We will also get supporting evidence from a new source: the press. When it became clear in the early fifties that the script was no longer untouchable, readers started reporting new and curious short forms to newspapers and magazines. The number of these letters and articles peaks in about 1960 and between 1974 and 1976. The attitudes of correspondents change with the prevailing atmosphere, mostly enthusiastic in the fifties and seventies when reform was in, indignant in the late sixties and from the middle eighties onwards when it was not.

Letters were even written to the Script Reform Committee. Those which were accessible to a resolute visitor in 1982 are presented at the end of the bibliography. While both enthusiasts and malcontents wrote to the press, the latter saw no point in writing to the committee. This creates a bias in this material. Zealots among the enthusiasts not only reported, but also invented forms. The latter do not interest us. Nor did they interest the committee, which separated letters containing “collected popular characters” from those propagating “characters invented by themselves”. Like the committee, we will rely on the former.

Contemporary forms are accessible on signs, price tags, menus, letters, street advertisements and the like. We are therefore well provided with characters used in 1981, 1982, 1986, 1988, 1990 and 1994, when this observer was in China.

To answer question two, this kind of field work is helpful, but not sufficient. Finding a form in one area may prove that it is used there, but not that it is used only there. The Hangzhou 垠 was observed in the phrase 人口垠长 (*rénkǒu zēngzhǎng* population increase) in a wall newspaper in Wenzhou, in 垠产 (*zēngchǎn* increase production) in a street slogan in Linhai, and in 垠加 (*zēngjiā* increase) in a letter from Haimen. These places are all in Zhejiang. This indicates, but does not prove, that 垠 is used exclusively in this province. The character may occur outside without our noticing it.

The visitor may miss a local form, but the permanent resident will not. If we want to find out whether a form is in use at a certain locality, we can repeat the Hangzhou procedure and ask local residents. We therefore showed 垠 and other suspected local forms to native readers at different places without context. 垠 was

identified as 增 by informants in Hangzhou, Jinhua, Ningbo, Linhai, Lishui and Wenzhou, and by some but not all informants in Huzhou, Shaoxing and Shanghai. No informant outside Zhejiang and Shanghai could recognize 垠 as 增. (These results are plotted on Map 24.) We can therefore be reasonably confident that 垠 is used only in Zhejiang and Shanghai.

The method involves a source of error. If an informant has spent time outside his present domicile, he may have learned characters in there. In order to exclude informants contaminated by widened outlook, recruitment procedures followed a fixed pattern:

“Yes, I come from Europe. Norway, you know, in Scandinavia. So you are from here? And you have lived here all your life? No? Did you go to school at Nanbeizhou? For three years? Yes, yes, Nanbeizhou is a nice place too. Goodbye.”

If the candidate answered “yes” to the second question, the interview would continue:

“So you have lived here all your life? And you don’t have to travel in your work? How fortunate! Do I get used to life in China? Yes, but your language is hard, especially characters. Take this 垠...”

Another source of error is guessing. Some read 垠 as *rén*, taking 人 as a phonetic, others read *yán*, taking 垠 for 垠, a short form for 盐 (*yán* salt). Such guesses are plotted/recorded as negative answers.

Most forms tested turned out to be in nation-wide use after all. 国, for one, turned up several times for 国 (*guó* country) in Yunnan Province. Nevertheless it turned out to be familiar to informants all over China. Some hundred forms stood the test, however, and proved to be truly local forms. Cases from our *a-f* sample are plotted on Maps 1 to 24 at the end of Chapter II.

4. Chapters

We will try to answer our five questions in Chapter III. The answers will be based on a survey of short forms, which will be presented in Chapter II. This is the longest part of this book, even though we limit our survey to characters beginning with *a-f* in the pinyin transcription.

A short form is a form which is shorter than a standard form. To survey short forms, we must have some notion of standard forms. We will try to establish this in Chapter I, which follows.

Chapter I

Writing norms

1. Chinese writing norms

TABLE 1. SCRIPT FORMS

Yin bone script (c. 1200- c. 1050 BC)	Zhou bronze script (c. 1050- 221)	Qin small seal (c. 220)	Han <i>lishū</i> or clerk script	Late Han <i>kǎishū</i> (model script) or <i>zhèngshū</i> (square script)	Modern print style	Modern reading and sense
						<i>bèi</i> cowry
						<i>yuè</i> moon
						<i>míng</i> bright
						<i>dé</i> virtue
						<i>qí</i> this

In the handbooks where these examples were found, *Hànzì lǐhuà* (Talking of Characters) and *Xuéshēng chángyòng hànzì qiǎnshù* (Concise Explanations of the Pupil's Most Used Characters), the differences between the scripts are described with great precision:

In bone script, 貝 looked like the two halves of a shell. In bronze script it looked basically like in bone script, except that the halves had become connected. But in the small seal there was a distortion which made the shell shape unrecognizable.

The bronze script form [of 月] looks like the bone script form, except for the addition of a vertical stroke in the middle, with which the ancients represented

the cinnamon tree in the moon.

In bone script 明 was made up of a moon to the left and a sun to the right. This makes it a compound ideograph. But in the bronze script there was a change: the sun changed into the shape of a window.

In bone script the left of 德 was 彳 *chi*, which in ancient script indicated movement. The right side was an eye with a vertical line over it, which expressed straight sight. The general sense of this character was therefore: virtue is acting straightforwardly without looking sideways. In bronze script, the sense was even more complete: under the eye a heart was added, which meant that only when eye and heart were straight could there be virtue.

In bone script, 其 was written 𠄎, as a basket. In bronze script it was 𠄎. In the small seal it was written 其, with an added phonetic component 丌 *jī*.¹

Our handbooks specify differences between the Yin bone script and the Zhou bronze script. How consistent are these differences? Let us look at a bigger sample.

TABLE 2. YIN AND ZHOU VARIANTS²

Yin		Zhou			Mod- em print
Periods I-II (c.1200–c.1150)	Periods III-V (c.1150–c.1050)	Western Zhou (-c.1050–771)	Spring&Autumn (770–476)	Warring States (475–221)	
𠄎 𠄎 𠄎	𠄎	𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎		𠄎 𠄎	貝
𠄎 𠄎	𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎	𠄎 𠄎	𠄎	𠄎 𠄎	月
𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎		𠄎 𠄎	𠄎 𠄎	𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎	明
𠄎 𠄎	𠄎	德 德 德	德 德	德 德 德 德	德
𠄎	𠄎 𠄎	𠄎 𠄎 其	𠄎 其 其 丌	其 丌 元	其

We see that 貝 did not have one Yin form with separate cowry halves and one Zhou form with connected halves. Even many Yin scribes connected the halves. Moreover, it was not in the Qin dynasty that the shell became unrecognizable; already in the Zhou dynasty many wrote unrecognizable shells.

The alleged cinnamon tree in 月 was added not in the Zhou dynasty, but in the Yin dynasty.

In 明, the sun did not change to a window (if that is what 𠄎 is) at the start of the Zhou dynasty. Both suns and windows had been used in the Yin dynasty, and both

1. Zuo 1984, pp. 138, 205–206, 278. Chen and Dong 1981, p. 95.

2. Characters from Gao 1980, Xu 1988, Jōnan 1988, and Ma 1990, items 866, 919.

continued to be used throughout the Zhou dynasty.

It is true that the heart in 德 was added in the Zhou dynasty. This does not mean, however, that the 彳 (step), 目 (eye) and 心 (heart) composition became universal; some writers persisted in the heart-less Yin fashion, yet others managed without the step.

The top line in 𠄎 is present not only in Zhou inscriptions, but also in some Yin ones. The phonetic component 𠄎 was not a Qin innovation, but a Zhou one.

So Yin writing had no fixed norms, nor Zhou writing. Confused readers must have longed for an orthographic standard.

Something seems to have been done about this during the reign of King Xuān, (827 to 782 BC). The *Hàn shū* (History of the Han) said “the chief chronicler of King Xuān wrote fifteen chapters describing the big seal script”.¹ This script is mentioned even in the introduction to *Shuōwén*, which said the Qin script reformers “took Chronicler Zhòu’s big seal, made some changes and that became the Small Seal.”

These passages have been taken to mean that King Xuān’s big seal was an established orthography. Was this orthography followed? Let us compare pre- and post-Xuān writing. Perhaps the most frequent phrase in inscriptions of this time was X乍鼎其壽萬年無疆子子孫孫永寶用 (X made this ding. May it last ten thousand years without end. May sons and grandsons forever treasure and use it). Of these characters, the least consistent were 鼎, 其, 疆 and 寶. We will now see if they become more consistent after the cited introduction of Zhòu’s big seal.

TABLE 3. VARIANTS BEFORE AND AFTER XUĀN

c. 908–828 BC (before Xuān) ²	781–670 BC (after Xuān) ³	Modern Sense
鼎 (7 inscriptions) 鼎	鼎 (4) 鼎 (3) 鼎 鼎 鼎	鼎 <i>dīng</i> kettle
其 (26) 其 (9) 其	其 (21) 其 (19) 其	其 <i>qí</i> this
疆 (6) 疆 (2) 疆 (2) 疆 疆	疆 (2) 疆 (2) 疆 疆 疆 疆 疆 疆	疆 <i>jiāng</i> border
寶 (28) 寶 (3)	寶 (24) 寶 (12) 寶 寶 寶	寶 <i>bǎo</i>

As it seems, they did not.

Warring States (475–221 BC) script was no less diversified, as we see in Table

1. *Han shu*: 藝文志.

2. Yiwang, Liwang and Gonghe periods (893–828). Characters on bronze vessels 384–390, 394–405, 407–414, 416–417, 419–423, 425–426, 428–433, 384–390, 397 and 400 in Ma 1988.

3. Reign of You and Early Spring and Autumn. Characters from vessels 450–454, 576, 578–580, 608–609, 614–617, 621, 625–626, 635–636, 638–639, 688, 691, 770, 772, 779, 783–784, 787, 800–802, 803–805, 810–814, 820–821, 823–824, 833–837, 840–841, 868, 904–905, 907–909, 912–914, 916, 919 in Ma 1988.

4. But, says the *Hàn shū*, “when Qín Shǐhuáng united the country, his minister Lǐ Sī united the script and discarded forms different from those of Qín”.¹ Unfortunately, Lǐ Sī’s instructions on writing are lost. Fortunately, however, he left inscriptions on monuments for everybody to copy. In Table 4 we select some of these and compare pre- and post-Lǐ forms.

TABLE 4. VARIANTS BEFORE AND AFTER Lǐ Sī

Late Warring States (380–221 BC)				Qin Li Sī small seal ⁷	Qin seal style inscrip- tions ⁸	Han seal style inscrip- tions ⁹	90 BC–AD 29 clerk style inscriptions ⁵	AD 100: <i>Shuō- wén</i>	Mod- ern print
Qin ²	Zhong- shan ⁶	Q ³	Chu ⁴						
	司 司		司	司	司 明	明 (2 inscr.)	明 ⁽¹⁶⁾ 明 ⁽⁶⁾	司	明
德	德 德 德	德	德 德	德	德	德	德 ⁽¹²⁾ 德 ⁽⁹⁾ 德 ⁽⁴⁾ 德	德	德
其	其 其 其 其 元	其	其 其 元	其	其 其	其 其 其	其 ⁽¹⁷⁾ 其 ⁽⁷⁾ 其 ⁽³⁾ 其 ⁽³⁾ 其 ⁽²⁾ 其		其
	臣 臣		臣	臣		臣 ⁽⁴⁾	臣 ⁽¹²⁾	臣	臣
	金	金 金 金 金 金 金	金 金 金 金	金	金	金 ⁽⁴⁾ 金 金 ⁽²⁾ 金 金 金 金	金 ⁽⁷⁾ 金 ⁽⁶⁾ 金 ⁽³⁾ 金 ⁽³⁾ 金 ⁽²⁾ 金 ⁽²⁾ 金 ⁽²⁾ 金 金 金	金	金

We notice two successes for Lǐ the standardizer.

Before, 德 had been written with or without 彳, with or without 心, with or without 匚 under 四. Lǐ Sī applied 彳 and 心 but not 匚, following the custom in the state of Qín. Han scribes conformed.

其 had been written with or without the 匚 (basket) on top. Lǐ Sī wrote it with.

1. *Han shu*: 意文誌. From Zuo 1984, p. 19.
2. Shaanxi. *Zu Chu wen* 詛楚文 (313 BC). From Jōnan 1988.
3. In Shandong. Bronze vessels 863 and 866 in Ma 1990.
4. Hubei, Hunan, Anhui and Jiangsu. Xinyang and Wangshan wood slips and E jun qi jie 厄君啟節 from Gao 1980, Chu silk inscription from Jōnan 1988, Yangtianhu slips from Shi Shuqing 1955.
5. Wood slips from Juyan. From Sano 1991. Ages according to Appendix B.
6. In Western Hebei. Inscriptions from c. 310 BC grave of King of Zhongshan in Zhang 1981.
7. 219 BC inscription at Taishan. From *Chūgoku hōsho sen*, vol. 2, and Lin 1976.
8. From Qin section of Rong 1931.
9. Vessels 13, 15, 18, 75, 88, 97, 108, 195, 196, 203, 225, 227, 252, 272, 272, 281, 350, 379, 423, 635, 6513, 15, 18, 272, 225, 252, 88, 273, 379, 635, 108, 196, 203, 195, 97, 423, 75, 281, 652, 227 and 350 in Han section of Rong 1931.

Han scribes joined ranks.

Other plans were less successful.

Before the Qin dynasty, 明 was written with either 日 or 囧 on the left. Lǐ Sī promoted 囧. Forms with 日 persisted, however. Worse, 囧 writers began to shorten this component to 目, creating another variant.

臣 (*chén* subordinate), was written 𠄎, which renders the bent head of a bowing subject, represented by the eye. Pragmatic Warring States scribes saved one stroke by piercing the eyeball. Lǐ Sī prescribed an intact eyeball. Han scribes ignored him and stuck to the pierced 臣.

金 (*jīn* metal) had mostly been written with 丩 (lumps of ore) around the upper and lower part of the 全 (axe or other implement). Lǐ Sī stipulated ore both above and below. Han scribes put the ore everywhere except where Lǐ Sī had put it.

So variation prevailed.

As we said, Lǐ's description of the small seal is lost. The small seal forms we see in dictionaries and handbooks come from the dictionary *Shuōwén jiězì*, which was completed in AD 100 by Xǔ Shèn, who, it has been said, “was particularly proficient in writing seal script, imitated the style of Lǐ Sī and acquired a very high degree of his finesse”.¹

Still we see in Table 4 that Xǔ Shèn could deviate from Lǐ Sī. Xǔ wrote 𠄎 (德) with an additional - in the middle, and 𠄎 with a 今 top for Lǐ's 金 (金). This deviated not only from Lǐ Sī, but also from Han practice, as we see in Table 4.

Xǔ Shèn's motives for going against the tide were etymological. In his dictionary he explained that 直 “means to look straight and is [therefore] written with 亠 [straight], 十 and 目”.² In consequence, 亠 was required in the derived character 德 as well (直 *dí* ǎk was phonetic in 德 *tək*). The 今 top in Xǔ's 𠄎 defies both Lǐ's model and Han practice, but does, with good will, fit his Xǔ's explanation that 金 “is written with 土 (earth), the points to the left and right resemble ore inside the earth, and 今 [modern 今 *jīn*] expresses the sound”.

What *Shuōwén* standardized was the seal script. The immediate effect of this standardization is hard to measure, since dated seal inscriptions from the time are scarce. The few forms collected in Table 5, however, show no influence from Xǔ.

TABLE 5. SEAL STYLE VARIANTS BEFORE AND AFTER *Shuōwén*³

Seal forms dated AD 12–109	<i>Shuōwén</i>	Seal forms 132–156	Modern print
𠄎 (3 inscriptions) 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎	𠄎	𠄎 𠄎 𠄎	金

By Xǔ's time, however, most matters were conducted not in seal style, but in the handier brush-written *lì* or clerk style. In Table 1 we see handbook examples and in Tables 4 and 6 authentic examples of this style. The latter are, unsurprisingly,

1. Eight century calligraphy guide *Shu duan* 書斷. From Fan 1989, p. 5.

2. Xu Shen took 亠 to mean 'straight sight', says the 986 *Shuowen* reviser Xu Xuan.

3. Forms of 金 radical in items 20, 114, 222, 270, 666, 672, 673, 117, 676 and 677 in Rong 1931.

more diversified than the former. Even this script could use a norm. One attempt to set one up is related in the *Hòuhàn shū* (History of the Later Han):¹

In the fourth year of Xiping [AD 175], Cài Yōng asked for permission to correct and standardize the script of the Six Classics, and this permission was given by Emperor Líng. Cài Yōng then wrote the characters in red on stone tablets, let craftsmen carve them out and raised the tablets in front of the Imperial College. [...] Once the tablets were raised, readers and copiers arriving in a thousand carriages a day packed the streets and filled the alleys.

These *Xīpíng shíjīng* (Xiping Stone Classics) were shattered at the end of the Han dynasty. In the Zhengshi period (240–248) another writing model was erected in front of the Imperial College. This so-called *Zhèngshǐ shíjīng* (Zhengshi Stone Classics) was written in ancient, seal and clerk script and has therefore been called the *Sān tǐ shíjīng* (The Three Styles Stone Classics). During the Jin dynasty (265–420) even these stones were destroyed. Our limited knowledge of them comes from fragments recovered in the Song dynasty and onwards.

TABLE 6. CLERK STYLE VARIANTS BEFORE AND AFTER THE STONE CLASSICS²

AD 150–174 steles	175 Xiping Stone Classics	176–239 steles	c. 245 Zhengshi Stone Classics	248–323 steles	1615 <i>Zihui</i> etc.
明 ^(9 inscriptions) 明 ⁽⁴⁾ 明	明	明 ⁽⁸⁾ 明 ⁽²⁾ 明	明	明 ⁽⁶⁾	明
德 ⁽¹⁰⁾ 德 ⁽⁴⁾ 德 德 德 德 德 德 德	德	德 ⁽¹¹⁾ 德 ⁽²⁾ 德 ⁽²⁾ 德 德 德 ⁽²⁾	德	德 ⁽⁵⁾ 德	德
其 ⁽⁸⁾ 其 ⁽⁵⁾ 其 ⁽³⁾ 其 其	其	其 ⁽⁵⁾ 其 ⁽³⁾ 其 ⁽³⁾ 其 其	其	其 ⁽⁶⁾ 其 ⁽³⁾	其
臣 ⁽⁴⁾ 臣 ⁽⁴⁾	臣	臣 ⁽²⁾ 臣 ⁽⁴⁾	臣	臣 ⁽⁴⁾	臣
金 ⁽⁴⁾ 金 ⁽²⁾ 金	金	金 ⁽⁵⁾ 金 ⁽³⁾ 金	金	金 ⁽⁶⁾ 金 金 ⁽²⁾ 金	金
曹 ⁽⁸⁾ 曹 曹 曹 曹 曹 曹 ⁽²⁾	曹	曹 ⁽³⁾ 曹 ⁽³⁾ 曹 ⁽²⁾	曹	曹 ⁽⁴⁾	曹

Did these models succeed in regularizing the clerk script? No, writers remained uncertain, says Table 6. And how could they be certain, when the models themselves wavered between 德 and 德, 臣 and 臣, and 曹 and 曹?

By this time a new script or style had developed, the *kǎishū* (model style), also

1. *Houhan shu*: 列傳: 地五十卷: 蔡邕. In *Si bu congkan: Shi bu*.
 2. From Fushimi 1989. 臣 and 金 variants in columns 2, 4 and 5 include the left sides of 臨, 錢, 錄, 錫, 鈞, 銀 and 銘.

called *zhēnshū* (regular style) or *zhèngshū* (square style). The most venerated model of this style was the calligrapher Wáng Xīzhī (d. 379?), so

when Emperor Wǔ of Liang [r. 503–519] wanted to teach his princes to write, he ordered Yīn Tiěshí to make rubbings of one thousand different characters written by the great Wáng. The emperor called for Zhōu Xīngsì and said: “You have great talent. Could you rhyme these characters for me?” Zhōu composed his text in one night, and when he presented it to the emperor his temples had turned white. Seeing this, the emperor rewarded him richly. The Zen monk Zhìyǒng, a descendant of Wáng Xīzhī’s, wrote eight hundred copies of this text, which he spread among the people and sent copies of to every temple.¹

This *Zhēn cǎo qiān zì wén* (An Essay of a Thousand Characters in Regular and Cursive Style) was copied by learners for generations, as we can see, for example, on the reverse of sutras excavated at Dunhuang.

Yet there was disagreement. Yán Yuánsūn (d. 714) recorded hundreds of variants in his *Gānlù zìshū* (Dictionary for Employment Seekers) and labeled them “correct”, “common” or “vulgar”. For example, 明 was called “correct” and 𠄎 “common”, 從 “correct”, 從 “common” and 徃 “vulgar”.

TABLE 7. SQUARE STYLE VARIANTS BEFORE AND AFTER *Qiān zì wén* AND *Gānlù zìshū*²

Wáng Xīzhī (d.379)	500–580 stele inscriptions	<i>Qiān zìwén</i> (c.600)	600–699 stele inscriptions	<i>Gānlù zìshū</i> (b.714)	715–774 stele inscriptions	780–900 stele inscriptions	960–1279 blockprints
曹	曹(4 inscriptions)	曹	曹(2) 曹	曹	曹(2) 曹	曹(1)	曹(2)
明	明(10) 明(8)	明	明(13)	𠄎	明(5) 𠄎	明(4) 明(3)	明(18)
德	德(12) 德(10)	德	德(20) 德(8)	德	德(4) 德(3)	德(6) 德(2)	德(10) 德
徃	徃(6)	徃	徃(2) 徃	徃	徃 徃	徃(4)	徃(10) 徃
光	光(18)	光	光(8)	光	光(6)	光(5) 光	光(10)
京	京(8)	京	京(6)	京	京(3)	京(5)	京(3)

We have seen, however, that the “vulgar” 徃 and the “common” but not “correct” 明 were the forms championed by the Xiping and the Zhengshi Stone Classics, by Wáng Xīzhī and by the *Zhēn cǎo qiān zì wén*. And they still remained, according

1. *Shangshu gushi*: 千字文.

2. Variants from 500–699 counted in inscriptions reproduced in *Zhongguo shufa jianshang da cidian*, 715–900 in inscriptions in the same book plus Lin *Zhongguo shufa da cidian*. Variants from Song prints counted in *Zhongguo banke tulu* vol. 2. The *Zhen-cao Qian zi wen* contains 糟, not 曹, the *Ganlu zishu* 聽, not 曹.

to Table 7, the common forms.

What made Yán Yuánsūn despise these forms and challenge convention? Perhaps reading of his great-great-grandfather Yán Zhītuī's *Yán shì jiāxùn* (Precepts of the Yán Family), which said:

When I started to read *Shuōwén*, I came to look down upon the characters used in society. On the other hand, I feared people would not understand me if I used correct characters. Then again, I thought people might be disgusted with my mistakes if I used vulgar characters. As a result I barely dared put pen to paper.¹

In other words, correct is what *Shuōwén* says. And *Shuōwén* says 明 “is written with 𠄎”, 從 “with 辵 and 从” and 光 (light) “with a fire above a man”, so these characters must be written 𠄎, 從 and 光. And 京 (capital) “is a shortened 高”, so it must be written 京 not 京.

Did writers listen? Not at the time, says the 715–774 column. And why should they, if following this Yán Yuánsūn meant abandoning the famous Wáng Xīzhī, Zhīyǒng, Chǔ Suīliáng and Ōuyáng Tōng? Actually the reason we know about Yán's *Gānlù zìshū* at all is that his nephew, the calligrapher Yán Zhēnqīng (708–784), inscribed it on stone tablets in 774, when he was prefect of Huzhou. Aha, so it was after that that *Shuōwén*-based forms like 從 and 京 came to the fore? Not even then, says the 780–900 column, not before the Song dynasty.

What had changed attitudes by the Song dynasty? Perhaps promotion of *Shuōwén*, which had been revised and printed in 986 at the orders of the emperor himself. Perhaps the posthumous rise of Yán Zhēnqīng, who became an object of veneration from the eleventh century onwards, as did his *Gānlù zìshū*.²

With time, more characters were modified to fit *Shuōwén*. Some of these modifications are shown in Table 8, others are described in Chapter II, like the changes from 寶 (*bǎo* precious) to 寶, 報 (*bào* report) to 報, 備 (*bèi* prepare) to 備, 變 (*biàn* change) to 變, 辨 (*biàn* distinguish) to 辨, 賓 (*bīn* guest) to 賓, 參 (*cān* join) to 參, 層 (*céng* layer) to 層, 插 (*chā* insert) to 插, 產 (*chǎn* produce) to 產, 嘗 (*cháng* taste) to 嘗, 懲 (*chéng* punish) to 懲, 乘 (*chéng* ride) to 乘, 遲 (*chí* be late) to 遲, 晷 (*chú* hay) to 芻, 處 (*chù* place) to 處, 窻 (*chuāng* window) to 窗, 牀 (*chuāng* bed) to 牀, 辭 (*cí* word) to 辭, 聰 and 聰 (*cōng* hearing) to 聰, 藁 (*cóng* collection) to 叢, 遞 (*dì* deliver) to 遞, 第 (*dì* number) to 第, 鬪 (*dòu* struggle) to 鬪, 對 (*duì* toward) to 對, 發 (*fā* send out) to 發 and 豐 (*fēng* rich) to 豐.

Shuōwén-based forms dominate the dictionaries, with the exception of 光 and 明. Once authorities had settled for those, traditional forms like 奇, 習 etc. found

1. *Yan shi jiaxun*, p. 32.

2. Yan died in 784 at the hands of the rebel Li Xilie 李希烈. In the eleventh and tenth centuries he was elevated as a model loyalist. See McNair 1998.

in old works were changed to 奇, 習 etc. in new editions.¹

TABLE 8. STANDARD FORMS MODIFIED ACCORDING TO *Shuōwén* (*Shuōwén*-based forms are underlined>)

AD100 <i>Shuōwén</i>	175c.245 Xi-Zheng Stone Class.	c.350 ² Wang Qian Stone Class.	Sui 674 Yù- Classics	c.700 Qian Classics	997 Yù- Classics	1007 Gān- Classics	1013 Lóng- Classics	1039 Guang- Classics	c.1330 Yù- Classics	1615 Jí- Classics	1716 Zì- Classics	1965 Zì- Classics	Sense
	píng shí	Xi- zì	zì piān ³	lù	kān	yun piān	yùn	jian	huì	xī	hua	zì- zì- diǎn dian	
	德	德	德	德	德	德	德	德	德	德	德	德	dé virtue
從	從	從	從	從	從	從	從	從	從	從	從	從	cóng from
龍	龍	龍	龍	龍	龍	龍	龍	龍	龍	龍	龍	龍	lóng dragon
革	革	革	革	革	革	革	革	革	革	革	革	革	gé hide
追	追	追	追	追	追	追	追	追	追	追	追	追	zhuī pursue
嘆	嘆	嘆	嘆	嘆	嘆	嘆	嘆	嘆	嘆	嘆	嘆	嘆	tàn sigh
黃	黃	黃	黃	黃	黃	黃	黃	黃	黃	黃	黃	黃	huáng yellow
番	番	番	番	番	番	番	番	番	番	番	番	番	fān time
高	高	高	高	高	高	高	高	高	高	高	高	高	gāo high
奧			奧	奧	奧	奧	奧	奧	奧	奧	奧	奧	ào profound
奇	奇	奇	奇	奇	奇	奇	奇	奇	奇	奇	奇	奇	qí ride
皆	皆	皆	皆	皆	皆	皆	皆	皆	皆	皆	皆	皆	jiē all
習	習		習	習	習	習	習	習	習	習	習	習	xí practice
鬼		鬼	鬼	鬼	鬼	鬼	鬼	鬼	鬼	鬼	鬼	鬼	guǐ devil
卑		卑	卑	卑	卑	卑	卑	卑	卑	卑	卑	卑	bēi humble
光	光	光	光	光	光	光	光	光	光	光	光	光	guāng light
明	明	明	明	明	明	明	明	明	明	明	明	明	míng bright

That dictionaries conformed did not mean that handwriters did. While dictionaries by the Song dynasty had agreed to adopt the *Shuōwén*-based 德, 革, 追, 黃 and 奇, the copier of the Yuan drama in Plate 1 used the traditional 德, 革, 追, 黃 and 奇. Moreover, he wrote neither the old standard form 龍 nor the new 龍, neither 歸

1. For example, 奇 in the 1013 version of *Yupian* was changed to 奇 in Qing editions, and the 日 at the bottom of 習 and 皆 of the Song edition of *Jiyun* which we have used to 白.
 2. From *Chūgoku hōsho sen*, vol. 11.
 3. We have only fragments of this book. Characters shown here are not entries, but part of the text.
 *. Inferred from analogous character 聽, 勒, 緹, 歸, 難, 燔, 審, 礪, 澳, 倚, 綺, 魏, 魄, 碑, 曠 or 統.

nor 歸, 鞭 nor 鞭, 嘆 nor 嘆, but shortened these characters to 尢, 婦, 鞭 and 爻.

In 1920, Qián Xuántóng, professor of Chinese at Yanjing University in Beijing, suggested a way to make good use of such short forms. Chinese students, he complained, were slower note writers than their Japanese colleagues. To increase writing speed, he proposed to adopt short forms, which he classified into five old types and three newly created ones, and to

- a) adopt ancient characters, like 匚 for 圍 [wéi enclose], 匈 for 胸 [xiōng chest] and 亼 for 集 [jí assemble].
- b) adopt customary characters, like 声 for 聲, 体 for 體 [tǐ body] and 刘 for 劉 [Liú].
- c) adopt cursive forms, like 东 for 東 [dōng east], 为 for 爲 [wéi be] and 彳 for 行 [háng trade]. [...]
- d) adopt phonetic loan characters seen in ancient books, like 辟 [pì refute] for 譬 [pì example], 道 [dào road] for 導 [dǎo lead] and 共 [gòng together] for 拱 [gǒng arch]. [...]
- e) adopt phonetic loan characters in popular use, like 姜 [Jiāng] for 薑 [jiāng ginger], 京 [Jīng] for 驚 [jīng startle] and 付 for 腐 [fǔ rot]. [...]
- f) adopt newly coined phonetic loan characters, like 范 for 範 [fàn model], 余 for 餘 [yú surplus] and 予 for 預 [yù in advance]. These are newly created forms of the e) type.
- g) adopt newly coined loans of characters with the same meaning, like 𠂇 for 旗 [qí flag], 由 for 鬼 [...].
- h) adopt newly coined forms with shortened strokes, like 厉 for 厲 [lì strict], 𧈧 for 蠱 [gǔ venomous insect] and 襲 for 襲 [xí assail].¹

It was after this that lists of short forms started appearing under titles like *Píngmín zìdiǎn*, *Jiǎnyìzì shuō* and the like.² In February 1935 the bimonthly *Tàibái* (Morning Star) and fourteen other Shanghai journals declared their intention to use two hundred short forms dubbed *shǒutóu zì* (offhand characters) in their columns.³ The declaration was also signed by personalities like Bā Jīn, Cài Yuánpéi, Guō Mòruò, Lǎo Shě, Yè Shèngtáo, a total of 311 persons. After *Tàibái* had adopted these short forms in April, the bimonthly *Lúnyǔ* (Analects) edited by Lín Yǔtáng followed suit, adopted a list of 105 partly different short forms and implored contributors to use these in their manuscripts.⁴

1. Qian 1920, pp. 111–114.

2. Fang and Ma 1927. Hu 1928. *Guoyin changyong zihui* 1932. Hai 1934. Xu 1934. Chen 1935. Ouyang 1935. Rong 1936.

3. “Tuixing shoutou zi yuanqi” 1935.

4. “Lunyu shixing jianbizi qishi” 1935. The differing forms were *Lunyu* 夔 for *Taibai* 变, 举

Now China had three orthographies. Unsurprisingly, the Education Ministry wanted just one. Declaring that “the results of compulsory and mass education are not outstanding” and that “one important reason for this is the complexity and diversity of character forms”, it published in August a First Batch of Short Forms, prescribing 声, 体, 刘, 东, 为, 厉, 归 etc. for 聲, 體, 劉, 東, 為, 厲, 歸 etc., in all 324 forms.¹ The principles of the compilers had been to “imitate but not create” or “to select and adopt short forms among already existing ones, and not to create new ones for those characters which have no such forms”, and “to select the more common form when there are many such forms”.² After July 1936, new books would be authorized for use in schools only if they used these forms.

Script reforms stir up resistance. One resister, Dài Jitáo, the president of the Control Yuan, is said to have to kowtowed in despair before the Kuomintang assembly while begging it to retain the traditional forms.³ The government was impressed and abolished the scheme in February the following year.

The odds for a reform of this kind might seem better in the revolutionary base areas, where “a simple and easy script was needed to write slogans and mimeographs, which led to the invention of ‘liberation characters’ like 拥护 and 胜利” for 擁護 (support) and 勝利 (victory).⁴ However, script reformers in these areas were busy propagating the *Latinxua sin wenz* (Latinized New Script) and had no time to waste on characters.

In 1949, these reformers got their break. On 25 August, their leader Wú Yùzhāng wrote to Chairman Máo and proposed to introduce *Latinxua sin wenz* in selected trial areas, but also, less expectedly, to “regularize the short forms of all kinds of characters.”⁵ Máo forwarded the letter to the language authorities Guō Mòruò, Mǎ Xùlún and Máo Dùn, who considered the time was not yet ripe for latinized script. Máo sent this answer on to Wú, who adjusted his position. When a Chinese Script Reform Society was inaugurated on 10 October, Wú described its first objective as research on and propaganda for a reform of characters.⁶ For the first time in 15 years, character simplification had better prospects than latinization.

These prospects improved further in June 1950, when Chairman Máo explicitly instructed Wú Yùzhāng to let script reform begin with character simplification, in

for 幸, 竟 for 竟, 齐 for 齐, 與 for 與 (興), 学 for 学, 养 for 养, 义 for 义, 众 for 众.

1. Jiaoyu bu 1935. The list had been compiled by the National Language Unification Commission and checked by Yuen Ren Chao 趙元任, Wang Yi 汪怡, Pan Zunxing 潘尊行, Zhang Jiong 張炯, Zhong Lingxiu 鍾靈秀, Wu Yanyin 吳研因 and Yan Liangjie 顏良杰.
2. Introduction to Jiaoyu bu 1935. ‘Imitate but not create’ 述而不作 is a quote from Confucius’ *Lunyu* 論語.
3. Xia 1974. Personal communication by Zheng Zhidong 郑支东 (Zheng Linxi 郑林羲) 1988.
4. Zheng 1984, p. 39.
5. *Jianguo yilai*, pp. 5–6. Much of the following text is based on this book.
6. Zhang and Fei 1980, p. 252 and *Jianguo yilai*, p. 7. Other objectives were research on the unification of the Chinese language and on minority scripts.

order “not to lose contact with reality and break with history”.¹ At this signal the Education Ministry itself, not some self-styled Script Reform Society, took action. The ministry proposed to select short forms on the basis of already existing forms and, when necessary, on the basis of cursive forms. By October it had prepared a list of 550 simplified characters.²

At the end of 1951, however, Chairman Máo gave Mǎ Xùlún, chairman of the new Preparatory Committee for Research on Script Reform, the often quoted instruction that the “script must be reformed, like other scripts of the world it must go towards alphabetization,” with the rarely quoted addition that “its form should be national, and the alphabet scheme should be worked out on the basis of the existing characters.”³ The call for an alphabet in a national form, meaning character form, threw the work performed on Latin script down the sink. The Chairman added, however, that characters were difficult to write by hand and should therefore be simplified. This was another step back for latinization and another forward for character simplification.

To deal with a Chinese-style alphabet and with character simplification, Premier Zhōu Ēnlái himself in December ordered the creation of a Committee for Research on Script Reform. In March 1952, Mǎ Xùlún notified this committee that simplification should follow regular patterns. Characters consisting of one significant and one phonetic component should retain the significant component and get a new phonetic component with the same reading as the original character. A call for rules was of course to be expected from the *Shuōwén* commentator Mǎ Xùlún. On this point there was dissent. While the committee members Wèi Jiàngōng and Lí Jǐnxī agreed with Mǎ, the member Yè Gōngchuò argued that characters were not regular to begin with and must be even less so after simplification, the aim was instead to make each character easy to recognize and easy to read for the masses.⁴ We will see in Chapter II how this discussion came to affect characters like 檳 (*bīng* betel nut) and 滄 (*cāng* dark blue).

The 1935 reformers had decided to adopt existing short forms only and not to create new ones. The new committee, too, adopted the ‘imitate but not create’ principle and decided not to make up new forms for characters for which there were already short forms in use. Thus far the group agreed with the 1935 reformers. “However,” the committee continued, “if a complicated common character has no

1. Report by Wu Yuzhang to meeting of Script Reform Society cadres 10 July 1950, see *Jianguo yilai*, p. 12. Public statement in February 1952, see Wu 1952.
2. “Dì yī pī jiǎntǐ zì chū biào” “第一批簡體字初表”, according to *Jianguo yilai*, pp. 13–14, 16. Acc. to Zheng 1957, p. 33, this list was completed in September and contained 555 characters.
3. Ma 1952. The Preparatory Committee for Research on Script Reform was created in May 1951 by the Education Department.
4. First meeting of the Character Adjustment Group of the Committee for Research on Script Reform on 25 March 1952. *Jianguo yilai*, p. 29.

current short form, nothing prevents us from looking for a new short form.”¹ In Chapter III.3 we will try to estimate how many such short forms were actually adopted.

While the Character Adjustment Group and the Alphabetization Group discussed principles, the rest of the committee staff was busy fighting the Three Scourges and Five Poisons, but “in July 1952 the work was set on the right track.”² By the end of 1952 the new schemes were shown to chairman Máo.³

His comment on the alphabets was discouraging:

The strokes are still too complicated. Some are harder to write than The National Phonetic Alphabet.⁴ Alphabetic writing need not be moulded into the complicated square frame pattern, which is impractical for handwriting, especially for writing connected strokes. It is because the direction of character strokes is disorderly that the cursive script has emerged, the cursive script has broken the tradition of the square form. No matter what, the alphabetic writing must be simple and it must use short strokes and cursive forms of existing Chinese characters. Generally the strokes should follow one direction, there is no need for complications. The scheme can be implemented only if it is really simple and easy.⁵

The requirement for a national but not square style must have paralysed alphabetizers. Character simplifiers were left with slightly more hope, although the Chairman said even their designs could be simpler, that simplified characters must be coined in a regular way, that even cursive forms should be used as a basis for new simplified forms, that the total number of characters in use must be radically reduced, and that only reducing characters both in form and number deserved to be called simplification.⁶ This made simplification difficult but not as hopeless as alphabetization.

The Character Adjustment Group set out to compose lists of simplified characters.⁷

1. Decided at the second meeting of the Character Adjustment Group on 16 May 1952. *Zhongguo wenzi gaige yanjiu weiyuanhui mishuchu* 1952, pp. 38–39.
2. Report by Ma Xulun on 25 March 1953 in *Zhongguo wenzi gaige yanjiu weiyuanhui* 1953. Three Scourges: corruption, waste, and bureaucracy. Five Poisons: bribery, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on government contracts, and stealing of economic information by private enterprise.
3. “*Zhongguo wenzi gaige yanjiu weiyuanhui juxing di san ci quanti huiyi*” 1953. *Jianguo yilai*, p. 38.
4. The semi-syllabic script invented in 1913, known as *bopomofo* (ㄅ ㄆ ㄇ ㄏ).
5. Report by Ma Xulun at a meeting of the Committee for Research on Script Reform on March 25 1953. *Jianguo yilai*, p. 38.
6. Mao’s comments on a list of 700 simplified characters which had been approved by the Committee for Research on Script Reform on 5 November 1952, related by Ma Xulun on 25 March 1953. *Jianguo yilai*, pp. 35, 38.
7. Different character lists and proposals were presented in February, June, July and October 1954. See *Jianguo yilai*, pp. 46, 49–50.

On 8 October 1955, the Committee for Research on Script Reform was promoted to Script Reform Committee under the sponsorship of the State Council. In January 1955 this body presented a Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme, consisting of three parts:

1. A Draft List of Simplifications of 798 Characters, including 1935 veterans like 声, 体, 刘, 东, 为, 厉 and 归 as well as 1955 appearances like 姜, 习, 龙 (lóng dragon), 运 (for 運 yùn transport), 动 (動 dòng move), 奋 (冀 fèn struggle), 斗 (鬪) and 敌 (敵 dí enemy).
2. A Draft List of 400 retained and abolished Variants, which abolished, as the title says, some variants, retaining instead “characters with simple strokes which already exist in print and are consistent with common handwriting habits, or characters which are relatively widely used in print”, like 高 and 奇 which the committee found simpler or more common than 高 and 奇 which it abolished.
3. A Draft List of Simplified Handwritten Character Components which recommended short handwritten forms for some characters which the committee did not venture to simplify in print. One would, for example, continue to print 卑, 貝, 鬼, 厲 and 其 but write 卑, 贝, 鬼, 厉 (sic) and 其.

The introduction of separate forms for handwriting needed explaining:

We have considered adopting cursive script to simplify characters. Our conclusion is that mixing cursive characters into printed texts is disharmonious. There are also problems with printing technique. However, we find the adoption of the running style and cursive style in handwriting useful.¹

This to some extent satisfied the Chairman’s instruction to make use of cursive characters in the new orthography.

The draft was accompanied by a form on which the reader could write his mind. By 14 February the committee had received one thousand forms, by the end of the month two thousand, and by 23 July five thousand one hundred and sixty-seven.² By October about two hundred thousand people had participated in discussions arranged by provincial and municipal education bureaus around the country.³

On this basis the committee, in September, prepared a Revised Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme, consisting of 512 simplified characters and 56 simplified character components like 贝 for 貝, 风 for 風 *fēng* (wind), 门 for 門

1. Zhongguo wenzi gaige weiyuanhui 1955, p. 3. The running style 行書 is a contracted handwritten style, although less contracted than the cursive style.
2. Zhongguo wenzi gaige weiyuanhui hanzi zhengli bu 1955, p. 37. “Hanzi jianhua fang’an caoan gongbu yi ge duo yue lai de qingkuang” 1955. *Duiyu hanzi jianhua fang’an caoan de yijian tiyao* 1955.
3. “Hanzi jianhua fang’an” 1956, p. 48. Wei Que 1955.

mén (gate) and 讠 for 言 *yán* (speech).¹ The separate handwritten norm was abandoned. Some amendments were made at a five day script reform conference in October and a few more after that. On 28 January 1956, the State Council ratified a Character Simplification Scheme consisting of 515 characters and 54 components.²

230 of these 515 became official already on 1 February. The other 285 and the 54 components were to be sent for consideration to the Political Consultative Committees of each province and after that introduced batch by batch. The first batch, of 95 more characters, was announced on 1 June.

During the Hundred Flowers campaign in 1957, the Script Reform Committee invited leading personalities to discussions. These discussions revealed aversions against the method of substituting complicated characters like 麵 (*miàn* flour) with shorter homonyms like 面 (*miàn* face).³ On 4 June, the committee decided to revoke substitutions which were not fully homonymous and ones which could cause confusion. In August the member Cáo Bóhán admitted that many substitutions could complicate the reading of classic texts and quotes and announced the imminent withdrawal of forty-five substitutions, already ratified ones like 出 (*chū* exit) for 齣 (*chū* play), 面 for 麵 and 云 (*yún* say) for 雲 (*yún* cloud), as well as planned ones like 发 (*fā* send) for 髮 (*fà* hair) and 胡 (*Hú*) for 鬍 (*hú* beard).⁴ Cáo even foresaw other changes: “As for the characters of List 1, which have already been implemented, we have taken account of suggestions made by personages from all walks of life and plan to ask the State Council to change those characters regarded as unsuitable.”⁵ On 10 January 1958 Premier Zhōu confirmed the revision plans:

A small number of characters have shown themselves to be unsuitable in practice. [...] If there really are unsuitable characters among the 230 characters in [the already official] List 1, one can make the necessary revisions. The Script Reform Committee is now collecting suggestions from all parts and is rearranging and revising the simplified characters. Anybody who has suggestions about simplified characters is welcome to send them to the Script Reform Committee to be taken into account. After that the final decision will be taken.

The Hundred Flowers had now faded. In September, the *Wénzì gǎigé* had urged to “expose and criticize rightist attacks on script reform”. In this atmosphere no one wanted to suggest revisions and join the attacked rightists.

The Hundred Flowers were followed by the Great Leap Forward, which made even characters bound on. On 15 May 1958 为, 拥 and sixty-eight more characters of the 1956 list were ratified, and on 15 July 1959 ninety-two more, including 习

1. *Hanzi jianhua fang'an* (xiuzheng caoan) 1955.
2. “*Hanzi jianhua fang'an*” 1956, p. 48.
3. “*Wenzi gaige wenti zuotanhui*”, pp. 6, 15.
4. Cao 1957 (b), pp. 28–29.
5. Cao 1957 (a), p. 2.

for 習, 凤 for 鳳 and the questioned 发 for 髮, leaving only twenty-eight characters of the 1956 scheme pending.¹

Some wanted more. In June 1958, the Script Reform Committee mouthpiece *Wénzì gǎigé* said “Character simplification is also in need of a Great Leap Forward”, continuing

there are some short forms which are widely used among the masses, but are not included in the two lists announced by the State Council. The Script Reform Committee should study and discuss these forms very carefully, and if it finds them adoptable, it should, on the approval of the State Council, announce them and let them become legal short forms. Some common ones are listed below. Everybody writes 建 [jiàn build] as 廾, 面 as 百, 原 [yuán original] as 厶, 源 [yuán origin] as 氵, 願 [yuàn wish] as 愿 (the form announced is 愿), 儒 [rú Confucian] as 亻, 蝶 [dié butterfly] as 夬 [...].²

Similar articles advocating forms like 芽 for 菜, 夕 for 餐, 点 for 点 (*diǎn* point), 北 for 冀 (*Jì* Hebei) 沝 for 酒, 苜 for 蒙 (*Měng* Mongolian), 宀 for 宣 (*xuān* declare), 灬 for 演 (*yǎn* perform) and 居 or 尸 for 展 (*zhǎn* display) followed. It turned out that the *Wénzì gǎigé* did not stand alone. On 22 April 1960, the Central Committee declared:

In order to accelerate the literacy campaign and alleviate children’s learning burden, it is necessary to simplify another batch of characters, so that each character whenever possible can be written with ten strokes or less. [...] For this task we must rely on the broad masses, which are very enthusiastic and capable in this field. The party committees in every province, city and area should instruct local structures concerned to propose a new batch of simplified characters, send it to the central Script Reform Committee for arrangement and pass it on to the Central Committee and State Council for approval.³

Subsequently, on 4 June the education bureau of each province was urged to invite teachers, publishers, artists, exhibition decorators and others to meetings to inform the Script Reform Committee about short forms used by the people. During the following months the committee received reports from these meetings and even from individuals who sent lists of short forms they had seen or invented (these letters are described in the bibliography). On this basis a new List of Simplified Characters proposing 芽, 夕, 北, 沝, 苜, 百, 亻, 厶, 居 and 328 other short forms was compiled by the committee by 1962.⁴

1. The remaining forms were 肱 (肱), 坝 (坝), 灿 (燦), 缠 (纏), 杆 (杆), 迭 (疊), 风 (風), 合 (合), 胡 (鬍), 回 (迴), 硷 (鹼), 篱 (籬), 砾 (礫), 疔 (瘡), 仆 (僕), 纤 (縴), 曲 (曲), 涩 (澀), 属 (屬), 铄 (鑠), 涂 (塗), 椭 (橢), 象 (象), 须 (鬚), 渊 (淵), 愿 (願), 脏 (臟) and 嘱 (囑).
2. Han 1958. Ji 1958.
3. Zhonghua renmin gongheguo jiaoyu bu 1960, p. 4.
4. 1962 nian ni gongbu di yi pi jianhua hanzi biao.

This list held a very advanced position. After all, the original 1956 scheme had not been fully implemented yet. Twenty-eight characters were still waiting for ratification, and the status of the simplified character components of the 贝, 风, 门 and 讠 type was still unclear. The 1959 announcement, the latest official word from the committee, said:

The simplified character components in the Character Simplification Scheme have been used in handwriting, stencils and offsetprinting for a long time. In typeprinted publications they will be introduced successively, in step with the carving and production of types, without further announcements.¹

In other words, write 贝, 风, 门, 财 (*cái* wealth), 问 (*wèn* ask) and 计 (*jì* count) if you have these types, or 貝, 財, 風, 門, 問, 計 if you do not. To clear up this impasse and validate the shorter forms once and for all, the committee and the ministry in April 1962 prepared a General List of Simplified Chinese Characters and sent it to the education bureaus of each province. However, Zhōu Ēnlái intervened, instructed the committee to initiate new discussions, to accept suggestions with open minds and to “consider revision of the characters already ratified by the State Council if people have objections.”²

Obviously this was not the time to promote a List of Simplified Characters containing 芽, 步, 汎, 百, 伙, 尻 and the like, so the committee left it buried in its cupboards. Instead it started arranging discussions as instructed by Zhōu. These revealed two problems. The masses were dissatisfied with the substitution of some homonyms and with some forms easy to confuse with other characters.

In October the State Council Secretariat phoned the committee to say that Premier Zhōu expected a revised simplification scheme to be ready for publication by the new year. On 9 November the committee sent an Opinion on the Revision of the Character Simplification Scheme (First Draft) to Zhōu, who gave his approval on the following day. On 9 February 1963 the committee sent a Report on the Work on Revision of the Character Simplification Scheme to the Premier, who agreed in principle, asked the committee to discuss it in plenum and send it back to him. By 3 March the committee had agreed on a Revised Character Simplification Scheme (Draft) with a few conservative revisions. After a few more changes this draft was sent to Zhōu on 31 April. All looked set for a revision of the scheme.

This time the committee had to wait, however. On 28 October it wrote to Zhōu and asked if the Central Committee, even if it might not have time to discuss characters just now, could ratify the simplified components part of the scheme. After waiting three more months, the Script Reform Committee sent the State Council a Request for Instructions concerning the Character Simplification Problem, saying:

1. “Tuixing di si pi jianhua hanzi” 1959.
2. Premier Zhou on meeting 20 May 1962. *Jianguo yilai*, p. 136.

Since Premier Zhōu was busy before going abroad, he has not had time to approve the revised draft. Because textbooks and some dictionaries are now waiting to be typeset, news and publishing units demand a clear norm for simplified characters in order to avoid confusion. We have therefore notified every unit concerned that until the publication of the revised draft, simplified characters should be used according to the original scheme published by the State Council in 1956, including the twenty-eight not yet implemented characters.¹

The State Council agreed in February, and in March 1964 the General List of Simplified Characters was published. This now so familiar list included all the 515 characters and 54 character components in the 1956 scheme. The changes envisaged in 1956, 1957 and 1962 had come to nothing because premier Zhōu had been too busy to sign them.²

The Script Reform Committee was dispersed by the Cultural Revolution. Organized script reforming was resumed by March 1972, when a Script Reform Office was set up by Academia Sinica. The *Hóngqí* (Red Flag) indicated the course of action by having Guō Mòruò answer a letter to the editor:

When the masses keep simplifying characters, it shows that the characters, and the script, must be simplified. This is the trend of our times and should not, and cannot, be forbidden. According to Chairman Máo's instructions, we must respect the creativity of the masses. Those who work with script reform should pay steady attention to the simplified characters used by the people, absorb those which can be adopted and in due time popularize them."³

Premier Zhōu Ēnlái on the other hand said in October that as far as language reform was concerned, promoting the standard language came first and simplifying characters second.⁴

Undeterred, the Script Reform Committee took on both tasks. It reassumed its recording of short forms and started publishing articles declaring that "the workers need simplified characters", that "the masses' tide of simplified characters cannot be stopped" and so on, preparing the ground for a new try with 芽, 步, 沆, 百, 伙 and 尻.⁵ In May 1975, the committee sent a Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme to the State Council for approval. An answer arrived in

1. *Jianguo yilai*, p. 156.

2. Or to very little. While the 1956 scheme substituted 疊, 覆, 干, 夥, 藉, 餘, 像, 徵 and 摺 with the shorter homonyms 迭, 复, 乾, 伙, 借, 余, 象, 征 and 摺, the 1964 list did so only in cases where the shorter forms could cause no misunderstanding. The 1956 scheme shortened 麼 to 么, the 1964 one in some cases only. The components 彡, 彳, 重 and 乌 in the 1956 scheme had been changed already in 1957 to 彡, 彳, 鱼 and 鸟.

3. Guo 1972, p. 85.

4. At a meeting with "a Chinese scientist with American citizenship". *Jianguo yilai*, p. 181.

5. Liu 1973. Shandong shifan 1975.

September from Premier Zhōu, who “raised objections concerning the number of simplified characters”, and reminded the committee of his priorities: “At present the question of propagating the standard language is not brought up as often as before. How can one write pinyin correctly if one does not learn the standard language?”¹

In January 1976 Zhōu died. On 20 May 1977, the committee made a new bid, asking the now Huà Guófēng-led State Council what to do with the draft, stressing that “the selected forms are simplified characters in use among the masses”, although, it admitted, “some new forms have been coined according to the patterns of the characters simplified by the masses.” In October the State Council agreed to publish the scheme and “solicit opinions from the broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers as well as from personages from all fields.”²

On 20 December 1977, newspapers published the Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme, which had, the text said, been “unjustly detained by the power-usurping [Gang of Four member] Zhāng Chūnqiáo” (not by Premier Zhōu) in May 1975.³ This draft consisted of two separate lists of characters. The 芽, 步, 点, 汛, 百, 伙, 尻, 尸, 忒, 迨, 泔 and other forms in List 1 were “already widely used among the masses” and could be used on trial in print in order to collect opinions. Those in List 2, whose “extent of use is not yet sufficiently wide”, had to be discussed further before being adopted. Thus having exhausted its capacity, the committee asked the public for help with simplifying remaining common characters with more than ten strokes, such as 增, 题 (*tí* topic), 篇 (*piān* article), 隔 (*gé* separate) etc.

The public willingly supplied opinions. 尸 looked too much like 尸 (*shī* dead body). 忒 looked too much like 忒, the form proposed for 愚 (*yú* foolish). 迨 was hardly simpler than the traditional 建. 一 inconsistently represented 茷 in 尸, 更 in 泔 and 冫 in 点. 泔 might easily be taken for an analogy to 伫 and 贮 and misread *zhù*.⁴ On 17 April, the Education Ministry gave in and instructed: “Textbooks for this autumn which have not yet been type-set shall not use the new simplified characters. Textbooks already printed with the new simplified characters need not be altered, but tuition shall still be carried out using the former characters.”⁵ Nothing was said about other books and newspapers. The public could see, however, that the new forms disappeared even from these.

Nobody was now certain what was valid orthography. In May 1980 Hú Qiáomù, president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told the committee it was time to make a clear announcement which characters to use and which not. The committee responded in July 1981 with a Revised Draft of the Second Character

1. *Jianguo yilai*, p. 188.

2. *Jianguo yilai*, pp. 191–192, p. 194.

3. “Zhongguo wenzi gaige weiyuanhui fabiao ‘Di er ci hanzi jianhua fang’an (caoan)’” 1977.

4. Opinions are collected in *Wenzi gaige tongxun* 1979:3–4.

5. “Jiaoyu bu guanyu xuexiao” 1978, p. 32.

Simplification Scheme, consisting of 111 characters “both established by custom and simplified in a rational way” without criticized forms like 尸, 恚, 汙, 迨 and 点. The rationality requirement was a 1981 addition.

To collect advice for further amendments, the committee in November sent 10 000 copies of the revised draft to key units in education, post, telegraph, publishing and defence.¹ The committee director Dǒng Chūncái declared that if the resulting version was accepted by the State Council, “the work on character simplification would in principle be finished”.² This abandoned the 1977 vow to simplify all common characters which had more than ten strokes.

The committee received 81 888 replies. Seventeen characters were supported by more than 80 000 respondents, eighty-seven by 70 000 to 80 000.³ Yet no reform was announced. Director Dǒng hinted why. For the New China News Agency he “expressed a wish to establish contacts with language and script scholars in Taiwan, in order to study and explore the standardization and modernisation of Chinese together”.⁴ He knew of course that the new leader, Dèng Xiǎopíng, favoured closer contacts with Taiwan. With some sort of Taiwanese backing he could, he may have thought, have presented the State Council with a list of characters deemed comprehensible and acceptable both to mainlanders and islanders. Even this last attempt to satisfy decision makers failed, however. Our last record of a revision of the second simplification scheme is from a Script Reform Committee meeting on 13 March 1982.⁵ In June 1986 the 1977 scheme was finally declared void by the State Council. Now there was only one way to write.

Or was there? The committee complained of a fad for old-style complex characters and set out to fight them alongside the just outlawed short forms.⁶ In December 1985 the Script Reform Committee assumed the now more fitting name State Language Commission, and its mouthpiece *Wénzì gǎigé* (Script Reform) became *Yǔwén jiànrè* (Language Planning). One of the first acts of the Language Commission was to write to the State Council and suggest a campaign against “the serious chaos which at present affects the characters used in society”.⁷ During the ensuing campaign schoolchildren, called “little woodpeckers”, were mobilized to detect and paint over irregular characters on shop signs and in street slogans. In 1989, the rank of Standard Character-using Model Street was introduced, and the Beijing Language Commission undertook to tidy up three hundred streets and elevate them to that rank.⁸

1. Fu 1982, p. 23.

2. Interview in October or November 1981. “Hanzi jianhua gongzuo” 1981.

3. Fu 1982, p. 23.

4. “Hanzi jianhua gongzuo” 1981.

5. *Jianguo yilai*, p. 224.

6 Fu 1984, p. 32. Wang 1985. Chen 1985. Fei 1985.

7. Guojia yuyan wenzi gongzuo weiyuanhui 1987 (1986), pp. 331–32

8. “Gao hao shehui yong zi guifanhua bing bu nan”, p. 48. Beijing shi yuyan wenzi gongzuo weiyuanhui 1990, p. 16.

Encouragement and persuasion did not give the desired results. By 1992 local authorities introduced fines for units using irregular characters in public. The Zhengzhou municipal executive imposed fines of up to 500 yuan on units which neglected to rectify signs containing unsimplified or oversimplified characters, and up to 1000 yuan for those creating new signs with these unwanted characters. Other cities followed suit.¹ Some municipalities extended the threat to sign-writing individuals, like Beijing which imposed “fines of 100 yuan per day and character until the character is corrected.”²

Effects of this were recorded. Researchers found, for example, that in five years the percentage of illicit complex characters in *Jiěfàng rìbào* advertisements sunk from 25.5 to 1.³ Fears are still voiced, however, that “coercive measures will not necessarily solve the problem”, and suggestions are made for some scheme which can “give consideration both to complex and simplified characters”.⁴

2. Japanese writing norms

In the fifth and sixth centuries, Japan took over Chinese script and its norms. Chinese dictionaries like *Yùpiān*, *Zìhuì* and *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* were authorities in Japan as in China. Still we might by the Tokugawa period (1600–1867) discern some disparity in the view on correctness. While we have seen that Chinese dictionaries since the 997 *Lóngkān shǒujìng* had prescribed the *Shuōwén*-based 黃, and since the 1615 *Zìhuì* the equally *Shuōwén*-based 高 and 奧, the Japanese encyclopedia *Zōho kagakushū* still in 1669 permitted itself to employ more traditional forms like 高, 黃 and 奧.⁵

Although slackness on this point might, perhaps, make Japanese writing a wee bit less difficult, it was still not easy. When Japanese society headed for reform in the late nineteenth century, script was one of many natural targets. Some proposed to swap the numerous and complicated characters for the native phonetic script hiragana, some for the native katakana, or for the Latin alphabet, others again wanted to limit the number of characters, or the number of their strokes.

It was the latter two projects which came to receive some official backing. In 1873 the Education Ministry prepared a *Shinsen jisho* (Newly-selected Character Dictionary) which limited the number of characters to the 3167 “most common ones in society” and shortened the forms of some.⁶ However, this manuscript was removed from the publishing list by the ministry later that year and from the surface of the earth by the 1923 Tokyo earthquake. Our information about it

1. *Guojia yuyan wenzi zhengce* 1996, pp. 396–469.

2. Hu 1996, p. 6.

3. Percentages from 1993 and 1998. Shanghai shi yuwei bangongshi 1998, p. 15.

4. Liu 1997, p. 39.

5. *Zōho kagakushū*, 1669, first vol. part 1, pp. 13a, 25a, part 2, p. 6b.

6. Described in Inokuchi 1982, p. 18.

comes from the ministry chief librarian, who read it earlier that year and commented: “Particularly interesting was this dictionary’s adoption of short forms. Although this is something anybody might envisage today, it was at that time a very daring step.”¹

Yes, by 1923 the adoption of short forms in dictionaries had become envisageable. In 1918 Hara Takashi, once the author of articles carrying titles like “Kanji shiyō no hai” (The Harm of Using Characters) and “Kanji genshō no hōhō” (How to Reduce Characters), had become prime minister.² By December 1919 his Education Ministry had issued a *Kanji seiri an* (Proposal for the Regulation of Characters), which alongside the traditional 從, 獨, 關, 歸, 聲, 圍 (*ji child*) etc. listed the “permitted forms” 從, 獨, 關, 歸, 聲 and 圍, which were “based in the main on habitual use in society”.³

In 1921 an Interim Committee on the Japanese Language was set up within the Education Ministry. This committee proposed to limit the number of characters to 1962, which it named in a “List of Characters for Common Use” presented in *Kanpō* (The Official Gazette) on 2 May 1923. “Since the prevailing opinion within the committee was to discard those Characters for Common Use which had complicated forms and replace them with short forms”, it added a “List of abbreviated Characters” containing 154 short forms including 從, 獨, 關, 歸, 聲 and 圍 to the scheme.⁴ Twenty newspapers in Tokyo and Osaka declared they would, “for the sake of the development of education and culture and especially to increase printing capacity”, apply the “List of Characters for Common Use” from 1 September 1923.⁵ However, on that day the great Kanto earthquake erupted and buried the plans.

The Interim Committee was still concerned that “regulation of character forms is an important goal, since the present practice of using all kinds of character forms alongside each other is extremely inconvenient, and characters, because of their complicated strokes, are very hard to learn and to use”.⁶ After more discussions the committee therefore published in 1926 a Proposal for the Regulation of Character Forms, which enlarged the 1923 list with forms like 竜 for 龍 and 單 for 單.⁷

In 1931 it looked as if the script might be reformed with the complex characters intact. In June that year *Kanpō* announced a committee proposal to reduce the number of characters to 1858, without changing character forms.⁸ Unforeseen by

1. Article by Shidehara Tan 幣原坦 in *Kyōiku kenkyū* 1 Feb. 1923, quoted in Inokuchi 1982, p. 18.
2. Articles on script reform collected in Hara 1900.
3. Monbushō 1919.
4. Hoshina Kōichi in *Kanpō* 1923.5.12, as quoted in Inokuchi 1982, p. 405. List of abbreviated Characters 略字表 in Inokuchi 1982, p. 407.
5. Inokuchi 1982, p. 38.
6. Hoshina 1926.
7. Rinji kokugo chōsakai 1926.
8. Rinji kokugo chōsakai 1931.

the Education Ministry, hostilities broke out in Manchuria in September, and the Japanese troops stationed there set out to occupy that territory. Newspaper reports were now crammed with names of Chinese persons, places and institutions, many of which were written with other characters than the chosen 1858. If these characters were replaced with kana, the reports would become unintelligible. The moment to reduce the number of characters was less opportune than ever and the scheme was put aside.

In 1934 the Interim Committee on the Japanese Language was replaced by the *Kokugo shingikai* (Japanese Language Council). Now that reduction of the number of characters was off the agenda, the Education Ministry instead requested the new council look at selection and unification of short forms.¹ After twenty-four meetings, the council turned out another “Proposal for the Regulation of Character Forms” in early 1937, which prescribed 56 short forms such as 関, 黄 and 双 (*sō* pair) for use in school books and common texts – but not in imperial edicts and laws – and permitted 161 more, like 従, 單, 独, 婦, 竜, 声 and 囿.² The proposal was not implemented, however, because it encountered opposition, as it has been said,³ or because the Cabinet became preoccupied with the war with China which broke out in July that year.

However, the war was not the concern of the Language Council, which toiled on. By June 1942 it had prepared a “List of Standard Characters” consisting of 2528 characters, of which 1134 were to be learned actively by pupils.⁴ According to this scheme, 関, 独, 婦, 双 and 74 other short forms would become standard forms, while 竜, 声, 囿 and 61 others were to be optional. In December the Education Ministry rendered the plan more harmless by increasing the list of characters to be learned actively to 2669 characters. This mattered little since Japan was now at war with most of the world and script reform was lower on the agenda than ever before.

The war ended, however, and reform became the word of the day. In November 1945, the ministry told the Language Council that complicated and unsystematically used characters were an obstacle to development and script reform was necessary.⁵ Conveniently for reformers, the Education Ministry was requested by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) to reduce the number of characters used in textbooks to 1500.⁶ Support for a reform was also anticipated from a delegation due to arrive from the U.S. on 5 March to assess Japanese education and advise SCAP on that matter. By 31 March the delegation presented a report

1. The Ministry asked the council to appoint a working group to this end in April 1935. Inokuchi 1982, p. 44.
2. Kokugo shingikai 1938.
3. Inokuchi 1982, p. 46.
4. Kokugo shingikai 1942.
5. Vice Minister Ōmura 大村 at meeting 27 Nov. 1945. See Inokuchi 1982, pp. 72–73.
6. Seeley 1991, p. 152.

advocating the adoption of Latin script, which could make “a great contribution to the transmission of knowledge and ideas across the borders”. The selection of the form of Latin script might, conceded the visitors, be delegated to a committee of Japanese scholars, educators and politicians.¹

Latin script was not what the Education Ministry had in mind and it chose to disregard the advice. It had already given the Language Council the following message:

Although all forms of administration in this country are carried out under the auspices of the allied powers, the Education Ministry will do its utmost to maintain autonomy in domestic affairs. The occupation authorities have expressed their consent on this point and declared that they will refrain from interference and not issue unnecessary directives.²

So the council continued its work on characters. In October 1946 it presented a list of 1850 *tōyō kanji* (Characters for Current Use), which included 131 short forms like 独, 関, 帰, 声, 双 and 囿. The council strengthened its case by pointing to the undeniable fact that the American educational delegation had “spoken of language reform in its report.”³ The Cabinet dealt quickly with the List of Characters for Current Use and ratified it in November that year.

Short forms like the 1919, 1923, 1926, 1937 and 1942 schemes’ 独, 関, 帰, 声, 双 and 囿 were now official. However, other once proposed forms like 従, 單 and 竈 were not. The Education Minister pushed on: “We have selected only those short forms which are at present widely used. We want to decrease the disparity between printed and written forms. As I see it, even printed forms should have few strokes. Character forms should be dealt with as soon as possible.”⁴

To this end, the Language Council, in July 1947, set up a committee consisting of representatives from press and publishing, which in November passed the baton to one dominated by educators.⁵ By June 1948 it had produced a *Tōyō kanji jitai hyō* (List of Forms of Characters for Current Use), which shortened 従 and 稻 to 従 and 稻, like earlier schemes, but also 單, 價 and 藝 to 單, 価 and 芸. The committee explained that “characters with complicated strokes have been simplified

1. Inokuchi 1982, pp. 70–71.

2. Vice Minister Ōmura at 27 Nov. 1945 meeting. From Inokuchi 1982, p. 73.

3. Japanese Language Council chairman Abe Yoshinari 安倍能成 at meeting 5 Nov. 1946. Inokuchi 1982, p. 76.

4. Education Minister Tanaka Kōtarō 田中耕太郎 at Language Council meeting. From Inokuchi 1982, p. 77.

5. The Committee on Regulation of the Printed Form of Characters 活字字体整理に関する協議会 had representatives from printing (9), press (7), government (7) and science (1). The succeeding Investigative Committee on the Regulation of Character Forms 字体整理に関する主査委員会 had a chairman from the Mitaka Japanese Language Research Centre and members from the press (2), Education Ministry (1), universities (3), schools (2) and The Kana Association (1). Inokuchi 1982, p. 95.

whenever possible [...] even in cases where the short forms have weak historic roots, if only their use in society is widespread”.¹

One member asked if it would not have been better to include even more characters, by picking short forms used in society and in China, for example “*权* is written *權* by students and others”. The Chairman advised caution, however, since “some wonder if even the present decision is not going too far.”²

This List of Forms of Characters for Current Use was submitted to the Education Ministry in June 1948. This time the Cabinet was in no hurry and did not ratify the list until April the following year. In May 1951 the Cabinet authorized 92 more characters needed in personal names, among them simplified ones like *龜* for *龜* and *弥* for *彌*.

No reform satisfies everybody. The newspapers’ organisation urged the Language Council to replace 28 of the 1850 characters with 28 others of their choice, and to simplify *燈* (*dēng* light) to *灯*. The Language Council seemed to favour this proposal, and published the characters in a *Tōyō kanji hyō shingi hōkoku* (Deliberative Report on the List of Characters for Current Use) in March 1954, but did not get around to asking the Education Ministry to confirm the list.³ The newspapers regarded the Deliberative Report as an approval and decided to adopt the twenty-eight new characters from April 1954. Some of these characters were simplified and thus it came about that characters like *竜*, *壤* and *溪* came to be used in print, even dictionaries, for *龍*, *壤* (*jō* soil) and *溪* (*kei* valley), without being ratified by the Language Council or the Education Ministry.

Although the Language Council had refrained from shortening these characters, it intended to proceed with further reform. The head of the council said he was “content with the designation ‘current use’ (which means ‘for the time being’) in Characters for Current Use”, since this opened the possibility “to set up a permanent committee to decrease the number of characters in the future, not only for the benefit of women, but also for the benefit of common people.”⁴ As it turned out, women and common people coped better than expected, and the List of Characters for Current Use could be replaced in 1981 by a longer 1945-character *Jōyō kanji hyō* (List of Characters for Common Use), which legalized a few more short forms, like *竜*, *灯* and *缶* (*kan* can).⁵

1. Speech by committee chairman Andō Shōji 安藤正次 at Language Council meeting 1 June 1948 in Inokuchi 1982, pp. 96–102.

2. Inokuchi 1982, p. 102.

3. Inokuchi 1982, p. 113.

4. National Language Council meeting 5 Nov. 1946. See Inokuchi 1982, p. 77.

5. *竜*, *壤*, *溪* and *灯* had been in the Deliberative Report on the List of Characters for Current Use and had been used in print already. *缶* (*罐*), *繩* (*繩*) and *螢* (*螢*) were new official forms.

Chapter II

Short forms from *a* to *f*

We will now look at Chinese and Japanese short forms of characters beginning with *a-* to *f-* in the pinyin transcription, corresponding more or less to the first one fifth of a Chinese dictionary.¹

If no other reference is given, Yin bone forms are from Xu 1988, Zhou bronze forms from Gao 1980 or Xu 1981, Han wood slip forms from Sano 1991 or Lu 1989, Han seal inscriptions from Luo 1978, Han and Jin stele forms from Fushimi 1989, later stele forms from Kitagawa 1975, Sano 1980 or Fushimi 1988, Japanese stele forms from Kitagawa 1991, calligraphers from the Han dynasty to the Ming dynasty from Lin 1976 or Fushimi 1964, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing blockprint forms from Liu 1930, and Japanese stone stele forms from Kitagawa 1991. Character etymologies are from Karlgren [1957] 1964 and Shirakawa 1994.

愛 爰 ài love

心 is hard to squeeze into 愛, so some writers compressed it to 一.² This practice continued for fourteen hundred years and became official in February 1956.

礙 𨔵 碍 ài obstacle

Shuōwén said this character “is written with 石 [stone], and the phonetic is 疑 [*ŋiəŋ].” Our earliest extant ‘obstacle’ in clerk style, however, is a 𨔵 on an AD 148 stele which says a cliff road project 𨔵𨔵弗前 (met an obstacle and could not advance).³ In the Tang dynasty, 𨔵 appears for 礙 in Dunhuang manuscripts, in the early Song dynasty in *Guāngyùn* and *Jíyùn*, which described 𨔵 as a variant of 礙.⁴ As late as 1084, Sīmǎ Guāng wrote 設無𨔵大會於太極殿 (an undisturbed meeting was arranged at the Taiji Hall) with 𨔵.⁵

1. Characters with more than one reading will be found under the most common one, here defined as the one which has the longest entry in *Xinhua zidian*.
2. Cuiqin statuette 崔勤造象 (AD 519). Kou Ping epitaph 寇憑墓誌 (Northern Wei 386–534).
3. The Shimen eulogy 石門頌. *Chūgoku hōsho sen*, vol. 3. 𨔵 represents 𨔵 (*dì* move).
4. Sixteen 𨔵 in Dunhuang manuscripts are listed in Pan 1978, item 1434.
5. *Zizhi tongjian*: 陳宣帝: 太建十四年: 九月.

This use of 尋 for 礙 clashed with *Shuōwén*, which said 尋 meant 得. Perhaps it was to avoid this conflict that writers started enlarging the 尋 meaning ‘obstacle’ with 石 to 碍, like the poet Qí Jǐ (863?–937?), who wrote about a traveller who 舉頭還有碍低眼即無妨 (舉頭還有礙, 低眼即無妨 raised his head and still faced the impediment, then lowered his eyes and met no hindrance).¹

Once the more explicit 碍 had come into use, the ambiguous 尋 fell into oblivion. Old texts with 尋 now had to be explained. In 1167, the commentator Hóng Kuò found it necessary to tell his readers that 尋 in 遯尋弗前 meant 碍, and in 1285 Hú Sānxǐng commented on Sīmǎ Guāng’s 1084 text: “尋 is the same as 礙. Monks write like this.”²

碍 marched on to Japan, where the Language Council proposed in 1942 to make this form one of the planned 2528 new official characters. The council’s final List of Characters for Current Use, however, contained only 1850 characters and found no place for 礙/碍. Since the council did not recommend 礙/碍 for use, it need not announce a short form for it. There was still a need for a short way to write the common word 障礙 (*shōgai* obstacle), however. The council avoided this problem by stipulating the written form 障害 with 害 (*gai* harm), which rendered sound fully and sense fairly. Nevertheless, guardians of precision snub the Language Council and write and print 障碍.³

The 害 option was not open for the Script Reform Committee of China, where 害 is read *hài* and cannot substitute 礙. The committee saw no problem with 碍, however, and adopted this form in February 1956.

骯 肮 *āng* dirty

The 1955 simplification scheme proposed to amputate the 夨 (bones) in 骯 and write 肮. Of this 肮 we have no former record. Zhào Tàijùn from Shandong University claimed he had never seen it before.⁴ It is therefore not surprising that the Script Reform Committee hesitated until 1964 before making 肮 official.

襖 袄 *ǎo* jacket

In 1958 襖 was officially substituted by the shorter 袄. The shorter 夭 *yāo* phonetic had come into use by about 1671, when *Zhèngzì tōng* (All About Correct Characters) declared that “襖 is customarily written 袄”.

奧 奥 *ào* profound

奧 is said to depict the far end of the house (宀) where one holds up (扌) offerings (采).⁵ The offering was shortened from 采 to 米 in 1949 in Japan and 1965 in

1. *Bailian ji*, vol. 4: 船窓.

2. *Li shi*, vol. 4. Comments on *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 in *Si ku quanshu*, vol. 307, p. 715.

3. See for example *Kenkyusha’s New Pocket Japanese-English Dictionary* 1964.

4. Zhao 1957, pp. 165–166.

5. *Liushu zheng’e* c. 1350, 號 rhyme.

China.¹ This change has been backed up by claims that “there were examples of this already in clerk script.”²

This is an understatement. In Han clerk style, forms with the bald 米 are the only ones found, as well as in early inscriptions in square style, and in dictionaries up to the Ming dynasty, as we saw in Chapter I. Not everybody was content with 米, however. *Shuōwén* wrote 廩 with a twist on top of the 米, which made it distinct from 米 (rice). Yuan and Ming commentators therefore insisted that the customary form with 米 was wrong.³ *Zi huì* and *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* took note and established the standard form 奥 with 采.

This process is analogous to the change from 蕃 to 番 which had been imposed earlier (see Chapter I above and 播 *bō* below).

懊 懊 忼 ào regretful

忼 for 懊 is an analogy to the older 袄 for 襖 *ǎo*. We first hear of 忼 in the 1927 dictionary *Píngmín zìdiǎn*.

Suggestions to include 忼 in the 1955 simplification scheme were passed over.⁴ In 1977 忼 fared somewhat better, made it into in List 1 of the Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme, and was used in print for some months.

澳 澳 沃 ào bay

After the publication in 1955 of the Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme, a *Yǔwén zhīshí* article argued that “once 襖 has been simplified to 袄, all characters with the component 奥 can be simplified to 沃, for example 澳 can become 沃, 澳 沃 etc.”⁵ One debater objected that “沃 is used in 肥沃 [*féiwò* fertile]. If one writes 沃門 [for 澳門 Macao] nobody will understand”.⁶

People were soon to get used to such use of 沃, however. In 1960 two correspondents from Guangdong, the province surrounding Macao, informed the Script Reform Committee that one could see 沃 used for 澳.⁷ Soon this practice had spread further. In 1962, the Beijing *Guāngmíng rìbào* complained: “沃 is read *wò* and means ‘fertile’. Some now use it as a short form for 澳 (*ào*) and write 澳洲 as 沃洲. This way of writing is completely wrong.”⁸

沃 was proposed for 澳 in List 2 of the abortive 1977 Second Simplification Scheme, but was discarded in the 1981 Revised Scheme.

1. “*Yinshua tongyong hanzi zixing biao de ji ben neirong*” 1965.
2. Yamada 1958, p. 40.
3. *Zi jian* c. 1330, 號 rhyme. *Liushu zheng'e* c. 1350, 號 rhyme. *Sushu kanwu* 1610, 效 rhyme. *Zi kao* 1617, 去 tone.
4. Proposed in Guan 1955.
5. Yun and Jun 1955, p. 21.
6. Xu Yihui 1955, p. 8.
7. Letters dated 1960.6.8 from Chaoan and 1960.10.21 from Guangzhou.
8. Chong 1962.

芭巴 *bā* banana
笆巴 *bā* basketry

In marketplaces 芭蕉 (banana) is commonly written 芭蕉 or 芭交. We have records of this practice since 1975, when a letter from a group of worker, peasant and soldier students at Shandong Normal Institute told *Guāngmíng rìbào* that “the masses of Shandong have substituted” 巴 for 芭, 笆 and 靶.¹ In the 1977 simplification scheme the Script Reform Committee proposed to change both 芭 and 笆 to 巴.

罷罷 𠄎 𠄎 *bà* stop

By the end of the Han dynasty some writers had connected the two 𠄎 and wrote 罷.² This form became popular and was good enough for a famed calligrapher like Ōuyáng Xún (596–658). Still the Tang *Gānlù zìshū*, the Song *Yùpiān* and later dictionaries stuck to 罷.

Yuan blockprinters peeled the left side off 罷 and wrote 𠄎. Their Qing colleagues did the same to 罷 and wrote 𠄎.³

The Yuan form 𠄎 disappeared early. Without competition 𠄎 became official with the first batch of simplified characters in February 1956.

霸朝 霸霸 𠄎 𠄎 *bà* hegemony

In 1986 a poster in Beihai in Guangxi warned against scoundrels who 欺行霸市 (欺行霸市 *qīxíng bàshì* organize trickery and dominate the market). The guardian of order had shortened the top of 霸 to 𠄎 and substituted the bottom with the phonetic 伯 *bó*.

The resulting 𠄎 is one of a long line of forms which have been used to get around the tedious 霸. One may wonder how a character meaning ‘hegemony’ or ‘despotism’ came to be burdened with the components 雨 (rain), 革 (leather) and 月 (moon) in the first place. The reason is that this character, like so many apparent anomalies, is a loan. The older sense of 霸 is ‘new moon’, which explains 月. The phonetic 鞞 *p’ak* meant ‘to soak’, which explains 雨 and 革.

Some scribes lessened their burden by dispensing with 雨 and writing 朝 only. This 朝 is actually our oldest extant form, found in the so-called Lǎo zǐ B manuscript from about 200 BC which was excavated at Mawangdui in Hunan. Here the ruler is called 國朝, 朝王 or 朝者 instead of 國霸 etc.⁴

Others avoided 霸 *pak* altogether and substituted the almost-homonym 伯 *pak*, which otherwise meant ‘elder brother’, like the pre-Qin or Han authors and copiers of *Guóyǔ* (Tales of the States), *Zuǒzhuàn* (Zuo’s Chronicles) and *Zhànguó cè*

1. Shandong shifan xueyuan 1975.

2. In model text Jianji zhibiao 薦季直表 from AD 221. *Chūgoku hōsho sen*, vol 11, p. 13.

3. 𠄎 in blockprint *Quanxiang Sanguo zhi pinghua* 全相三國志平話 (1321–1328), 𠄎 in *Mulianji tanci* 目蓮記彈詞, acc. to Liu 1930, p. 63.

4. “Lao zi yi ben”, line 28 upper part, 32 lower part, 146 upper part.

(The Book of the Warring States), who wrote 伯諸侯, 晉之伯 and 伯首 for 霸諸侯 (dominate the nobles), 晉之霸 (the ruler of Jin) and 霸首 (ruler).¹ In the Han dynasty, the historian Bān Gù (AD 32–92) still expected readers to understand that 文公伯諸侯 meant ‘Duke Wen ruled over the nobles’. His commentator, Yán Shīgǔ (581–645), however, did not and added “伯 is read 霸.”² This was advisable, since 霸 had by then lost its *g* ending, was read *pa* and evoked no associations with 伯 *pak*.

Although 伯 was now no good, there were other ways to shorten 霸. Already Han writers shortened the 雨 top to 𠄎, or further to 𠄎, or shortened 革 to 手. This gave forms like 霸 and 霸.³

On a monument from AD 308 the top is written with the compromise 𠄎.⁴ This is the origin of the 𠄎 which appears as an alternative form in the *Xīnhuá zìdiǎn* (New China Dictionary) and some other dictionaries. The 𠄎 top has not always been a second-rate alternative. In the Wei and Tang periods it was the most common top, and 霸 with 𠄎 is the form used in Zhiyǒng’s model text *Qiān zì wén*. Later, however, the *Gānlù zìshū* (c. 700), *Guǎngyùn* (1008) and other dictionaries endorsed the more *Shuōwén*-like 霸 with 雨.

Perhaps surprisingly, the Script Reform Committee of China did not impose the shorter 霸 for 霸 in 1955. It appears it had more radical plans for this character. In May the committee’s mouthpiece *Yǔwén zhīshí* published a letter arguing that “when the masses have already created a simplified character, like 𠄎 for 霸 and 𠄎 for 懺, we should not retain the original one.”⁵ This 𠄎 or 𠄎, with 伯 *bó* below as a phonetic, was on record since 1935.⁶ Another reformer promoted 𠄎 with the still shorter 巴 *bā* phonetic.⁷ In 1957, a teacher complained that his pupils used this form in compositions.⁸ By 1960, the committee also had received reports of the still simpler form 𠄎, and by 1975 of 坝, a homonym which otherwise means ‘dam’.⁹

In 1962, the committee was told to prepare a new list of simplified characters. It did not propose one of the forms already created by the masses, however, but the new 𠄎, with the argument: “If this character is written 𠄎, it will still have many strokes. If we instead simplify to 𠄎, the phonetic will be easy to read out,

1. *Guoyu*. 吳語. *Zuozhuan*: 昭公十就九年. *Zhanguo ce*: 齊策六. From Gao 1989, pp. 922.

2. *Han shu*: 地理志. From Gao 1989, p. 923.

3. 霸 with 𠄎 in the “Lao zi yi ben” manuscript from Mawangdui. 霸 with 手 on wood slip 288.6 from Juyan site A32 (82–4 BC). 霸 with 𠄎 on wood slip 133.20 from Juyan site A8 (69 BC–AD 29). 霸 with 𠄎 and 手 on wood slip 3A from Gangu in Gansu, dated AD 159.

4. Shixian 石鮮 stele, see Fushimi 1989, p. 759.

5. Wang Tonghan 1955.

6. Ouyang 1935, p. 9. *Jianbizi* 1951, p. 41.

7. Chen 1955, p. 123.

8. Fan 1957. Similar account in Huang 1958.

9. 𠄎 in letters 1960 (g), 1960.9.30 (b) and 1975.6.20. 坝 in letter 1975.4.17.

and the signfic will be easy to comprehend.”¹ Of this 𠄎 we have no record of practical use neither before nor after.

The committee’s next chance came in 1977 with the Second Simplification Scheme. This time it did choose one of the forms in actual use, namely 𠄎. This form was included only in List 2, however, of characters designated for further discussions. The discussions were disappointing for 𠄎. The Guangdong Script Reform Committee seemed not to know the form: “There should be as few new characters as possible. [...] Some people think that we should, as far as possible, adopt characters that the masses are used to using, like 𠄎 for 要 and 坝 for 霸.” The Yixing Education Bureau wrote: “The masses in our area have become used to writing 霸 as 坝. A change to 𠄎 will make the character both hard to remember and hard to write. (The 雨 top is inconvenient to write, and one gets the general feeling that 𠄎 is something like ice or snow).”² The committee listened and dropped 𠄎 from the revised 1981 list.

In Japan, the 1923, 1926 and 1938 script reform schemes all proposed to use the shorter 西 top. However, when a reform finally took place in 1946, 霸 did not earn a place among the 1850 official Characters for Current Use, so no ruling was given on its shape. Nevertheless 霸 was widely used in print, and when the Language Council finally put ‘hegemony’ on the list of Characters for Common Use in 1981, it was in the shape of 霸. Thus higher ambitions have left China with a more complex official form than Japan.

壩 坝 坝 坝 *bà dam*

Song dictionaries said 坝 *bà* means ‘river bank’ or ‘plain’. The Qing *Zhèngzìtōng* added ‘dam’. So by now 坝 had been loaned for the homonym 壩 (dam). Or, in other words, 坝 had become short for 壩.

The right side of 坝 is the phonetic 貝 *bèi*. Many enlarged this component to 具 or 貝.³ This may be due to confusion with the character 坝 *jù*. This confusion was resisted by the Ming dictionary *Zì huì*: “坝 is read 具 [*jù*]. Dyke. It is different from 坝. [...] 坝 is read 壩 [*bà*]. Hole for seeds. It is different from 坝.”

When the Script Reform Committee proposed to shorten 壩 to 坝, it became clear that *Zì huì*’s resistance had been futile. One debater said 坝 “does not agree with the simplified form the masses are accustomed to. [...] the customary simplified form is 坝”. Another asked: “Is it not a mistake to simplify 壩 to 坝? (The character in common use is 坝.)” Reformers did not deny that forms with 具 and 貝 were common, but insisted they were erroneous.⁴

This conflict between habit and logic delayed the ratification of 坝 until 1964.

1. 1962 *nian ni gongbu di yi pi jianhua hanzi biao* [p. 3].

2. Zhu 1978.

3. For example, a map in *Dongtai xian zhi*, 1817, vol. 1, p. 80, shows the place names 信坝, 義坝 and 仁坝, but also one 智坝 with 貝.

4. Yu 1955, p. 29. Zeng 1955. Yi 1955, p. 14 and Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 31.

闆板 *bǎn* boss

In February 1956 the Script Reform Committee replaced 闆 with the homonym 板 which otherwise means ‘plank’. The reformer Chén Guāngyáo asserted: “People in the Changjiang area call a shop manager 老闆, which they usually write 老板. These two characters have been used interchangeably for a long time.”¹

辦办 *bàn* do

In and after the Han dynasty, the *biàn* phonetic in 辦 was written 𣪠, 𣪡, 𣪢, 𣪣 and so on.² The form varied even in the canons: *Shuōwén* said 𣪠, the Xiping Stone Classics 𣪡, the *Zhēncǎo qiānzìwén* 𣪢. Tang calligraphers followed *Shuōwén* and established the present 辦 standard.

Yuan blockprinters avoided quandaries by contracting both 辛 to 丩. The resulting 办 persisted and was made official by the Script Reform Committee in February 1956.

瓣弁 *bàn* valve

In Japanese, 瓣 is read *ben*, identically to 辦, 辯 and 弁. Once Japanese scribes had begun to shorten 辦 and 辯 to 弁 (see *biàn*), it was natural to treat 瓣 likewise. We have record of 弁 for 瓣 from the end of the Moromachi period (before 1568).³

In 1946, the Japanese Language Council made 弁 official both for 瓣, 辦 and 辯.

幫幫帮邦 *bāng* help, gang

幫 is a relatively recent character. It enters our records with the dictionary *Guǎngyùn*, which says it means ‘cover shoes with cloth’. Later it was loaned for the more common sense of ‘help’. Soon after 幫 had been assigned this more important function, writers dismembered the 帛 (silk) signific and wrote 幫, a form recorded about 1270 in the writing guide *Liùshū gù* (Reasons Behind the Six Character Categories). Later, writers substituted the 封 *fēng* phonetic with the somewhat shorter 邦 *bāng*, as in the 帮 form seen in documents from the Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864).⁴ Later again, economizers substituted the whole character with the phonetic (which traditionally means ‘state’), as we see in a handwritten resolution from 1943 urging the people of Jiangsu not to 邦助敌人作事 (*bāngzhù dírén zuò*

1. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 8.

2. Including variants of 辦 and 辯.

3. In transcript of poem “Seisen Tō-Sō sen ka senshu shi kaku” “精選唐宋千家聯珠詩格”, according to Yamada 1958, p. 36.

4. Wu 1958, p. 43. 丰 is actually a regression to an older form. 圭 in 封 and 幫 comes from the phonetic 丰 / 𠂔 / 𠂕 **p'ung*, a picture of a plant or flower, which became 丰 in clerk and square characters like 峰, 蚌 and 邦. It was only in the combination 封 that the flower was reinterpreted and enlarged to a pile of earth.

shì help the enemy by working for him).¹

The Script Reform Committee ignored this innovation and instead made 幫 official in February 1956. Use of 邦 persisted, however. The following year a teacher from Zhejiang said in *Guāngmíng rìbào* that 8 of his 154 pupils wrote 邦 for 幫 in their compositions.² In 1976 this practice turned public, as posters against the 四人邦 (sì rén bāng gang of four) abounded.

The following year, the Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme proposed to make this use of 邦 official. However, a *Guāngmíng* article pointed out that this would associate the state with ‘gang’ and ‘clique’.³ Heedful, the committee withdrew 邦 from the revised 1981 scheme. The form lived on, however, and in 2005 writers were still warned against writing phrases like 邦助 and 匪邦 (*fěibāng* pack of bandits) which “appear in society today”.⁴

In Japanese, 幫 is not a common character and was not one of the 1 850 Characters for Current Use. The Japanese Language Council has therefore made no decision as to its form. Nevertheless publishers and dictionary editors use the shortened form 幫.

寶寶宝 *bǎo* precious

In some early inscriptions, ‘precious’ is simply written 缶 (缶) with the phonetic which is today read *fǒu* and means ‘jar’.⁵ This may have been the original way of writing ‘precious’. Already on Yin bronzes, however, the jar was most often replenished with 玉 (jewels) and 貝 (money) and sheltered in a 宀 (house). This gave us the expressive but burdensome structure 寶.

Some lightened their burden. Yin bone diviners might write 寶 (寶) or 寶 (寶) without the jar, Zhou scribes 寶 (寶) without the jewel, 寶 (寶) without the money, 寶 (寶) without either, or, later in the Warring States, 寶 (寶) without the house.⁶

It seems the Qin reformers prescribed the full form. Nevertheless variation of some sort prevailed. The shape of the jar had varied in Zhou seal script and continued to vary in clerk script; on Han monuments it is written variously as 參,

1. *Jiangsu kangzhan*, 1987, item 326.

2. Fan 1957.

3. Wu Jiafeng 1978.

4. “Wenzi – rongyi wuyong” 2005.

5. 缶尊彝 (precious adoration cup) on the Gangjie zun 剛劫尊 and Gangjie lu 剛劫卣 from the Chengwang period (1042–1019 BC). In Ma 1988, items 29, 30.

6. Shortened forms on Yin Period I (1200–1181 BC) bones in Xu 1988, p. 804, but full forms on late Yin bronze vessels 5 and 6 in Ma 1988. 寶 on the Qin gui 禽簋 (Cheng wang, 1042–1019 BC, Ma 1988, item 27) and on the Fuji shi gui 鬲季氏簋 (Late Western Zhou, 893–771 BC, Rong 1959, p. 415). 寶 in the 781–670 BC sample in Chapter I, further examples in Rong 1959, p. 416, and Ma 1988, item 515. 寶 on the Jiyaomu 姑晉母 tripod (early Zhou 1045–974), Shimei ding 師眉鼎 and Shimei gui 師眉簋 (Middle Western Zhou, 973–894, Ma 1988, items 326, 327). 寶 on Warring States ceramics. Similar forms on wood slips from Houma (497–489 BC).

尔, 尔, 尔 or 击. 尔 came to dominate and was used by influential Jin, Sui and Tang calligraphers like Wáng Xīzhī, Zhìyǒng, Ōuyáng Xún. By the Tang dynasty, everybody had come to write 寶.

The calligraphic authorities were challenged by the writing guide *Gānlù zìshū*, which accepted only 寶 with 缶 as correct. Apparently the author Yán Yuán sūn found 寶 with 尔 too deviant from the *Shuōwén* form with 缶. *Gānlù zìshū*'s 776 successor *Wǔjīng wénzì* agreed with Yán, emphasizing that “寶 is written with 缶. Writing with 尔 is wrong.” This view has prevailed, although thorough dictionaries still mention the alternative 寶 with 尔.

Song blockprinters dodged the problem by dropping the problematic 缶/尔 component altogether, and the bulky 貝 as well, and wrote 宝. This form became popular and was among the first short forms to become official both in Japan and in China.

爆炸 *bào* burst out

The left side 暴 means ‘to dry’ or ‘sudden’. The sun on top exposes ‘sudden’ as a loan. The related sense of ‘burst out’ was specified with a fire on the left.

At some stage the enlarged 爆 assumed the additional sense of ‘quick-fried’. This tested the patience of menu writers. Their patience had run out at least by 1951, when the form 炸, with the short phonetic 卜 *bǔ*, was “in use in society” according to the character collection *Jiǎnbǐzì*.

The Script Reform Committee proposed to make 炸 official in 1962, 1977 and 1981. This failed, but restaurants continue to offer 炸肉 (quick-fried meat) dishes.¹

報報報 报报报 *bào* avenge, report

Yin bone forms show an avenging hand, 又 in the modern character, bullying a man (𠄎) with his arms (二) in shackles (幸). Clerk style writers could not agree how to reproduce these images. On Han steles, the shackled arms on the left are rendered 幸 or 幸, the bullied man on the right 𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎 or 𠄎. Jin, Wei and Tang calligraphers were more consistent and wrote 報 with 幸 and 𠄎. This standard has persisted, except that Song, Ming and Qing dictionaries restored the hand to 又 and prescribed 報. Since that, the dictionaries’ 報 has competed with the calligraphers’ 報.

These more or less standard forms were contracted at an early stage. Already on Han wood slips we find left sides shortened to 𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎 or 𠄎.² Forms with 𠄎 on the left persisted, and in February 1956 the Script Reform Committee made 报 with 𠄎 official.³

1. A 公炸肉丁 seen in 1994 on a Baoding restaurant menu.

2. Slip 495.4A from Juyan site A35 (containing slips dated 85–2 BC) records a pledge to 报厚恩 (報厚恩 repay a large debt of gratitude).

3. 报 appeared in eleven of the vernacular blockprints investigated in Liu 1930, 报 in one.

In Japan the habit was to shorten the 幸 part slightly differently to 𠂔.¹ This custom seems to have died out by the twentieth century, however, and Japanese character simplification schemes left 報 alone.

貝 貝 bèi cowry

Short 貝-like versions of the character component 貝 appear already in the oldest clerk style inscriptions. A map from 239 BC excavated at Tianshui in Gansu designates place names like 貞里 for 貞里 and 九貝 for 九貝.² Blockprints from the Song dynasty onwards shorten 貝 sometimes to 貝, sometimes to 貝.

The 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme proposed to write 貝 but print 貝. The 1956 scheme gave up this plan and prescribed 貝 both in print and handwriting. The prescription was not implemented until 1964.

備 備 備 备 bèi prepare

Traditional dictionaries prescribe 備. In early times, however, in the Han and Jin dynasties, it was written shorter as 備 or 備. In the sixth century, some stele writers made it still simpler by compressing the bottom 用 to 田, writing 備, 備 or 備.³ Others on the other hand expanded the character to 備.⁴

One can understand 田 writers. 田 is easier to squeeze in than 用. But why would anyone expand the top to 艹? Why did Yán Yuánsūn say in *Gānlù zìshū* that 備 was more correct than 備? Because, we must presume, they had read *Shuōwén*, which says the right side consists of “用 and a shortened 苟”, and therefore wrote with a grass (艹) top. From the Song dynasty onwards, dictionaries wrote this grass top as 艹 and prescribed the now traditional 備.

Handwriters kept 備 alive, however, and when the Education Ministry proposed to simplify characters in 1935, 備 was their natural choice.

Twenty years later, the Script Reform Committee faced a less straightforward choice. By then, a new short alternative had appeared, namely the 亻-less 备, which was mentioned in *Wénhuì bào* in 1950.⁵ Without hesitation the committee chose the new but shorter form and made it official in 1956 with the first batch of simplified characters.

We would expect the longer 備 to disappear. As late as 1985, however, a *Wénzì gǎigé* reader complained that “many discarded variants are still seen written in the streets, like [...] 備 備 [...]”⁶

1. The 1753 writing guide *Wakai seika* said 狻 was short for 報. Earlier, in a letter from 1278, we find 狻申 for 執申 (*torimōshi send*). *Enshū komonjo sen: Shōen hen.*, item 50.
2. Cao 1989, p. 79.
3. 備 on the Zhang Menglong 張猛龍 stele (522) etc. 備 on the Yang Qian 楊乾 epitaph (Eastern Wei 386–536). 備 on the Wenquan eulogy 溫泉頌 (Western Wei 535–557) etc.
4. Zhang Ju 張矩 and Wei She jun furen Sun shi 尉社君夫人孫氏 epitaphs (Northern Zhou, 557–581) etc.
5. Huang 1951 (1950), p. 17.
6. Chen 1985.

Japanese records of this character start with a 備 from 707, and continue with 備, 備, 備 etc.¹ For some time, in the Tokugawa period, shortened forms without 亻 seem to have been in use. The 1692 writing guide *Itaiji ben* said “備 is the same as 備”, and the 1757 *Dōsai suihitsu* that one may shorten 備 to 菑.² Dictionaries promoted 備, however, and were obeyed, so that by the twentieth century we find records of 備 only. Accordingly the official Japanese form remains 備.

鼻 鼻 *bí* nose

In 1936, the paleographer Róng Gēng proposed to save effort by writing 鼻 as 鼻, an idea which was adopted by the newly formed Chinese Script Reform Society, the predecessor of the Script Reform Committee.³

The committee did not include 鼻 or 鼻 in the 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme, however. One Wú Jīng complained:

Among the two thousand common characters announced by the Education Department, there are quite a few which have not been simplified, like 疑 [yí doubt], 聚 [jù gather], 靜 [jìng calm], 隸 [lì clerk style], 鼻, 傲 [ào proud], 儲 [chǔ store up], 塞 [sāi squeeze in], 賽 [sài compete], 戳 [chuō seal] [...], while characters which are not common, like 噸 [dūn ton], 燉 [dùn stew] [...], have been. I wish the Script Reform Committee could first make an effort to simplify those of the two thousand common characters which contain more than ten or twelve strokes, so that they can be easy to use for common people.⁴

Apparently common people know nothing about 鼻 or 鼻. In consequence, even the 1956 scheme left 鼻 as it was.

This changed by 1960, when a proofreader from Shanghai wrote to the committee that he had seen 鼻 in manuscripts.⁵ The form must still have been a rarity, however. In 1964, an employee of the Yiyang District Health Office, who should be familiar with characters for ‘nose’, if anybody, wrote in *Guāngmíng rìbào* that “there are even people who go so far as to write 鼻 as 鼻 [...]”.⁶

The committee proposed to make 鼻 official in 1962 and 1977, but dropped the plan in 1981.

筆 筆 笔 笔 *bǐ* pen

筆 is a hand (扌) holding a device (聿) made of bamboo (艹). On sixth century steles we find the shorter compound 笔, a twig of bamboo (艹) with hair (毛)

1. Ina no Ōmura 威奈大村 epitaph. This and other forms in Kitagawa 1991, p. 45, etc.
2. *Itaiji ben*, p. 14a. *Dōsai suihitsu*, p. 22a.
3. Introduction to Rong 1936. *Changyong jianzi biao* 1951.
4. Wu Jing 1955.
5. Letter dated 1960.5.22 from Shanghai.
6. Zeng 1964.

underneath.¹ This form prevailed and became official in China in June 1956.

Some did not find 笔 short enough. In 1965, the committee's journal *Wénzì gǎigé* had to point out: “笔 is not written 笔. 笔 is read *mào*.”² This was not the first time authorities picked on those who shorten 𦰇 to 𦰈. In 1610, the writing guide *Súshū kānwù* said: “筆 is customarily written 笔. This is wrong. 華 is also wrong. 華 is the name of a plant.” Before that, in 776, the *Wūjīng wénzì* wrote: “Writing 篇 as 篇 is wrong. [...] Writing 符 with ‘grass’ is wrong.”

If ‘wrong’ means ‘unetymological’, grass tops were definitely wrong. 符 (*fú* marks) and 篇 (*piān* texts) are written on bamboo, not grass, 筆 (pens) are made of bamboo and must therefore first have been written with that top. The mix up started in the Han dynasty, when the seal grass top 𦰇 became the clerk style 𦰈, and the seal bamboo top 𦰉 became 𦰊 or, more often, 𦰋 and identical with ‘grass’.³ Actually very few Han writers wrote the full 𦰊 and distinguished the two. As late as in the Sui dynasty, the model text *Qiān zì wén* recommended 荅, 萁 and 藉 with ‘grass’ (but also, confusingly, 籃 and 筍 with ‘bamboo’). Promotion of the etymologically correct bamboo top begun in the Tang dynasty with the *Gānlù zìshū* and continued with the *Wūjīng wénzì*, *Súshū kānwù* and later dictionaries. A retreat was contrived in 1955, when the Script Reform Committee proposed to legalize 荅, 萁, 第, 萆 and 篇 for 答 etc. For some months, these forms were sporadically seen in print. Grass writers saw their first chance since the Sui dynasty and urged the committee to abolish bamboo tops altogether.⁴ In the event, the committee retained all bamboo tops. Grass tops persist, however. In 1994, this writer saw shops selling 水管 (水管 water pipes) and 暖氣管 (heating tubes), a fuel tank marked 油箱, and even a printed 電話號簿 (telephone directory) for Bazhou City.

斃 毙 *bì die*

We find no record of 毙 before the 1955 simplification scheme. The reformer Chén Guāngyáo characterized it as a “new signific–phonetic compound.”⁵ Not surprisingly, the committee hesitated until 1959 before implementing new form.

壁 毙 *bì wall*

In 1960, the signific–phonetic compound 毙 had been “used by the masses for a long time”, according to a *Guāngmíng rìbào* correspondent from the Shenyang Forestry and Pedology Institute.⁶ The Script Reform Committee proposed to make this form official in 1962 and 1977, but not in 1981.

1. In 560 on the Juan Xiuluo 雋修羅 stele and in 565 on the Fang Zhoutuo 房周陀 epitaph.

2. Article in committee's journal *Wenzi gaige*. Xiao 1965, p. 9.

3. Early example of 第 for 第 on Juyan wood slip no. 275.20 from 90 BC.

4. *Zhongguo wenzì gaige weiyuanhuì hanzì zhènglǐ bù* 1955, p. 37.

5. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 31.

6. “Jianzìtai” 1960.

弊 弊 *bì* fraud

弊 is not a common character, nor is it particularly current in a specific profession, like 蔽 and 幣 below. Still the short form 弊 was said to be “used in parts of Guangdong” in 1960.¹ On this basis, the Script Reform Committee proposed to simplify 弊 to 弊 in 1962 and again in 1977.

畢 畢 *bì* finish

In 1955, the Script Reform Committee proposed to substitute the top of 畢 with the phonetic 比 *bǐ* and write 畢.

It is uncertain whether this form had been in use before the reform. One reformer wrote that 畢 was “established by custom”, another that “all the simplified characters were selected according to the established-by-custom principle, except for a few newly created ones like 亿 and 毕.”²

毕 became official in 1959. Is the three years’ delay a hint that the latter was right?

蓖 蓖 *bì* castor-oil plant

In 997, *Lóngkān shǒujìng* said 蓖 was a customary form for 蓖, although we find no text examples of this practice from the time. In the nineteen sixties, however, 蓖 was revived or reinvented. A letter sent in 1960 from an employee of the Hanzhong Normal Institute in Shaanxi informed the Script Reform Committee that 蓖 for 蓖 was one of the “new characters now used by everybody in our city”.³

In the 1962 and 1977 reform schemes, the Script Reform Committee proposed to authorize use of 蓖 for 蓖 (and for 蔽 below). The closest concerned nodded approval. An agronomist commented in the *Wénzì gǎigé* that “characters like 蓖 (蓖), 播 (播 [*bō* sow]), 步 (餐), 苳 (藏 [*zàng* store]), 秠 (稻 [*dào* rice]) [...] etc. have been popular in our parts for many years”.⁴ This support was not sufficient to make the committee retain 蓖 in the revised 1981 scheme, however.

蔽 蔽 苳 *bì* cover

To write ‘cover’, pre-Qin scribes loaned the character 𦉳 (蔽), which consisted of 欠 (tear), 巾 (cloth) and 彳 (shreds) and originally meant ‘to tear’. At some stage the character was enlarged with a grass top to specify the ‘cover’ sense. Still in the third century BC, however, the author of the *Lǎo zǐ B* manuscript from Mawangdui wrote 不蔽六荆, with the topless 蔽, for 不蔽其形 (does not hide his shape).⁵

After that, 蔽 with the 艹 top reigned unchallenged until 1960, when a form

1. Letter to the Script Reform Committee dated 1960.8.6.
2. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 31. Zhang 1956, pp. 19–20.
3. Letter dated 1960.6.28. Also in letters dated 1976.12.10 and 1977.2.10.
4. Qian 1978, p. 29.
5. “Lao zi yi ben”, line 43 lower part.

with the shorter phonetic 比, analogous with the by then official 毙 above, was said to be “used in parts of Guangdong Province”.¹ A letter to *Guāngmíng rìbào* revealed by whom it was used: “Like every profession in the country, the officers and men of the People’s Liberation Army actively create and use lots of new simplified characters. Below I list some words containing simplified characters which we often use: 卅队 [部队 army unit] [...] 隐苳 [take cover] [...]”²

The Script Reform Committee proposed to simplify 蔽 to 苳 in 1962 on the grounds that “one is already used to writing 苳 in the armed forces” and again in 1977.

幣 币 *bì* currency

As war raged, inflation soared and currencies multiplied. Price tags had to show not only price, but also currency. The character concerned – 幣 – was bound to be cut down to size. We first encounter a short form for 幣 in a handwritten proclamation by the Huaibei and Jiangsu-Anhui Border Area People’s Anti-Japanese Self-Defence Force from about 1944, which promises a reward of 边币70元 (70 yuan in Border Currency) for each pistol captured from the enemy.³ This 币 seems to be made up of the first one and last three strokes of 幣.

In 1955 the Script Reform Committee proposed to make this relatively new form official. It turned out to be unknown to some. One debater wrote: “Most of the 798 simplified characters are familiar to us, and also common, like 拥, 护, 扰, 乱, 戏, 据 etc., but there are some unfamiliar ones, like 币, 亩 etc. Nevertheless, those are easy to memorize.”⁴ At the script reform conference in October the committee member Yè Gōngchuò argued that “the 币 in 貨幣 is already popular in financial circles, the 艺 of 藝朮 is common in the realm of literature and art, although they may be unfamiliar to ordinary people. We will make these characters known and popularize them.”⁵ Three years later 币 was considered popular enough to become official.

邊 邊 邊 边 边 *biān* side

邊 is burdened with the bulky phonetic 鼻 *mian* which accommodates both 自, 穴 and 方. Han wood scribes found some relief by transforming the bottom of this cluster to 豕, writing 邊 or 邊.⁶ Later writers did away with 丩, 八 and 宀 and wrote 邊, 邊 and the like.⁷ A similar variant, 邊 with 刃, was denounced by the Tang writing guide *Gānlù zìshū* as “vulgar”. This did not deter Yuan blockprinters,

1. Letter dated 1960.8.6.
2. Yang 1973.
3. *Jiangsu kangzhan*, item 390.
4. Shi Hou 1955.
5. Ye 1955, pp. 29–30.
6. *Yili* inscription on wood slips from Wuwei (Chengdi period 32–7 BC). Sano 1991, p. 723.
7. 邊 on the Lower Zheng Xi 鄭羲 stele (511). 邊 on the Diao Zun 刁遵 epitaph (517).

who peeled off 自 and 丁 and wrote 辺.¹

This form spread to Japan, where some writers sliced off the top and wrote 辺.² When simplification efforts started in that country, both 辺 and 辺 were still in use.³ Nevertheless the 1919, 1923, 1926, 1938 and 1942 simplification schemes, as well as the winning 1946 scheme, were unanimous in their choice of 辺.

China has no record of this 辺 with 刀. *Zhōngguó Yǔwén* pointed out in 1955 that the official Japanese form 辺 “is different from our habitual way of writing”.⁴ The Script Reform Committee had nothing to ponder over and included 辺 with 力 already in February 1956.

變變變變變 *biàn* change

Han, Tang and Song scribes 變 was wrote 變, 變 or 變 with a long second stroke. This left little room in the centre. Song blockprinters made more by contracting 冫 to 丨 and 糸 to 丿, writing 變. Later colleagues dropped 丨 in 久 and wrote 變.⁵

The 久 bottom was not the original clerk and square style form. Han and Jin inscriptions have 又, 又 or 反 bottoms. None of these is consistent with the seal’s club-swinging hand 𠂔. This bothered Tang calligraphers like Ōuyáng Tōng and Yán Zhēnqīng, who adjusted the bottom to 久, the square form of 𠂔, and gave us the 變 we know from the dictionaries.

變 and 變 moved on to Japan.⁶ 變 with 久 was the more common form, was the only one mentioned in the 1923, 1926, 1938 and 1942 simplification schemes, and finally became official in 1946.⁷

In China the choice was less straightforward. When some Shanghai journals introduced simplified characters in 1935, *Tàibái* chose 變 with 又 and *Lúnyǔ* 變 with 久, while the Education Department proposed to use the former in textbooks. When the simplification project was revived twenty years later, some reformers again mentioned 變.⁸ In the event, however, the Script Reform Committee chose the shorter 變 and made it official already in February 1956. This did not completely eradicate 變, which can be seen in signs advertising 變色鏡 (glasses with changing colours) and so on.⁹

1. *Quanyuan zaju*, Part 1, pp. 2232, 2235, 2409, 2412, 3668, 4301, Part 2, p. 8, etc.

2. 辺 and 辺 in manuscript “Wa-Kan rōei shū shishū” “和漢朗詠集私註” from the late Moromachi period. Yamada 1958, p. 32.

3. *Enshū komonjo sen: Kindai hen*, Last vol., a collection of 1912–1945 documents, contains one of each, in items 42 and 45.

4. Liu Zexian 1955, p. 30.

5. Yuan examples in Liu 1930, p. 85, and in *Quanyuan zaju*, Part 1, p. 3676.

6. 變 in a late Moromachi edition of “Wa-Kan rōei shū shishū” “和漢朗詠集私註”, according to Yamada 1958, p. 35.

7. In *Enshū Komonjo sen: Kindai hen*, which contains manuscripts from the period 1868–1945, 變 appears in three (nos. 4, 22 and 60), 變 in none.

8. Ding 1952, p. 8. Xu 1954.

9. 1994, vendor’s stand at Baoding railway station.

辨辨辨 弁 *biàn* distinguish

辯辯辯 弁 辯 *biàn* argue

It seems that ‘argue’ was formerly written shorter as 𠄎 (辯), without the significs 丨 (knife) or 言 (words). This is presumed on the basis of the *Shuōwén* entry “辯: two arguing criminals.” Significs were added quite early, however. 丨 was present already in our oldest records of it from the early Western Zhou dynasty (1050–970 BC).¹

Scribes coped badly with the criminals, which came out as 𠄎 in the Mawangdui manuscript, as 𠄎, 𠄎 or 𠄎 on Han stone steles and wood slips, and as 𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎, 𠄎 or 𠄎 on later steles. Even standardizers disagreed on their shape. The Xiping Stone Classics said 辯, the *Qiān zì wén* 辯. Eventually Liao and Song dictionaries like *Lóngkān shōujìng* and *Yùpiān* set the norm to 𠄎, the form closest to *Shuōwén*’s 𠄎, and were followed by later colleagues.

A short form is said to have been invented already in the Han dynasty. According to Song commentators, a stele from AD 108 was inscribed 治狀刃明, which was taken to mean 治狀辨明 (settled the situation and cleared things up).² Of this 刃 we have no further records, however.

Instead, later scribes avoided 辯 and 辨 by substituting the homonym 弁, *biàn* in Chinese, *ben* in Japanese, which once designated some sort of headgear. A land contract from 1057 preserved in Tōdai in Japan temple required tenants to 弁濟 (辨濟 *bensai* clear up debts).³ In China, use of 弁 for 辯 and 辨 is seen at least from the Song dynasty onwards.⁴

The use of 弁 for 辨 and 辯 was sanctioned by the Japanese Language Council in 1946.

Such use prevailed even in China, and in 1962 the Script Reform Committee proposed to simplify 辨 to 弁 and “achieve unity with the short form used in Japan.”⁵ In 1977 it proposed to adopt 弁 for both 辨 and 辯, a proposal which was dropped in 1981.

In China 弁 has met some competition from the still shorter homonym 卞, which in the dictionary means ‘impetuous’.⁶

1. On two early Zhou vessels in Gao 1980, p. 346.

2. Yangdoudao 羊竇道 stele. In *Li shi*, vol. 4.

3. “Echikō no kuni Ishii no shō zenshi ken sankai” “越後国石井莊前司兼算解 (東大寺文書)”. In *Enshū komonjo sen. Shōen hen*, item 5. Even the homonym 弁進 *benshin* is common in such contracts.

4. Ōta found 弁 for 辨 and 辯 in unspecified Song works. Ōta 1982, p. 55. 弁臣民 (distinguish between officials and common people) is found in a Yuan blockprint of the drama Gong she zheng 公攝政. *Quanyuan zaju*, Part 2, p. 10.

5. Use of 弁 for 辨 is mentioned in Chen 1955, p. 118, for 辯 in letters 1960(a), 1960(c), 1960(e). Quote from 1962 *nian ni gongbu di yi pi jianhua hanzi biao* [p. 3].

6. 弁证法 (dialectics) and 卞证法 seen in 1981 notes of a student at Nanjing University.

標 标 *biāo* sign

We first hear of the 西-less 标 in “550 súzì biǎo” from 1934.¹ This short form became official in February 1956.

表 錶 *biǎo* watch

In 1956 the Script Reform Committee ruled that 錶 should henceforth be written 表 without 金.

This was no great break with tradition. It was 錶 which was a novelty, absent in the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* and only just mentioned in the 1916 *Zhōnghuá dà zìdiǎn*: “The instrument which is nowadays used to measure time is called 表. Since it is made of metal, it is customarily written 錶. Actually this is the same character as 表.”

警 别 *biè* awkward

警 *biè* has a quasi-homonym *bié* (different) which is written 别. Chinese reformers said use of the shorter 别 for 警 “is very widespread” and “has been common for a long time, for example when writing 警扭 [*bièniu* awkward] as 别扭.”² On these grounds the Script Reform Committee made 别 official for 警 in February 1956.

賓 賓 賓 賓 賓 *bīn* guest

Zhou forms are made up of a 冂 (building), 𠂔 or 𠂕 (gift) and 丌 or 丌, which has been interpreted as a man with something above him, as an ox-offering, as the character 万, or, by *Shuōwén*, as the phonetic 丐 *mian*.³ Han clerk style writers rendered this component as 𠂔 or 夕 and wrote 賓 or 賓 on their slips and steles. Jin and Tang scribes added the variants 賓 and 賓 with 尸 or 尸.

None could not tell which was standard. The Xiping Stone Classics said 賓 with 𠂔, Wáng Xīzhī and the *Qiǎn zì wén* 賓 with 尸, the 776 writing guide *Wújīng wénzì* 賓 with 尸. Although the latter emphasized that “writing with 尸 is wrong”, most did just that.⁴ On a Dunhuang scroll from 851, a teacher named Ān Wéndé 安文德 has written a string of characters for his student Sòng Wénxiàn 宋文獻 to copy correctly, among them 賓 with 尸. It was later, after the Liao and Song dictionaries *Lóngkān shǒujìng*, *Guāngyùn* and *Yùpiān* had prescribed 賓 with 尸, that this longer form became the more common.

The Tang calligrapher Yán Zhēnqīng was not satisfied with any of these and

1. Xu 1934, p. 1005.

2. Chen Wenbin 1956, p. 19. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 8.

3. This is not the original structure of the character. In the older Yin forms, 貝, and sometimes 丌, is absent. In its stead there is a kneeling man and/or a foot.

4. We see what was considered correct on a Dunhuang scroll from 851, on which the teacher An Wende 安文德 has written a string of characters for his student Song Wenxian 宋文獻 to copy, among them 賓 with 尸. In *Dunhuang baozang*, Stein document no. 2071.

wrote 賓 with 𠂔.¹ The Song *Yùpiān* reveals where that idea came from: “賓 is the *Shuōwén* form for 賓.” Later, the *Shuōwén*-based 賓 was prescribed by *Zì huì* and *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* and became universal in print.

Qing blockprinters found 賓 too laborious, substituted the bulky lower part with the phonetic 兵 *bīng* and wrote 𠂔, a form which became official in the People’s Republic of China in February 1956.²

濱 濱 濱 濱 *bīn* bank, shore
鑛 鑛 鑛 鑛 *bīn* wrought iron
鬢 鬢 鬢 鬢 *bìn* hair on the temples
檳 檳 檳 檳 *bīng* betel nut

The 賓 or 賓 *bīn* phonetic of these characters has been shortened to 兵 *bīng* at least since the Yuan dynasty, when 鬢 turns up in a blockprint. The next 兵 form to appear is 檳 for 檳 in Qing prints.

By this time, 𠂔 had come into use for 賓. By the end of that era, analogies like 鑛 for 鑛 had appeared, later again 濱 and 檳 for 濱 and 檳.³ This gave us two sets of short forms, the old short ones like 檳 with 兵, and new analogies like 檳 with 𠂔.

The older 檳, 鬢 and 濱 are known even from Japan.⁴ Obviously such forms are Chinese loans, since the phonetic 兵 is read *hei* or *hyō* in Japanese and does not fit 檳, 鬢 and 濱 which are read *hin* or *bin*. The newer Chinese forms 濱, 檳 and so on are on the other hand absent in our Japanese records.

For the Japanese Language Council the choice was therefore simple. In 1946 it shortened the most common of the above characters, the 濱 in 橫濱 (Yokohama) and 濱松 (Hamamatsu), to 濱.

The Script Reform Committee of China faced a harder choice between the traditional 濱 and 檳 and the younger 濱 and 檳. One *Guāngmíng rìbào* debater advocated 檳, because “this is the short form one is more accustomed to”.⁵ The reformer Cáo Bóhán replied: “Since 賓 is changed to 𠂔, even other characters written with 賓 will be changed to 𠂔. The simpler forms 檳 and 濱 which are in use in society will not be adopted, since we must distinguish the two characters 濱 and 濱 used in 洋涇濱 ([the Shanghai place name] Yangjingbang) and 哈尔滨 (Harbin).”⁶ Another debater said 濱 and 檳 were easier to learn and supported these forms even though they were “a change away from the 濱 and 檳 which are

1. Yanjia miao bei 顏家廟碑 (780). Shen 1993, p. 272.

2. In early Qing blockprint *Mulianji* and 1862–1892 print *Lingnan yishi* 嶺南逸使. Liu 1930, p. 21.

3. 鑛 in blockprint *Lingnan yishi*, acc. to Liu 1930, p. 21. 濱 and 檳 in Rong 1936, pp. 41, 43, Huang 1951 (1950), p. 13 and *Jianbizi* 1951, pp. 17, 20.

4. *Itaiji ben* 1692, p. 29. Matsui 1861, pp. 2b, 3a. Kuroyanagi 1910, p. 3b.

5. Liu Naizhong 1955.

6. Bohan 1955.

current in society”.¹

It is evident that forms with 兵 were more common than those with 宾. Still the 1956 simplification scheme, for reasons mentioned above, stipulated a change of 賓 to 宾 wherever this component occurred. Not quite convinced, the committee hesitated until 1964 before implementing the decision.

Habits do not change overnight, however. Still in the nineteen eighties shops would offer customers 槟榔 (*bīnglang* betel nuts).²

餅 饼 并 *bǐng* cake

In 2005, staff of the Nantong Normal School complained that “饼干 [*bǐnggān* cookies] becomes 并干…… if one takes a walk in the streets of Lishui, one very easily discovers incorrect handwritten characters of this kind”. This practice can be traced back at least to 1965, when a teacher from Jilin wrote to *Wénzì gǎigé*: “In our little town Qiala people often write 酒 as 洵, 餅干 as 并干 [...]”³

病 疒 *bìng* be sick

疒 was launched as a short substitute for 病 in 1955 by the reformer Chén Guāngyáo, who claimed it was “the ancient original character” for 病.⁴ This claim is based on *Shuōwén*, which says 疒 means ‘to lie down’ and depicts a sick man prostrated (𠂔) on a wooden stretcher (𠂔). However, we have no ancient records of use of 疒 in this or any other sense.

Records of 疒 for 病 do not appear before 1960, when the Guangdong Education Bureau reported to the Script Reform Committee that there were people who used 疒 for 病.⁵ The committee took note and proposed to make 疒 official in 1962 and again in 1977.

番 播 播 拈 *bō* sow

Our first record of ‘sow’ is the phrase 蕃于下土 (sow on the ground) in the Mawangdui silk manuscript from around 200 BC. When we meet the term again on second century AD steles, it is written 播, with a ‘hand’ that has stuck ever since.

The 番 component, at the time still written 番 without 扌, is said to depict a paw (田) with claws (米). The claws were written 𠂔 on Zhou bronzes and 𠂔 in *Shuōwén*. In Han clerk style this component became 米 and merged with ‘rice’, and stayed merged in Jin, Wei and Tang square style. Our first record of 番 with 扌 is the 776 writing guide *Wǔjīng wénzì*, which says: “番 is the *Shuōwén* form. 番 is clerk style.” This presented a way to distinguish ‘claw’ from ‘rice’ even in square style. The ostensibly etymological 番 appealed to the editors of the Song

1. Zheng 1955.
2. Seen in 1981 in Guangzhou by RB.
3. Pan 1965, p. 13.
4. Chen 1955, p. 100.
5. Mentioned in letter dated 1960.8.6.

dictionaries *Yùpiān* and *Jíyùn*, who prescribed 番 and 播 with the ㄟ.

At first, few listened. In a collection of Song prints, we find 翻, 番 and 蕃 with 米, but no forms with ㄟ.¹ Later, however, ㄟ has taken over, and today everybody writes 播 with ㄟ.

That is, except those who use the shorter phonetic 布 *bù*. The short form 拈 is on our record since 14 July 1958, when the front page of the Hubei *Máchéng bào* carried the headline 趙金良同志作廣播講話 (Comrade Zhào Jīnliáng makes speech on radio). According to a school teacher from Taishun in Zhejiang, 拈 is at least a couple of years older. In 1960, he wrote the Script Reform Committee that 拈 was one of several forms with “a history of five to ten years”.²

The committee proposed 拈 in its 1962 and 1977 simplification schemes. Critics said the 拈 form might lure pupils to misread the character as *bù* and impede tuition of the standard language.³ In consequence, 拈 was dismissed from the revised 1981 scheme.

薄 薄 箔 苳 苳 *bó báo* thin *bò* peppermint

One may wonder why the character for ‘thin’ is burdened with a pile of components meaning ‘grass’ (艹), ‘water’ (氵), ‘hand’ (寸) and ‘mister’ (甫). The answer is that 薄 is a loan character which originally meant not ‘thin’, but ‘interlaced branches’. This explains 艹. 薄’s phonetic 溥 was the name of a river. This explains 氵. 溥’s phonetic 專 meant ‘spread out’. This explains 寸. The river’s name was something like *Bak*. This may explain the 甫 *fū* phonetic.

Writers early found ways to avoid the overloaded 薄. About 200 BC, the Lǎo zǐ B scribe loaned the river name 溥 for ‘thin’ and wrote 德溥而功厚者 (those with frail morals but great achievements) where later versions use 薄 for 溥.⁴

Others loaned the still shorter 泊, which was read *b’ak* like 薄 and originally meant ‘stop’. The Lǎo zǐ B manuscript says a good man does not 居汜泊 (rely on flimsiness) where later versions say 居其薄. The Han *Lùnhéng* says 非厚與泊殊其釀也麴孽(蘖)多少使之然也 (It is not so that strong flavour or thin flavour is determined by the brewing. It is the quantity of yeast which does it.)⁵

Han scribes could also avoid 薄 by writing the cursive 苳 or 苳, while their later colleagues would use 苳. On the basis of the latter, modern writers have coined the square form 苳, analogously to the 专 which the Script Reform Committee drafted on the basis of the cursive 𠄎(專) in 1955 and implemented after nine

1. *Zhongguo banke tulu*, vol. 2, items 73, 105, 118.

2. Letter dated 1960.6.11. Apart from that, 拈 was mentioned in most other letters to the committee.

3. *Fujian sheng jiaoyuju 1979* (1978), p. 26. *Zhejiang sheng jiaoyuju 1979* (1978), p. 31. *Beijing shiwei jiaoyu gongzuobu 1979* (1978), p.4.

4. “Lao zi yi ben”, line 54 lower part.

5. “Lao zi yi ben”, lines 146 lower part, 176 lower part. *Lunheng*, 率性. (Actually we cannot be certain that the use of 泊 for ‘thin’ is more recent than the above forms. The Mawangdui manuscript, with 泊, is the oldest inscription containing this word.)

years of hesitation.¹

蒨 and 蒨 are the most common ways to get around 薄 today, but there are others. In 1960, two correspondents told the committee that some people in Guangdong wrote 蒨 with a 泊 *bó* phonetic below.² Later we can see this for ourselves. In a mimeographed libretto bought 1979 in Guangzhou, 薄纸一张 (*báo zhǐ yì zhāng* one sheet of thin paper) is handwritten 蒨纸一张 in a mimeographed booklet bought in the same city, 刻薄 (*kèbó* unkind) is written 刻蒨.³ In 1981 this writer saw 咸蒨荷 (*xián bòhè* salty peppermints) for sale in Shantou, in 1986 蒨膜 (*báomó* film) in Jiangmen.

All these records are from Guangdong. Here is an opportunity to apply the method we contrived in Introduction.2. We ask informants to identify 蒨. Answers indicated on Map 1 show this form to be familiar to readers from Guangdong and adjacent parts of Guangxi but unknown elsewhere. 蒨 is a local form

It has not always been. 蒨 is also found in Qing blockprints from northern China.⁴ 蒨 is thus an old form which has died out except in the distant south.

Even the North East can boast a form of its own. Signs outside workshops in Shenyang and Dalian offer 蒨板 (sheet metal) and 蒨铁 (iron plates) for sale. Interviews with informants confirm that this 蒨 for 薄 is known in the three northeastern provinces, but unknown elsewhere (see Map 2).

蒨 is an analogy to the Japanese 伝 and 筵 for 傳 and 簿 (see *bù* below). It is therefore no accident that 蒨 is found in the part of China which was run by Japanese administrators up to 1945.

The Script Reform Committee of China proposed in 1962 to simplify 薄 to the traditional but retreating 蒨, in 1977 to 蒨, the common 蒨 with an extra 丿 on the right. Obviously this 丿 was added to distinguish the component 專 from the component 專, which had already been simplified to 专. This logic did not impress handwriters, however, who have continued to write 蒨 without 丿.

蒨 卜 𦉳 *bo* radish

We know two short forms for the 蒨 of 蘿蔔 *luóbo*. The presently official form 卜 was “established by custom” before the reform, according to the reformer Chén Guāngyáo.⁵ The unofficial 𦉳 is occasionally seen in markets and shops.⁶ Presumably even this form was in use before 1956, since writers would hardly invent a new form which was longer than the official one.

The Script Reform Committee opted for the shorter alternative and without

1. 蒨 was mentioned in letters dated 1977.11.28 and 1977.9.12.
2. Letters 1960(b) and 1960.8.6. 蒨 is also mentioned in letter 1960.8.
3. *Nü fuma* 1979(?). *Lian'ai de yishu* 1981(?). *Nü fuma* was provided by Lars Fredriksson.
4. In Jishui (Shandong) edition of *Jinping mei qishu qianhou bu* 金瓶梅奇書前後部 from 1796–1820 and in an 1862–1892 edition of *Lingnan yi shi*. Liu 1930, p. 75.
5. Chen Guangyao 1956.
6. 萝卜 signs seen in 1981 and 1982 in Nanjing market shops.

delay made 卜 official with the first batch of simplified characters in January 1956.

補 补 *bǔ* mend

On early Han wood slips, 補 is written 補 without the 丶 in 甫. We first find the point on steles from the Eastern Han dynasty, and on later inscriptions pointed and point-less forms alternate. Dictionaries decided to write the 甫 component with 丶, following *Shuōwén* which says the top of 甫 is the phonetic 父.

As far as 補 is concerned, this quandary became irrelevant when some practical scribe swapped the phonetic 甫 *fū* with the shorter 卜 *bǔ* and wrote 补. This form is on record since 1934 and has been official since February 1956.¹

簿 簿 簿 簿 *bù* register

Like other bamboo tops, the one in 簿 can get shortened to ‘grass’ (see 笔 *bǐ* above). That 簿 changes into the 薄 for ‘thin’ seems to bother no one. A Han clerk at Juyan could write 卒被兵簿 (卒被兵簿 the soldiers were enrolled in the military register), his modern colleague at the Beijing Library 读者意见簿 (Book of readers’ suggestions).² Indeed, merging these two characters was once routine: of sixteen extant ‘registers’ on Han monuments, all have ++ or 丷 tops.³

Changing 艹 to 卅 did not do for the Script Reform Committee, which in 1962 proposed to simplify 簿 to 簿 with the phonetic 布 *bù*, a character of which we have no former record, and hardly any later ones.⁴ This lack of records must have been the reason why this form was included only in List 2 of the 1977 scheme, the list of characters to be discussed further.

We know, however, that the common short form for 簿 is 簿 or 簿.⁵ So why did the 1962 committee not chose this 簿 instead? Perhaps because the square form 簿 had not come into use yet. It is very likely that the public coined 簿 with 专 below some time after 1964, as an analogy to the 专 which had become official that year for 專.

In Japan, one may see advertisements offering help with 家計簿 (*kakeibo* household account books).⁶ This 簿 for 簿 is an analogy to the Japanese forms 伝 and 転 for 傳 and 轉. In 1963 the Japanese Language Council wrote that 簿 was one of a dozen “short forms which are not adopted in the List of Forms [of Current Characters], although they are used to a certain extent in contemporary

1. Xu 1934, p. 1005.

2. Juyan wood slip 198.19, dated 55 BC. Entrance of Beijing Library, 1994.

3. Fushimi 1989, pp. 548.

4. 簿 is mentioned in Xiao 1962, p. 65, and in letter 1977.11.28. Neither specifies that 簿 is in use.

5. A 户口簿 (*hukou bu* household registration book) seen 1981 in Hangzhou by RB.

6. Sign seen 1990 by the Keisei train line from Narita.

society”, a hint that legalization of 筥 had been on the table.¹

部 𠃉 𠃊 bù part

In 1963, one Wú Nánxīng told the journal *Qiánxiàn* (Frontline) about the problems he met on a walk in Beijing:

Above me were ten large characters: 拥和宫大于商店青芽𠃉. I looked at the sign and sure enough it contained some characters unknown to me. Anyhow, some of them could be made out from the context. For example, 拥和宫 was of course 雍和宫 [*Yōnghégōng*], 大于 must be 大街 [*dàjiē* street], with these there was no problem. It was only 青芽𠃉 which I could not make out at first, what on earth was that? Still pondering, I went inside the shop and looked. It turned out that it sold vegetables. Only then did I realize that 青芽𠃉 must be short for 青菜部 [*qīngcàibù* vegetables section].²

The character 𠃉 was new to Wú Nánxīng, but not to the world. The late sixth century Changansōng city wall near Pyongyang is inscribed 漢城下後𠃉 (the back part of Hansōng), a sword from a Japanese grave from the same time 額田𠃉 for 額田部 (*Nukata be* the Nukata clan).³ Japanese use of 𠃉 prevailed, and in 1750 a writing manual found it necessary to point out: “𠃉 is an erroneous customary character used in Japan which should be written 部. This form is the 𠃊 of the right side which has been altered to 𠃉.”⁴ Later, in 1910, a more liberal tutor at Wakayama Middle School declared he would not deduct points from pupils who wrote short forms like 𠃉 for 部.⁵ However, fellow teachers ignored him and combated this form so effectively that this came to be our last Japanese record of 𠃉. When Japanese reformers started to produce character simplification schemes in the nineteen twenties, 𠃉 was already forgotten and mentioned in none.

In China, 𠃉 had been put to another use. In Qing vernacular blockprints 𠃉 is used for 爺 (*yé* grandfather).⁶ On a shipping receipt for 烏梅七𠃉 (*wūméi qī bàng* seven pounds of smoked plums) from about 1900 it on the other hand represents 磅. Xú Zémǐn’s 1934 list of “vulgar characters” confirms the latter usage. Xú was on the other hand contradicted by a fellow character collector named Hú Xíngzhī, who said 𠃉 represented 脚 (*jiǎo* foot).⁷

Reformers wavered. In 1935, *Tàibái* and the other Shanghai journals which

1. Chairman Abe Shinnosuke 阿部真之助 in letter to minister of education. Inokuchi 1982, p. 124.
2. Wu 1963.
3. Tanaka 1985, pp. 125, 135–136. Sword from Okadayama grave no. 1 reproduced in *Nihon kofun dai jiten*.
4. *Seikai roku* 1750, Middle vol., p. 5.
5. Kuroyanagi 1910, p. 1a.
6. In early Qing print of *Mulianji* and 1796–1820 print of *Jinping mei*, acc. to Liu 1930.
7. Receipt in Tōa Dōbunkai 1906, vol. 3, unnumbered page. Xu 1934, p. 1004. Hu 1935, p. 52.

adopted simplified characters, chose to use 卩 for 磅. However, when the Education Ministry published its character simplification scheme later that year, it more cautiously refrained from adopting “forms used for different characters, like ㄅ which stands for 廣 [guǎng wide] but also for 慶 [qìng celebrate], and 卩 which stands for 爺 but also for 部.”

This is our first record of 卩 for 部 in China. Records would soar, however, when war broke out and calls were made to the 卩隊 (*bùduì* troops) and 干卩 (*gànbù* cadres).¹

Still 卩 remained ambiguous for some time. In 1951, a *Dàgōng bào* (Objective Daily) article complained: “These weird characters are special ‘inventions’, without any system, therefore [...] separate characters turn into one single weird character and become incomprehensible. The character 卩 for example, is it 衛 as in 保 卩 [*bǎohù* protect]? Or 部 as in 幹 卩? Or 院 as in 影 卩 [*yǐngyuàn* movie theatre]?” About this time, yet another character was to become common and stake a claim for the practical 卩 design: in 1957, a teacher told *Guāngmíng rìbào* that some of his pupils wrote 卩 for 革命 (*gémìng* revolution).²

When character simplification became official policy in the nineteen fifties, reformers thus had information of use of 卩 for 爺, 磅, 脚, 部, 衛, 院 and 命. On top of this came a proposal to adopt 卩 for 節 “in accordance with the ancient form”.³ Baffled 1955 reformers followed their 1935 predecessors and did not decide on using 卩 for either. The public did, however. Post-1957 records of 卩 represent 部 and nothing else.⁴

This should have made the choice simple for future reformers, were it not for a minority of 卩 writers.⁵ 卩 is the right side of 部 and is closer to the original than 卩 is. It would be reasonable to take 卩 for an older form of 卩. Records tell a different story, however. In these, 卩 does not appear before 1951, when a teacher from Harbin complained in *Yǔwén xuéxí* (Language Learning): “May we ask, for example, those who write 幹部 as 干 卩, 歷史 [*lìshǐ* history] as 庀, 共產黨 [*gòngchǎndǎng* the communist party] as 共产 卩 and 問題 [*wèntí* question] as 問: how many can recognize characters like these?”⁶

In its 1962 character simplification scheme, the Script Reform Committee proposed to adopt the not too common 卩. In 1977, however, it followed the tide

1. Examples in the Principles of administration of Southern Jiangsu issued by the Liberated Area authorities in 1943. *Jiangsu kangzhan*, item 326.
2. Yuan 1951. Fan 1957.
3. Bao 1955, p. 40. 卩 is said to be the ancient form for 節 because the Song version of *Yupian* said “卩 is now written 節”.
4. Zhao 1958. Xiong et al. 1958. Liu 1959, p. 15. Letters 1960.6.16, 1960.6.22, 1960.7.12(a), 1960.7.20, 1960.9.18. Etc. etc.
5. In our letters to the Script Reform Committee, 卩 is mentioned in two (1960.7.27 and 1977.10.7), 卩 in almost all others.
6. Bai 1951, p. 55. Mentioned again in Tao 1953, p. 33.

and changed to the more common 冫, while the revised 1981 scheme left 部 alone. Modern handwriters do not leave 部 alone, however, but continue to write advertisements for 修理冫 (repair shops), 头冫肩冫按摩 (*tóu bù jiān bù ànmó* massage of head and shoulder areas) and so on.¹

擦掙掙 *cā wīpe*

掙 and 掙 are analogies to 爻 and 宀 (see *chá*), on record since 1960, when they appear in letters to the Script Reform Committee.² In 1977, the committee proposed to make 掙 official together with 爻.

纒才 *cái* only

Abstract words are a headache for the script inventor. To write ‘only’, Han scribes turned to loaning the homonymous 纒 *cái*, which originally meant, says *Shuōwén*, “the colour of the head of a silk-finch”.

Not surprisingly, scribes sought simpler solutions. A stele from AD 158 is inscribed 各遣一子財八九歲 (each sent one son of only eight-nine years) with the homonym 財 (fortune) for 纒, another from AD 179 頌裁足 (only a eulogy will do) with another homonym 裁 (cut cloth) in the same function.³ The author of the *Jin shū* (History of the Jin) more radically wrote 惟正月才生魄 (only the first month of the year produces the new year moonshine) with the still shorter 才 (talent).⁴ This 才 became the more common substitute and was made official by the Script Reform Committee in February 1956.

菜芽才 *cài* vegetable

We saw in the 部 *bù* section above that in 1963, a 青芽冫 sign was incomprehensible to a passer-by. This unfamiliarity with 芽 is understandable. Our first record of this now so common form is a 1959 *Wénzì gǎigé* article where one Liú Hé mentions 芽 among “short forms created by the masses”. Already in the following year, however, 芽 was reported to the Script Reform Committee from areas as disparate as Inner Mongolia and Guangdong, and in 1961 the signature Wén Bīng wrote in *Wénzì gǎigé* that characters like 畝 (賽), 拈 (播) and 芽 (菜) were “in common use all over the country”.⁵ Or most of the country; a reader from Henan replied that 芽 was unknown in his native Linxian.⁶ Today, however, it would be difficult to find a literate person who cannot recognize 芽.

Some have found a still more economic way of writing. The above-mentioned

1. 1994 examples from Baoding and Beijing.
2. 掙 in letter dated 1960.8.6, 掙 in 1960.7.7, 1960.11.26, 1975.4.17
3. The back face of the Sun Shuao 孫叔敖 stele, and the Guo Min 郭旻 stele. From *Li bian*, 1-58. Other examples, from *Han shu* and *Yan shi jiaxun*, are found in Li Rong 1980, p. 9.
4. *Jinshu* 644-646: 夏侯湛傳.
5. Letters dated 1960.6.25 from Baotou and 1960.7.12(a) from Yangchun. Wen 1961.
6. Zhang 1961, p. 22.

Wú Nánxīng continued: “It is striking that in many restaurants one can often see all kinds of strange characters on the menu, like 米反, 代于, 九才 [...] and the like. Even if your literacy level is high as the sky, can you at a glance make out that this means 米飯 [mǐfàn rice], 帶魚 [dàiyú hairtail], 韭菜 [jiǔcài chives] [...] and so on?”

The 1956 Character Simplification Scheme was criticized in 1957 for substituting characters with shorter homonymous characters. Accordingly the committee rejected the shorter 才 and promoted instead 芽 in its 1962 and 1977 schemes.

蔡 芘 Càì

In 1975, members of the staff of Huzhou Middle School in Northern Zhejiang wrote in *Guāngmíng rìbào*: “Some of the new short forms used in the countryside are based on dialect and do not comply with the need for a standard for character simplification. For example, in the Wu dialect [...] 尺 *chǐ* [inch], 察 *chá* [examine], 插 *cha* [insert] and [the surname] 蔡 *cài* are all read *cā*. As a consequence of this, new short forms like 𠂔(察), 𠂔(插) and 芘(蔡) have emerged.”¹

Is it only in Huzhou and the Wu dialect area of Zhejiang, Shanghai and Southern Jiangsu that the phonetic 尺 will do for 蔡? Let us look at dialect readings.

	Z h e j i a n g				Shang- J i a n g s u				Fujian	
	Hu- zhou	Jia- xing	Hang- zhou	Wen- zhou	hai	Yi- xing	Su- zhou	Chang- zhou	Nan- jing	Xiamen (litt.)
蔡	ts'a ²	ts'a ²	ts'e ²	ts'a ²	ts'a ²	ts'a ²	ts'a ²	ts'a ²	tɕ'ɛə ²	ts'ai ²
尺	ts'a ² ₂	ts'a ² ₂	ts'ə ² ₂	ts'e ² ₂	ts'a ² ₂	ts'a ² ₂	ts'a ² ₂	ts'ə ² ₂	tɕ'ə ₂	ts'ik ₂

So 蔡 and 尺 are not identical in any Wu dialect. 尺 ends in a glottal stop in Wu dialects, 蔡 does not. However, when the Wu speaker switches to standard language, his first step is to drop his boorish glottal stop. If he is from Huzhou, Jiaxing, Shanghai, Yixing or Suzhou, from the northern part of the Wu area, his 蔡 and 尺 become identical.

And that is where 芘 is recognized and therefore used, says Map 3. True, this is contradicted by a letter sent in 1976 to the Script Reform Committee from a teacher in Huian, between Putian and Quanzhou in Fujian, far outside the map's 芘 area and far from where the 尺 phonetic fits.² This Fujian teacher, however, had collected short forms among 'educated youth', youngsters sent from the big cities, including Shanghai.

When characters were in for further simplification in 1977, the committee did not take the uncommon 芘 into consideration. Instead it proposed to change 蔡 to 芽 and make it identical with 'vegetable' (see 菜芽 *cài* above). Reactions were negative. It was pointed out that “if 小菜 [*xiǎocài* pickles] and 小蔡 [our buddy Cai] are not distinguished in script, the meaning can be misunderstood”, that

1. Zhejiang sheng Huzhou zhongxue geming weiyuanhui 1975.

2. Letter dated 1976.9.2. 芘 is also mentioned in letter 1977.6.27 from Huzhou.

“comrades named Cai have objections” and that “the masses have not responded positively.”¹

𣎵 𣎵 參 參 參 *cān* join

Calligraphy students are puzzled to find that the model calligraphers of the Jin and Tang dynasties wrote 𣎵 or 𣎵 with 小 or 𠂇 below, and not with the 彡 they know from the dictionary. Are 參 with 彡 and 𣎵 with 小 short forms for 𣎵 then? Hardly. Our oldest forms, the ones we find on Han wood slips and Han steles, are 𣎵 with 小. The later enlargement of 小 (small) to 𠂇 (heart) seems to have been an attempt to add some sense, however far-fetched, to this cryptic character.

No sense will satisfy the highbrows, however, if it does not agree with their *Shuōwén*, which had a 彡 (hair) bottom. A minority of writers, notably Chǔ Suiliáng (557–641), adapted *Shuōwén*'s 彡 to square style and wrote 參. This 參 with 彡 was prescribed by dictionaries from the Song dynasty onwards and came to be the more popular form.

In running style, the middle 𠂇 of 參 was contracted to 一. By the Yuan dynasty this practice had spread to square style, and forms like 𣎵, 𣎵 and, later, 參 appeared in blockprints.

The now official 參 was recognized by the Japanese Language Council in 1946 and by the Script Reform Committee of China in 1956.

餐 餐 飡 飡 飡 飡 步 *cān* eat

If you tamper with a component of a character, friends of order will object that some sense or other is lost. Many would say that 餐 needs its 食, which means ‘eat’, and some that it needs its 又, which looks like ‘hand’. The 步 component, however, carries no obvious sense and was fair game for Tang calligraphers, who shortened it to 夕, 𠂇 or 又 and wrote 餐, 餐 or 餐.² From the Song dynasty onwards, however, dictionaries enforced 餐 with the full 步.

Shuōwén said 餐 “is even written 飡 with 水.” Han clerks made good use of this shorter alternative and consistently wrote 飡, or 飡 with one point less on the left.³ 飡 and 飡 are familiar also to the modern reader, who can find them for example in his *Xīnhuá zìdiǎn*.

Even the character 飡 has been used for 餐. This practice, however, gains no support from dictionaries, which insist that 飡 means ‘a light meal of cooked rice’, as fits a character consisting of 夕 (evening) and 食 (meal). Misuse of 飡 was warned against already in the Tang writing guide *Gānlù zìshū*: “餐 and 飡. The first character is read 千安反 [*c-ān*], and may also be written 飡. The second

1. Shanghai shi wenzi gaige linshi lingdao xiaozu 1979 (1978), p. 7. Yu 1978, p. 127. Shandong sheng jiaoyuju 1979 (1978), p. 35.
2. Yu Shinan (626). Ouyang Tong (663). Yan Yuansun (d. 714) in *Ganlu zishu*.
3. Sano 1991, p. 789 registers three 飡 and no 餐 on Juyan wood slip inscriptions. Zhang Zhi (d. 192) character with 彡 on the left in Lin 1976, p. 1529.

one is read 息魂反 [s-*in*].”¹ The malpractice has persisted, however, so that one can still see 飧館 (restaurant) signs outside restaurants, as well as 殮厅, 殮厅 and 殮厅.²

In January 1955, the Script Reform Committee proposed to simplify 餐 to 飧. The latter still contained eleven strokes, however. A letter urged the committee to “shorten as much as possible” and reduce 餐 to 步, its characteristic north west corner.³

Whosever it was, the idea was a hit. In April 1957, the committee member Wèi Jiàngōng said: “Now there are some creations in the streets again, like 鞋, 畺 and 皮 which are used for 鞋 [xié shoes], 賽 and 飧.”⁴ By 1960 the committee had received reports of 步 from most parts of the country.⁵

The committee let 飧 go and instead endorsed the shorter 步 in its 1962, 1977 and 1981 schemes.

蠶 蠶 蠶 蚕 *cán* silkworm

The modern official form 蚕 is 蠶 minus 死, 丿, 日 and 虫.

The detached components did not go in one blast. The first registered absentee was the auxiliary 虫, which is missing in a 蠶 on a wood slip from the early Eastern Han dynasty, and in a 蚕 on a stele from AD 186.⁶ Actually these one-虫 forms are the oldest ‘silkworm’ inscriptions we have. Whether the original form had one or two 虫 is therefore unclear.⁷

Even the middle 日 disappeared early and was gone already in the above-mentioned 蚕 from 186. 日 was definitely present in the original form, since it is a part of the phonetic 瞽 *cán*.

Next went the 丿 of the two top 死, which had turned into two 天 in the 蚕 seen on some sixth century steles.⁸

One of the two 天 went missing some time before 1008, when *Guǎngyùn* complained: “蠶 is customarily written 蚕. This is wrong.” The wrong form prevailed, however, and had appeared in typeprinted books by the Ming dynasty.⁹

1. 千安反 or 千安切 means “the initial reads like 千 and the final like 安”.

2. 飧館 seen 1986 in Yangjiang in Guangdong, 殮 1981, 1982, 1986, 1988 in Hongkong and 1982 in Zhaoqing, 殮 1981, 1986 in Hongkong, 殮 1981, 1986 in Hongkong, 1982 in Nanning.

3. Letter dated 1955.2.13.

4. Wei 1957, p. 11.

5. Mentioned in letters dated 1960.4.18, 1960.6.25, 1960.7.27, 1960.8.6, 1960.10.21 and 1961.11.16.

6. Medical inscription on tablet from Wuwei, in Sano 1991, p. 638. Zhangqian stele 張遷碑, in Fushimi 1989, p. 631.

7. The oldest 蠶 with two 虫s is found on the Shouchan memorial 受禪表 from AD 220. See Fushimi 1989, p. 631.

8. On Wenzhen gong guo taifei Lu shi 文貞公國太妃盧氏 epitaph (Shiping 506–507) and Luxumiduo 陸須密多 epitaph (572).

9. In *Jiaofeng xiansheng wenji* 蛟峰先生文集卷之四. Introduction to vol. 4 reproduced in *Zhongguo banke tulu*, vol. 7, item 632.

In 1946 蚕 was recognized as the official form in Japan, and ten years later in China.

殘殘殘殘 *cán* damage

Shuōwén says 𠂔 means ‘injure’, as befits a character consisting of two dagger-axes. One therefore believes that the right side of 殘 is its original part, and that the crushed bones on the left were added for emphasis some time before the Qin dynasty.

After expanding the left side, scribes little by little shortened the right. From the fifth century onwards, we find forms like 殘 with the top 戈 contracted to 土.¹ Song blockprinters connected the top | with 丿 and wrote 殘, saving one stroke more. Yuan colleagues went on to drop 丿 and write 殘.²

These forms spread even to Japan. By the twentieth century, 殘 had become dominant so reformers did not waver. 殘 was the form selected by the Japanese Education Ministry for the 1919 Proposal for the Regulation of Characters, for the successive 1923, 1938 and 1942 schemes and for the final 1946 scheme.

Even in China, 殘 had disappeared and left the scene to 殘. Here 殘 did not remain alone, however. Liberated Areas activists had realized that characters like 殘 and 錢 were recognizable even with one 一 less and started writing 殘 and 綫 with 戈.³ The Script Reform Committee thus had to choose between the more habitual 殘 and the shorter 殘.⁴ It opted for shortness, ratified 殘 in 1964 and created a difference with Japanese orthography.

The longer 殘 quickly faded. In 1965, a teacher from Changchun complained in *Wénzì gǎigé* that students “from their math teachers have picked up forms like 柝 駝 (檢驗 [jiǎnyàn test]), 直线 (直线 [zhíxiàn straight line]) [...].”⁵ After that, such complaints disappear.

粲粲粲 *càn* bright

粲, with its ‘rice’ signific, originally meant ‘fine grain’. Some time before the Han dynasty, this character was loaned for ‘bright’.⁵ To avoid confusion with the

1. Analogous form 錢 on paper inscription from 436, excavated from the Astana grave in Turfan. *Chūgoku shodō zenshū*, vol. 2, item 87. 殘 on the Cuan Longyan stele 爨龍顏碑 from 458. Lin 1976, p. 815.
2. In Yuan blockprint of drama “Zhougong niezheng” “公攝政”. *Quanyuan zaju*, Part 2, pp. 5, 10.
3. 綫 is found in the handwritten “Directives concerning the training of troops” “關於部隊整訓的指示” issued in October 1944 by the Central China Office 華中局 and reproduced in *Jiangsu kangzhan*, item 382.
4. 殘 was still more common, and appeared in more formal contexts than 殘, like on the book cover 老殘遊記 from 1948. *Laocan youji* 1948.
5. The oldest text example of 粲 with 火 in *Hanyu da zidian* is from *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露, traditionally attributed to Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 BC).

original sense, writers added ‘fire’ and wrote 燦 in the ‘bright’ sense.¹ Dictionaries, however, came to accept both 燦 and 燦 for various senses of ‘bright’.

In January 1955 the Script Reform Committee proposed to make things simpler by abolishing 燦 and retaining the shorter 燦 only. One debater objected that 燦 was not short enough, proposing instead 𠄎 which was “already established by custom”.² The committee took note and picked a shorter form for the final scheme. Not the proposed 𠄎, however, but the more rational 𠄎 with the phonetic 山 *shān*.

We have no record of 𠄎 prior to this. The reformer Chén Guāngyáo, however, asserted that 𠄎 was “established by custom”. The debater Zhào Tàijùn on the other hand complained that 𠄎 was one of several “characters never seen before, or newly created characters”. Against such charges the committee member Cáo Bóhán argued: “There are also some people who believe that the characters in the Draft [of the Character Simplification Scheme] which they do not know, have been freely invented by the editors of the Draft. This is inconsistent with the facts. The reason that they do not know them is that some characters have been used to a limited extent. For example [...] 𠄎 (燦) is used in parts of Shandong and Zhejiang[...].”³

So 𠄎 was unfamiliar to most. On top of that it was criticized for misleading learners to read *shān*.⁴ These shortcomings delayed the adoption of 𠄎 until 1964.

倉 仑 仑 *cāng* storehouse
滄 沧 沧 *cāng* dark blue
蒼 苍 苍 *cāng* dark green
創 创 创 *chuàng* start

倉 depicts a room (口) packed with with food (食). Already in the Warring States, some scribes dispensed with etymology and shortened the character to 𠄎.⁵ This form disappeared, however, and our last record of it is *Shuōwén* which calls 𠄎 a “strange character for 倉.” Later, however, Qing blockprinters found 倉, 滄 and 蒼 too complex and shortened them to 仑, 沧 and 苍, forms surprisingly similar to *Shuōwén*’s “strange character”.⁶

These 仑 forms were still in use in the nineteen fifties.⁷ Nevertheless the Script Reform Committee proposed in January 1955 to simplify to 仓, 创, 沧 and 苍. These forms turned out to be unfamiliar, even to reformers. The committee member

1. Guang 1965.

2. Wu Jing 1955, p. 25.

3. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 49. Zhao 1957, pp. 165–166. Cao (b), 1957, p. 30.

4. Qiu 1957.

5. On late Warring States inscriptions on a spear and on a dagger-axe from Xinzheng County near Kaifeng, described in Hao 1972. Same and similar forms are found on pre-Qin coins described in *Xianqin huobiwen bian*, p. 69.

6. In early Qing blockprint *Mulianji* etc., acc. to Liu 1930.

7. Mentioned in Chen 1936, Huang 1951 (1950), pp. 14, 16 and *Jianbizi* 1951, pp. 3, 14, 17.

Wèi Jiàngong wrote that 仓 was one of several “newly created forms”, and Jīn Míngshèng spoke of “characters simply made up by the Script Reform Committee, like 仓, 卢, 孛 [...]”. At a meeting of The Chinese Association for the Promotion of Democracy, “some comrades meant that the introduction of 仓 for 倉 could be postponed, since it might create problems with understanding.” The proof-reader Zhào Xī instead advocated a change to 仓, 创, 苍 and 沧, which would be “more in accordance with the long-time habits of the masses”.¹

The committee explained: “In order to distinguish 淪 and 滄, we decided to simplify 淪 to 沦 and 滄 to 沧, and to treat all characters written with 侖 and 倉 analogously according to this rule”, although “this is not consistent with the custom of using 仓 all over.”² The committee found support in letters and articles welcoming an end to “the present practice of not distinguishing 倉 and 侖” and finally adopted 仓 in 1959.³

Keeping in line proved difficult. The committee’s organ *Wénzì gǎigé* was itself unfortunate enough to reproduce a placard on its front page vowing to 立大志创 (lì dà zhì chuàng show determination and make a great start) with the eradication of illiteracy in Shandong. Still in 2005, students of the Nantong Normal School complained that some “people who write do not know what characters they are writing, like when 清仓 [qīngcāng clearing up the accounts of the storehouse] becomes 清仑 [...]”⁴

廁廁厠厠 cè lavatory

The original signfic in this characer is 廌, which consists of the left side of 廌 and means ‘edifice’. At least since the Sui dynasty, some writers have dropped the top 丶 in some 廌 characters.⁵ That made this component identical with 厂 which means ‘cliff’. This practice upset some writers. The Yuan writing guide *Zìjiàn* declared: “廌 means ‘building’ and is different from 厂 which is read hàn. 廳 [tīng hall], 廂 [xiāng room], 廨 [xiè mandarin’s office], 廈 [shà tower], 廛 [chán family patch], 廁, 廚 [chú kitchen] and 廄 [jiù stable] are written with 廌. To mix things up and write with 厂 is wrong.”

The wrong habit persisted, however, and gained a certain recognition. In 1916, the *Zhōnghuá dà zìdiǎn* said “廁 is the same as 廁.” In the nineteen fifties, Chinese script reformers proposed to shorten 廌 to 厠 not only in 廁, 廂 and other characters where 廌 was seen, but also in characters like 店 (diàn shop), 度 (dù

1. Wei Jiàngong 1955, p. 6. Jin Míngshèng 1955. “Zhongguo minzhu cujinhui” 1955. Zhao 1955.

2. Bohan 1955.3.2.

3. Zheng 1955. Yao 1955.

4. *Wenzi gaige* 1960:7, front page. “Chengshi bu guifan yong zi heshi xiu?” 2005.

5 An early example is a 厠 (yōng inferior) written with 厂 on the Longshan gong epitaph 龍山公墓誌 (600). Kitagawa 1975, p. 64.

degree) and 庫 (*kù* store) where it was not.¹ In the event, however, the Script Reform Committee trod carefully and installed 厂 in 厠, 廂, 厦, 厨 and 厅 (廳) but left 店 and 度 alone.²

In 1964, 厠 was shortened further to 厠 when all 貝 components became 贝, as had been planned in 1956.

By this time a still shorter form had turned up. A letter sent in August 1960 from the Guangdong Education Bureau to the Script Reform Committee said 厠 was sometimes written 厠 “in parts of Guangdong Province”. The following year, a group of teachers at Dongguan Normal Institute in the Huiyang District, also in Guangdong Province, said 厠 was one of many “common irregular simplified characters”.³

Both reports are from Guangdong. Is the character used only in this province? We ask informants, and find that 厠 is known in Guangdong and in Guangxi (see Map 4).

The 次 *cì* phonetic in 厠 gives little clue to speakers of the standard language. Perhaps it does to others? Let us compare readings.

	G u a n g d o n g				Jiangxi	Guangxi	Fujian:	Hunan	Beijing
	Guangzhou	Yangjiang	Meixian	Chaozhou	Ganzhou	Guilin	Xiamen	Chenzhou	
厠	<u>tʃ'ɿ'</u>	<u>tʃ'eɿ'</u>	ts'et,	ts'e'	<u>ts'ɿ</u>	ts'ə	ts'e'	ts'aʔ	ts'ə'
次	<u>tʃ'ɿ'</u>	<u>tʃ'eɿ'</u>	ts'P	ts'P	<u>ts'ɿ</u>	ts'ɿ	ts'u'	ts'i	ts'P

Yes, the phonetic does make sense to Cantonese speakers of Guangzhou and Yangjiang. This is the probable homeland of 厠. From there the form spread to non-Cantonese-speaking parts of the province like Meixian and Chaozhou.

In Japanese, 厠 was not common enough to become a Character for Current Use, so the Japanese Language Council made no decision about its form. Dictionaries and printing houses, however, have of their own accord adopted the shorter 厠 (as well as 厦, 厨 and 厠).

層層厠层 *céng layer*

In Chinese, the phonetic component is written 曾 with 厠, in Japanese shorter as 曾 with 田. We will first see how the two forms came to diverge.

In the Zhou dynasty, 曾 was written 曾, 曾 or 曾. The shape of these characters make sense if we assume that they are primary forms of 甞; 甞 (*zèng* rice kettle). In that case, 曾 is an image of a kettle over a stove with vapour above it, which has been loaned for ‘add’, ‘before’ and ‘so’. In the Han dynasty, the seal form continued to be written 曾 with 田. In clerk style it became 曾 with 田.

This pattern was disrupted by Xǔ Shèn, who saw no kettle in 曾. Instead he

1. Ding 1952, p. 17. Xu 1954, p. 34.

2. Zhonghua renmin gongheguo wenhuabu 1955. Zhonghua renmin gongheguo guowuyuan 1956.

3. Dongguan shifan 1961.

formulated an etymology which fit the loaned sense ‘so’: “會 [is a particle which] softens the statement. It is written with 曰 [speech] and 八 [distinguish], while 𠄎 indicates the sound.” 𠄎 could be taken to indicate the sound because it was “the ancient form of 囟” or 窗, read *ts’uŋ, which Xǔ found close enough to 曾 *tʂ’əŋ.¹ To fit this etymology, 曾 and 層 must be written with 𠄎.

Xǔ’s tale found no support in contemporary practice, which was to write with 田 and 𠄎. It was noticed by writers, however, some of which took up 曾 with 𠄎, beginning on a now lost stele from AD 174.² Dictionaries ignored 𠄎 forms until the Ming, when *Zihuì* elevated them to standard status. Both forms continued to coexist, however, and in 1946 the Japanese Language Council decided to write 層 with the shorter 曾. Such insignificant reforms did not interest the Script Reform Committee of China, which had had its eyes on much simpler alternatives. As we saw in the introduction, the proofreader Zhào Xī had informed in 1955 that “層 is already written 𠄎, 𠄎 or 层.”

The first form, 𠄎, can be traced back to 1951 and 1954, when it was mentioned in *Jiǎnbǐzì* and *Chángyòng jiǎnlǐ zì huì* (A List of Common Short Forms).³ In Shanghai, where both these glossaries were published, 人 is read *zən* in the low even tone, like 層. 𠄎 thus appears to be a signific-phonetic compound.

𠄎 is known to us only through Zhào Xī above.

层 is the oldest of the three, on record since 1943 when a handwritten declaration by the communist Administrative Office of Southern Jiangsu called on 各社会阶层 (*gè shèhuì jiēcéng* every social stratum) to take part in the resistance against Japan.⁴ This 层 looks like an analogy to the older 会 for 會.

For the Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme the committee chose 层. An *Yǔwén zhīshī* correspondent objected:

Some of the short forms in common use today are simpler than the characters presented in the simplification list. In such cases one can adopt the short form in common use. For example:

Selected simplified characters:

嘯
傘
寧
层

Short forms in common use today:

哨
干
宁
𠄎⁵

Perhaps it was this dissent which delayed the adoption of 层 until 1959.

𠄎 writers persisted some years. In 1960 𠄎 was mentioned in letters to the committee from Jilin and Wenzhou, in 1962 it was reported that candidates for

1. *Shuowen*, 2 上, 10 下.

2. Lou Shou 婁壽 stele. *Li bian*, 2-55.

3. *Jianbizi* 1951, p. 11. Huang 1954, p. 15.

4. In the “Principles of Administration of Southern Jiangsu”. *Jiangsu kangzhan*, item 326.

5. Yun and Jun 1955, p. 20.

Zhejiang universities wrote 厶 for 层 in their entrance exams, and as late as 1976 a correspondent from Huzhou in Zhejiang wrote to the committee that he had seen people write 厶 for 层.¹

插插扌扌扌扌 *chā* insert

‘Insert’ was originally written 𠂔 without the hand on the left. This form, however, even meant ‘to thresh’,² so writers added a hand to specify the ‘insert’ sense. This happened no later than the Western Han dynasty.³

This gave us the twelve-stroke 插. Many find this too labourious and write 插班 (*chā bān* enrol in a class), 插秧 (*chā yāng* transplant seedlings), 揸票咭 (*tsap piu kat* insert ticket card) instead.⁴ This contraction of 臼 to 日 is no recent innovation. Actually the oldest ‘insert’ inscription we have, a 揸 on a wood slip from the Western Han dynasty, is written with 日, not 臼.⁵ Song dictionaries, however, prescribed the more etymological 插 and established the present standard.⁶

Modern shop attendants dispense with both 臼 and 日 and advertise 插头 (*chātóu* plugs) and 插座 (*chāzuò* sockets) as 扌头 and 扌座, or, less frequently, as 扌头 or 扌座.⁷ 扌 is 插 minus 臼, 扌 perhaps the cursive form 扌 minus two points. Both forms are on record since 1960, when they were reported in letters to the Script Reform Committee.⁸

插 has even been shortened with the aid of a phonetic. We saw under 蔡 *cai* above that by 1975, “new short forms like 𠂔 (察), 扌 (插) and 𠂔 (蔡) have emerged” in Huzhou in Zhejiang, since “in the Wu dialect [...] 尺 *chǐ*, 插 *chā* and 蔡 *cài* are all read *cā*.”

The local readings of 插 and 尺 are:

	Huzhou	<u>Shang-</u> <u>hai</u>	Suzhou	Chang- zhou	<u>Hang-</u> <u>zhou</u>	Wen- zhou	Yang- zhou	Xingyi	Shao- guan
插	<u>ts'aŋ</u>	<u>ts'aŋ</u>	ts'aŋ	ts'aŋ	ts'ɛŋ	ts'a	ts'aŋ	ts'a	tʃ'ap
尺	<u>ts'aŋ</u>	<u>ts'aŋ</u>	ts'ɔŋ	ts'ɔŋ	ts'aŋ	ts'ei	ts'ɔŋ	ts'ɿ	tʃ'ek

Identical readings are identical in Huzhou and Shanghai (underlined), where 扌 is used (see Map 5). Our Huzhou correspondent was proved right again. However,

1. Letters 1960 (a) and 1960 (f). Zhang 1962, p. 17. Letter 1976.9.2.
2. *Shuowen*, 7 上. The ‘thresh’ sense must be the older, since that is what the pestle (干) in the mortar (臼) depicts.
3. 揸 is found on Juyan slip 9.1A. Sano 1991, p. 339.
4. 1981–1982 examples from Xi’an and Hangzhou street ads, from Xiamen board bulletin and from Hongkong subway.
5. Juyan slip 9.1A. Character form from Sano 1991, p. 339.
6. While the 997 *Longkan shoujing* still said 揸, the 1013 *Yupian* prescribed 插. The 1039 *Jiyun* had 插, but added that “the character is also written with 日.”
7. 扌 was seen by RB 1981 on price tags in Yueyang, Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Zhengzhou, 1982 in Nanning, Changzhou and 1990 in Beijing, 扌 1982 in Beidaihe.
8. 扌 in letters 1960.6.28, 1960.7.14, 1960.7.20, 1960.7.26, 1960(h), 1960(i), 扌 in 1960.10.21.

the map also plots 枳座, 枳头 and 枳口 (*chākǒu* socket) price tags from from shops in faraway Xingyi in Guizhou and Shaoguan in Guangdong. Informants can recognize it outside these shops could not recognize 枳. We must presume that 枳 had been written on receipts or boxes leaving Shanghai, a big producer of such equipment, was picked up by receiving shop attendants in Xingyi and Shaoguan and was on its way to becoming a professional jargon character.

On top of all this one can see plugs labelled 枳头 written with the homonym 扱 *chā* which originally means ‘to spear’.¹

Chinese reformers were indecisive. Enthusiasts proposed the archaic 𠄎 in 1955 and the 𠄎 “created by the working masses during the production process” in 1964, the Script Reform Committee chose the homonym 扱 in 1962 and the archaic 𠄎 in 1977.²

In 1946, the Japanese Language Council excluded 插 from its List of Current Characters and therefore made no decision as to its form. In 1981, however, this character was selected for the new List of Characters for Common Use in the form 插.

察 𠄎 𠄎 *chá* examine

In 1981, this writer read about a 叫𠄎队 in a Shanghai billboard bulletin, a 市𠄎院 in a Xiamen police notice, and some 观𠄎 on a Quanzhou billboard.³ Since we learned above that “new short forms like 𠄎 (察), 枳 (插) and 芑 (蔡) have emerged” in Huzhou and the Wu dialect area, we know that these writers were referring to a 纠𠄎队 (*jiūchá duì* order maintenance patrol), the 市检察院 (*shì jiǎncháyuàn* city procuratorate) and the phrase 观察 (*guānchá* observe). The least new of the above-mentioned new short forms is 𠄎, which was mentioned in 1960 in letters to the Script Reform Committee from Xiamen, Zhangzhou, Pucheng and Songxi/Zhenghe in Fujian, Wuhua in eastern Guangdong and Yancheng in Jiangsu.⁴

The Huzhou correspondent meant that 𠄎, like 枳 and 芑, had appeared because the Wu dialect reading of the phonetic 尺 fits that of 察. We can see these readings below (identical readings are underlined).

	Yangzhou Northern Jiangsu	Shanghai	Huzhou Northern Zhejiang	Hangzhou Northern Zhejiang	Jian'ou Northern Fujian	Xiamen Southern Fujian	Meixian Eastern Guangdong
察	<i>ts'aʔ</i> ₃	<u><i>ts'aʔ</i></u> ₃	<u><i>ts'aʔ</i></u> ₃	<i>ts'vʔ</i> ₃	<i>ts'ue</i> ₃	<i>ts'at</i> ₃	<i>ts'at</i> ₃
尺	<i>ts'vʔ</i> ₃	<u><i>ts'aʔ</i></u> ₃	<u><i>ts'aʔ</i></u> ₃	<i>ts'əʔ</i> ₃	<i>ts'io</i> ₃	<i>ts'ik</i> / <i>ts'io</i> ₃	<i>ts'ak</i> ₃

1. 枳头 price tags seen in 1982 in Luoyang, Taiyuan, Suxian and Lianyungang.
2. Guan 1955, p. 40. Li Muhan 1964. *1962 nian ni gongbu di yi pi jianhua hanzi biao* [p. 4]. *Zhongguo wenzi gage weiyuanhui* 1977.
3. 叫 is a variant of 叫 *jiao* (call) and is here a misspelling of 纠.
4. Letters dated 1960(e), 1960.6.3, 1960.7.7, 1960.7.20, 1960.9.30(a), 1960.11.26. Also in letters 1975.4.17 from Hanjiang in northern Jiangsu and 1977.3.4 from Huian in southern Fujian.

The 尺 phonetic fits in Shanghai and Huzhou, as predicted. It is plausible that 尺 originated here. However, we have also records of 尺 from northern Jiangsu, Fujian and eastern Guangdong, where the phonetic does not fit. Obviously 尺 filled a need and spread to these areas.

But not further, to the inland and to the north? We ask our informants to make sure. And yes, the interviews plotted on Map 6 reveal that 尺 is unknown in the interior and north of China.

Was there no need for a short form for 察 in these parts? Yes, there was, but the need was filled by another form, namely 𠄎, which we also find in our 1960 letters.¹ The phonetic 叉 *cha* fits 察 in the north of China, but not in the south, where 察 is read with an entering tone and ends in a consonant, which disqualifies 叉 as a phonetic. We therefore assume that 𠄎 is a northern invention. It spread fast, however, and was reported from the entering tone areas of Anhui and Guangdong as early as 1960.² Unsurprisingly, the more widespread 𠄎 was the form the Script Reform Committee chose for its 1962 and 1977 simplification schemes. 攪 揅 *chān* to help by the hand

讒 詭 讒 *chán* slander

饞 餽 *chán* greed

巉 峴 財 *Chán*

On some sixth century steles, 巉 and 讒 are written 峴 and 詭 without the lower ‘hare’.³ These short forms did not take root. Instead Song and Yuan blockprinters later took to substituting the lower ‘hare’ with 彡 and write 讒, 揅 and 饞. These forms persisted and became official in 1959.

“However,” says its successor, the State Language Commission, “uncommon characters like 巉 and 饞 [*chán* pierce] were not simplified.” This frustrated the citizens of Qingdao, who were stuck with their local 巉山 (*Cáishān* Mount Cai). The Qingdao people have found a solution, however. Buses carry 峴山 signs, and everybody knows. This somewhat forced analogy to 才 for 纜 is on record since 1974, when an enthusiastic correspondent from Qingdao campaigned for 峴 in *Guāngmíng rìbào*.⁴

纏 纏 纏 *chán* entangle

The phonetic 塵 (farm) consists of a building (广), a bag (異) and earth (土). These components do not make much sense to us, nor did they to Han and Jin scribes, who therefore saw no harm in distorting the character by dropping the

1. 𠄎 in letters 1960(j) from Zhengzhou, 1960.6.25 from Baotou, 1960.7.23 from Hefei and 1960.9.24 from Zongyang, 𠄎 in letters 1960(k) from Nangong and 1960(l) from Shijiazhuang.
2. 𠄎 in letters 1960.7.23 and 1960.9.24, the analogous 揅 in letter 1960.8.6 from Guangdong.
3. 峴 on the Zhang Menglong 張猛龍 stele (522). Lin 1976, p. 462. 詭 on the jian miao 曹子建廟 stele (593). Li 1996, p. 28.
4. Li 1996, p. 29. 巉山 seen on buses and timetables by RB in 1982. Ji 1974.

bottom 冫 and 土 and, sometimes, the top 纒.¹ The resulting 纒 prevailed and was accepted as a variant by dictionaries like *Jíyùn* and *Kāngxī zìdiǎn*.

Under these circumstances it was not unexpected that the Script Reform Committee proposed to make this 纒 official in January 1955. However, the reformers became aware that the right side was identical with 厘, the new official form for 釐 *lí*, and that readers might be tempted to misread 纒 as *lí*.² The 1956 scheme therefore added a point at the top and prescribed 纒, a form of which we have no record from the preceding years.

産 产 *chǎn* produce

産 is one of the ‘liberation characters’ we spoke of in the introduction, on our record since 1943, when a handwritten proclamation by the communist Administrative Office of Southern Jiangsu urged to 发展农业生产 (*fāzhǎn nóngyè shēngchǎn* develop agricultural production).³

産 became official in the People’s Republic in June 1956, five months after the first batch of simplified characters. The delay may have been due to complaints that 産 was ugly.⁴

Apart from having no 生, the new dictionary form differs from the old one by having a 立 top for the former 文 top. Perhaps surprisingly, this 立 top had been universal in Han clerk style and early square style. The 立 top was inconsistent with the ancient seal form, however, which had a distinct 文. Writing handbooks like the Yuan *Zi jiàn* and the Ming *Súshū kānwù* therefore declared that writing with 立 was wrong. The dominant dictionaries *Zi huì* and *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* agreed and gave us the 産 norm, which held sway to 1946 in Japan and to 1956 in China.

懺 懺 忏 *chàn* repent

In its seal form, the 懺 phonetic, which is probably the original form for 懺 (*jiān* extinguish), depicted a hatchet (戈) dealing with two men (从). In clerk and square style, the two men were substituted by a 十 (multitude), and 懺 became 懺. It was in the Song dynasty that dictionaries started to follow the seal form and write 懺 and 懺 with 从.⁵ Calligraphers, however, continued to write 懺 and 懺 with 十 and left us with a double standard.⁶

To make an end of this, the 1955 Draft List of 400 retained and abolished Character Variants proposed to adopt 懺 with 十 and discard the longer 懺 with 从. A letter to *Yǔwén zhīshí* objected that “when the masses have already created

1 纒 in Jiangling grave no. 10 (153 BC), acc. to Li 1996, pp. 29–30. 纒 on a Han seal in Luo 1978, Part 13, p. 3b.

2. Committee’s motives according to Li 1996, pp. 29, 30.

3. “Principles of administration of Southern Jiangsu”. *Jiangsu kangzhan*, item 326.

4. Yao 1955. Ye 1955, p. 34.

5. The 997 *Longkan shoujing* has forms with 十, the 1013 *Da guang yi hui Yupian* with 从.

6. Song and Yuan inscriptions in Lin 1976, pp. 817, 1083, 1121.

a simplified character, like 𣎵 for 霸 and 忤 for 懣, we should not retain the original one.”¹ The committee took note and substituted 懣 with 忤 in the 1956 Character Simplification Scheme. This proposal was not implemented until 1964, however.

The delay is understandable. 忤 had little basis in tradition, and was criticized for encouraging the misreading *qiān* because of its right side 千, whose presence in 忤 can only be explained as an analogy to the more fitting 殳 and 纆 for 殲 (*jiān qiān*) and 織 (*xiān*).²

嘗嘗嘗嘗嘗 *cháng* taste

In 1923 and 1926, the Interim Committee on the Japanese Language proposed to simplify the dictionary form 嘗 to 嘗. Nine years later, the Chinese Education Department proposed the more radical simplification 尝, which was finally adopted by its successor the Script Reform Committee in 1956.

It is hard to see how either 嘗 or 尝 can spring from 嘗. For an explanation, we must look far back. The seal form 𩚑 consists of the phonetic *shàng* (尚) and the signfic ‘tasty’ (旨). In Han clerk style, 𩚑 came to be written 嘗, 嘗, 嘗 or 嘗.³ In the Jin, Wei and Tang dynasties, 嘗 with the 甘 bottom came to dominate, and this form was the norm set up by the Sui model text *Qiān zì wén* and the Song dictionary *Yùpiān*.

The problem with 嘗 was its 甘 bottom, which deviated from the seal’s 𩚑. *Shuōwén* followers therefore designed the form 嘗 with 匕 and 日, which we find in calligraphy from the Tang dynasty onwards and in dictionaries from the Song *Guāngyùn* onwards.

The problem with 嘗 was that its many components were hard to squeeze in. Yuan blockprinters avoided them by introducing 尝, a square version of the cursive 嘗, which had been in use at least since the Jin dynasty and was based on the Han clerk form 嘗. In February 1956, the State Council made this 尝 official in the People’s Republic.

Thus 嘗 was the progenitor neither of 嘗 nor 尝.

償償 *cháng* repay

In the early Zhou dynasty, ‘repay’ was written without the 亻 signfic, identically to the cognate word 賞 (*shǎng* to reward), as in a tenth century BC inscription which says one person was compelled to 𩚑 (賞馬 repay a horse).⁴ The extra 亻 was added some time before the Han dynasty, when the enlarged 償 is found on

1. Wang Tonghan 1955.

2. Qiu 1957.

3. The oldest clerk style inscriptions are 嘗s on *Yili* wood slips from Wuwei (28–25BC) shown in Sano 1991, p. 161.

4. The Hu ding 忽鼎 vessel (Yi wang, 917–908 BC) says 𩚑𩚑卑我賞馬 (𩚑則俾我償馬 Shi[?] then made me repay a horse).

wood slip contracts.

In February 1956, the Script Reform Committee shortened this longer 償 to 償, using 尝 *cháng* as a phonetic.

This 償 has not got a very long history. In 1936, it was mentioned in Róng Gēng's dictionary of short forms. Twenty years later, however, 償 seems to have been new to the reformer Chén Guāngyáo, who called it “a new signific-phonetic compound”, not, as was his routine, “a character established by custom”.¹

長 长 𠄎 *cháng long zhǎng grow*

Already Han scribes sliced 長 down to 𠄎, 𠄎, 长 or even 𠄎.² These forms again fathered the cursive 𠄎 and 𠄎.

Script reformers tried to mould these cursive forms into square style. In 1935, the Education Department proposed 𠄎, twenty years later the Script Reform Committee 𠄎. One objector argued that the latter was “hard to write” and that “the masses of the countryside write 𠄎”, others that “the shape of 𠄎 is close to 去 and hard to distinguish from that character.”³ The committee took the last point into account and enlarged 𠄎 to 长 in its revised September draft. The January 1956 scheme, however, reduced the form again, this time to 长. Now critics objected that the proposed 长 was hard to get right, that writers tended to add a 一 and write 𠄎, and called for a form more like the latter.⁴ Still 长 was imposed in 1964, when the last characters of the 1956 scheme were pressed through.

For this, the committee has expressed some regret. In 1982, its organ said 长 “is a newly created character component, and apart from that, one very easily splits the connecting vertical stroke into one upper and one lower stroke.” In other words, the character tends to be written 𠄎. Worse still, the additional 一 has survived. Just now, for example, a 要长寿吃驴肉 (*yào chángshòu chī lǘròu* if you want a long life, eat donkey's meat) street ad is on display on the web.⁵ Moreover the official 长 faces competition from the still shorter cursive-like 𠄎, a form used by many more than “the masses of the countryside” referred to above.

腸 腸 肠 𠄎 *cháng intestines*

Thorough dictionaries list two complex forms, 腸 and 腸. The former looks like an abbreviation of the latter but is not. The oldest inscriptions on Han wood slips have no top 一. The later 腸 writers were influenced by the seemingly analogous 傷 (*shāng* injury), where 一 is original, as a part of the abbreviated 腸 *shāng*

1. Rong 1936, p. 41. Chen Guanyao 1956, p. 24.
2. 長 on Juyan slip no. 557.3B (84BC) etc., 𠄎 on slip 267.10 (45BC) etc., 长 on slip 502.2 from site A35 (85–2BC) etc., 𠄎 on slip 233.1A from A21 (11 BC–AD 13) etc.
3. Duan 1955. Xu Chuanxing 1955, p. 19. The latter point is also made in Zhang Decun 1955.
4. “Jianzitai” 1960. “Hanzi jianhua zuotanhui jiyao (er)” 1960. Wang 1962, p. 16. Ni 1963. Liu Wanxin 1964, p. 24.
5. *Wenzi gaige bianjibu* 1982, p. 8. “Chengshi bu guifan yong zi heshi xiu?” 2005.

phonetic.

The cursive form of the 易 component was 易, of the 易 component 易. This gave us the two cursive forms 腸 and 肠.¹ In 1935, the Education Department in Nanjing chose to base its short form on the latter and proposed 肠, 场 and 伤 for 腸, 場 and 傷. Twenty years later, the Script Reform Committee more cautiously proposed to recommend the same 肠 for handwriting, but continue to print 腸. However, its final 1956 scheme opted for 肠 and 场 instead, which had the advantage of being analogous with 汤 and 扬, and shorter than 肠 by one stroke.

An arguably still easier form does exist. In 1981, this writer saw a price notice for 廣肢 (*guǎngcháng* intestines) in a Nanjing shop and one for 猪大肢 (*zhū dàcháng* pork intestines) in Jinhua in Zhejiang. Interviews show that 肢 with the 丈 *zhàng* phonetic is recognized in Jiangsu, Shanghai and Zhejiang, but not elsewhere (see Map 7).

Is 肢 used in this area because local pronunciation makes 丈 a suitable phonetic for 肠? The characters are read as follows:

	J i a n g s u			Shanghai	Z h e j i a n g				
	Nan- jing	Chang- zhou	Su- zhou		Jia- xing	Hu- zhou	Hang- zhou	Jin- hua	Wen- zhou
肠	t̚s'ã	d̚zar̚	z̚ar̚	zã ²	zã	d̚zã	d̚zar̚	d̚zian̚	d̚zi
丈	t̚sã ²	d̚zar̚ ²	zar̚ ²	zã ²	zã ²	d̚zã ²	d̚zar̚ ²	d̚zian̚ ²	d̚zi ²

Yes, in these Wu dialects the initials of 肠 and 丈 are voiced and identical. In Shanghai 肠 even has a low falling tone which makes it identical with 丈. Can we take it that Shanghai is the birthplace of 肢?

場場 场 坊 *chǎng* place

For the same reasons as 腸, 場 has alternative square forms with 易 and 易 cursive forms with 易 or 易. In 1935, the Education Department chose to base its simplified form on the latter and proposed the square form 场.

When the Script Reform Committee took over the simplification task twenty years later, a new alternative had appeared, namely 坊, which had been on record since 1936.² This form was an analogy to the older 伤 for 傷 which had been in use since the Yuan dynasty. The 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme proposed to make this 坊 official. In its final 1956 scheme, however, the committee switched to 场 and made the character analogous to 肠 and 杨.

坊 has stuck with us, however. In January 1960, even the committee's journal *Wénzì gǎigé* slipped and reproduced a 会坊 (assembly hall) sign on its front page, and signs inscribed 停车场 (*tíngchēchǎng* parking lot) and the like have been common to this day.³

1. Early 易 form: 易 on Juyan slip 25.19 from site A21 (11 BC –AD 13). Sano 1991, p. 764.
2. Rong 1936, p. 25.
3. *Wenzi gaige* 1960:2, front page. 自行车坊 (自行车坊) and 付食商坊 (non-staple food market)

Although 腸 and 場 were current even in Japanese handwriting, the Japanese Language Council refrained from transforming them into printed style and retained the dictionary forms 腸 and 場.

廠 廠 厩 厂 广 仄 厶 *chǎng* factory

In 1955, the proof-reader Zhào Xī said he had seen 廠 written both as 厂, 广, 仄, 厶 and 厩 in manuscripts. He did not, however, help reformers by telling them which form was the more common. Let us see if other records do.

In 1956, the reformer Chén Guāngyáo wrote that the broad masses had been using 厂 for 廠 “during the last few years”.¹ These few years are at least six, since we find the address 大連機車厂 (*Dàlián jīchē chǎng* Dalian Locomotive Factory) on a letter from 1950.²

Of 广 we have no such first-hand record. We read, however, in the dictionary *Xué wénhuà zìdiǎn* from 1952 that 广 (as well as 厂) is a short form for 廠.³

仄 looks like a misprint for 仄, a form we know from later records. In 1962, Wénzì gǎigé reported that students in Zhejiang wrote 仄 for 廠 at university entrance exams, and students at Ningbo Cadres’ Literacy School in compositions.⁴ In 1982 this writer saw a 棉花仄 (*miánhuā chǎng* cotton factory) in Hangzhou, in 1988 a 紙仄 (*zhǐchǎng* paper product factory) in the same city, a 日用仄 (*rìyòngchǎng* factory for daily products) in Wenzhou, and a 汽车仄 (*qìchē chǎng* car plant) and a 白肉仄 (*báiròu chǎng* pork processing unit) by the road south from Wenzhou.

All these records of 仄 are from Zhejiang Province. This may explain why 仄 was misprinted above: the form was unknown to *Zhōngguó Yǔwén*’s Beijing-based typographer. To check this, we ask informants about 仄. Their answers, shown on Map 9, confirm that 仄 is known in Zhejiang and only there.

In southern Zhejiang, *-ng* endings are lost and 廠 is read something like *ts’e*. In the dictionary, 仄 means ‘a non-even tone’ and is read *zè*. Thus 仄 was close enough to 廠 be loaned for it.

厶 records are not confirmed before 1964, when a school teacher from Wuzhou in Guangxi complained that some people wrote 厶 for 厂, and an employee of the Beijing post office that “some write 道 as 辺, 宣 as 宀, 厂 as 厶, 戴 (*dài* wear) as 宀, 增 as 坤, 通 (*tōng* pass) as 迎, etc., plus unintelligible characters in wild cursive style. Since these characters are hard to decipher, we have appointed special people in the sorting process to deal with these nonsensical letters.”⁵ In

seen in 1994 in Dingxing, Hebei and in Baoding, Hebei by RB. 停车坊 seen in 2000 in Fuzhou by Yoshida Yoshio. Yoshida 2003. Also mentioned in “Wenzi – rongyi wuyong” 2005.

1. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 24.
2. The postcard is reproduced in Zhu 2001, p. 162.
3. *Xue wenhua zidian* 1952, pp. 1, 3.
4. Zhang 1962, p. 17. Wang 1962, p. 16.
5. Liu Wanxin 1964, p. 24. Wang 1964.

1985, the traveller Tollef Ås noticed a 沅厝 (distillery) in Guangzhou, the following year, this writer saw a 石灰厝 (*shíhuīchǎng* lime factory) in Zhongshan in Guangdong, two years later again a 釉面厝 (*yòumiànchǎng* enamel factory) in Huian in Fujian and a 纸箱厝 (cardboard box factory) in Shantou in Guangdong.¹

All accounts of 厝 are from South China, except that of our Beijing postman who called 厝 “nonsensical”. Interviews plotted on Map 8 confirm that 厝 is known in the south and only there.

厝 is, apart from the above quote, known to us from a Qing blockprint only.²

Of Zhào’s five forms, 厝 and 厝 were uncommon and 厝 and 厝 local. This left 厝 as the natural choice. The problem with 厝 was that many were in the habit of using that form for 厝 (*lì* history).³ In the event, the 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme changed 厝 to 厝 and 厝 to 厝. Some still grumbled that 厝, like 产, was ugly and “looks like falling down”.⁴ The committee countered that readers would get used to that and ratified 厝 already in February 1956.⁵

After that, the variants 厝 and 厝 have disappeared from use. True, *Yǔwén xuéxí* complained in 1958 that 工厂 (factory) was written 工厂 in advertisements, but this came to be our last record of that practice.⁶ The local forms 厝 and 厝, however, have as we have seen lived on.

朝朝朝朝 *cháo* court *zhāo* morning

Since the Jin dynasty, pragmatic scribes have shortened the left side of 朝 to 车, 𠂔 or 𠂔.⁷ This made it identical with the ‘carriage’ in 較 (*jiào* compare), 軟 (*ruǎn* soft) etc.

In 1964, the Script Reform Committee chose to shorten all ‘carriages’ to 车. Thirteen years later it proposed include even the 草 in 朝 and 韩 in this process and write 朝, an idea which was given up in the revised 1981 scheme.

車車车 *chē* carriage

In 車, the stroke order 一 | 冫 — — | is considered correct. Some Han scribes saved effort by writing 一 L 冫 — — |, and more by dropping 冫 —, leaving 车.⁸

1. 厝 also seen 1982 in Zhuhai in Guangdong, 1986 in Zhangzhou in Fujian, and 1988 in Huidong in Guangdong.
2. In early Qing blockprint *Mulianji* according to Li 1930, p. 23
3. Like the Fujian, Guangdong and Jiangxi Border Area Working Committee, which mentioned 厝史教训 (the lessons of history) in a 1947 document. *Fujian geming shi*, p. 324.
4. “Zhongguo minzhu cujinhui” 1955. Xia 1955. Yao 1955. Ye 1955, p. 34.
5. Committee member Ye Gongchuo at the October script reform conference. Ye 1955, p. 34.
6. Xiong et al. 1958, p. 16.
7. 朝 by Wang Xizhi (d. 379). 朝 in Yuan blockprint, acc. to Liu 1930, p. 28. 朝 in Yuan blockprint, in *Quanyuan zaju*, Part 1, pp. 3669, 4128.
8. Changed stroke order on wood slips 28.10 and 477.4 from Juyan site A8 (69 BC–AD 29). 輸 written with 车 on slip 394.4 from P9 (63 BC–AD 2). 车 for 車 on slip 18.11 from A8. Lu 1989, pp. 268–269.

Others dropped 一 to write 車, 一, 一 and 一 to write 丰, or |, | and 一 to write 丰.¹

In 1955, society remained split into 車, 車 and 丰 writers. There were also those who wrote 丰 when 車 appeared as a component in characters like 較, 軍 (軍 *jūn* military) etc.² The 1955 Draft List of Simplified Handwritten Character Components changed the 車 component to 丰, the simplest alternative. One debater objected: “As far as possible, characters should be simplified according to the forms people are used to. [...] Everybody writes the character and character component 車 as 车, for example in 较 and 范.” Another: “Everybody writes 車 like this: 车. Yet the draft simplifies 車 to 丰. People can misunderstand and believe that this means 豐.”³

Yes, 丰 was already booked for 豐 (*fēng* abundant). If the committee wanted a short form not only for the 車 component but also for the character, 丰 would not do. So it selected 车.

徹 沏 彻 *chè* remove
澈 沏 *chè* clear

When the 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme presented no short forms for 徹 and 澈, the public reacted. A letter to *Guāngmíng rìbào* proposed to simplify 澈 to 沏, since “some people write 澈 as 沏”, one to *Yǐwén zhīshí* pointed out that 沏 “is used by the broad masses” for 徹, another that the use of 沏 for 澈 and 徹 “has a broad base of usage among the masses”.⁴

There was a hitch, as the reformer Chén Guāngyáo pointed out: “If we simplify 澈 to 沏 it will become identical with the colloquial Beijing word 沏 (read *qī*) as in 沏茶 [*qī chá* make tea].”⁵ To avoid this, the 1956 Character Simplification Scheme simplified both characters not to 沏, but to 彻 with 彳, a form not seen in previous records.

The Script Reform Committee avoided implementing this decision. When 彻 became official in 1959, it was only in the sense of 徹, not for 澈.

Use of 沏 continued but was picked on. In 1960, the committee said: “It is not good when some people write the 徹 in 貫徹 [*guànchè* carry out] as 沏, because 沏 is the 沏 in 沏茶.” In 1962, *Guāngmíng rìbào*: “沏. This character is pronounced *qī* and means ‘to pour boiling water on’, like in 沏茶, but now some people use it

1. 轉 written with 車 for 車 on wood slip 395.14 from Juyan site P9 (63 BC–AD 2). 車 written 車 on slip 280.4 from A33 (79 BC–AD 24). 軍 written with 丰 by Zhang Zhi (d. 192). 車 written 丰 by Suo Jing (239–303). 車 written 丰 by Zhang Xu (c. 830).
2. 軍 written with 丰 for 車, Luo 1954, p. 18. 軍 with 車, Luo 1954, p. 18. 丰 common for character component 車, acc. to Yi 1955, p. 24.
3. Liu Kuimin 1955. Zhang Decun 1955.
4. Huang 1955. Yun and Jun 1955, p. 21. Wang Tonghan 1955.
5. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 46.

as a simplified form of 澈. This is wrong.”¹ A new attempt to make 沏 correct was made with the abortive 1977 Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme.

In Beijing, 澈 is read *chè* and the phonetic 切 makes no sense. It does elsewhere, however.

	Beijing	Yangzhou Jiangsu	Huaiyin Jiangsu	Guangzhou Guangdong	Yangjiang Guangdong
澈	<i>tʃ'əʔ</i>	<u><i>tɕ'ieʔ</i></u>	<u><i>tɕ'ieʔ</i></u>	<u><i>tʃ'it</i></u>	<u><i>tʃ'it</i></u>
切 in 切开 (<i>qiē kāi</i> cut)	<i>tɕ'ie</i>	<u><i>tɕ'ieʔ</i></u>	<u><i>tɕ'ieʔ</i></u>	<u><i>tʃ'it</i></u>	<u><i>tʃ'it</i></u>
切 in 一切 (<i>yíqiè</i> all)	<i>tɕ'ieʔ</i>	<u><i>tɕ'ieʔ</i></u>	<u><i>tɕ'ieʔ</i></u>	<i>tʃ'ɛrʔ</i>	<i>tʃ'ɛrʔ</i>

Was 沏 invented in Jiangsu or Guangdong?

塵尘 *chén* dust

On some Dunhuang scrolls, ‘dust’ is written 尘 or 𡇗, as “micro-dirt” instead of “deer-dirt”.² This short form has even been used in Japan, for example in a Buddhist tale from 1140 which says 皆碎テ尘トナリヌ (*mina kudakete chiri to narinu* everything has disintegrated and become dust).³

The Song dictionary *Jíyùn* noticed and denounced 尘: “塵 is customarily written 尘. This is not correct.” Whether or not because of this condemnation, 尘 disappears from our records and seems to have fallen out of use. True, it does appear in the 1716 *Kāngxī zìdiǎn*, but now with the label “an ancient form”.

Chinese reformers had seen 尘 in these dictionaries, appreciated its shortness and included it in the 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme. Not surprisingly, the founding turned out to be unfamiliar to the public. One debater objected against “reviving obscure ancient characters, like 糝 [*jiāng* starch] and 尘.” Another wrote: “Some comrades do not approve of the characters 尘 and 灭 [*miè* extinguish] and think they are difficult to understand.” One delegate to the October script conference, very reform-minded at that, admitted that 尘 was “a little unfamiliar”.⁴

The Script Reform Committee member Yè Gōngchuò explained:

When necessary, we have applied the above rules to create a small number of new simplified characters, like 竟 [競 *jìng* compete] [...] 尘 (塵, an ancient form) [...] Since these characters are not established by custom one might prefer to leave them out, but without them the problem of simplifying some

1. “Hanzi jianhua zuotanhui jiyao” 1960. Chong 1962.

2. Li 1996, p. 35.

3. Manuscript in Kanazawa Bunko. From Yamauchi 1972, p. 95.

4. “Ge di renshi” 1955. Yao 1955. “Chen Zhongfan daibiao de fayan” 1955, p. 77 (糝 was removed from the final scheme).

characters will not get a satisfactory solution.¹

The newness of 尘 was confirmed by the writer Lǎo Shě:

At first even I did not know 尘 and 灭, but after paying just a little attention I learned them. They are certainly not so difficult to master as the seal script. Some intellectuals patiently study seal characters, but say that simplified characters are hard to understand, this sounds odd. After I became acquainted with them, 尘 and 灭 have become my friends, and now I do not like to write 塵 and 滅 any more.²

Still in 1958, 尘 was widely unknown. A countryside middle school teacher wrote:

I wrote the character 塵. When the pupils saw this heap of a character, they asked me anxiously: “Teacher Liang, is there a simplified form of this character?” I stopped to think, what simplified form could there possibly exist? Thoughtlessly I answered: “No, this character cannot be simplified.” Then a young peasant in the back row stood up and said reproachingly: “No? A 小 on top, a 土 at bottom, isn’t that *chén*?” I wrote this character on the blackboard, but no matter which way I looked at it I could not recognize it.³

尘 became official in 1959 and is of course now recognised by every teacher.

橙 杌 *chén* orange

In Guangzhou marketplaces 甜橙 (*tiánchén* sweet oranges) price tags alternate with 甜杌 ones.⁴ Some but not all Guangdong informants recognize 杌 as 橙, as we see on Map 10. Outside that province 杌 is unknown, or, sometimes, identified as 凳 (*dèng*, q.v.).

襯 衬 寸 *chèn* shirt

The glossary *Jiǎnbìzì* published in Shanghai in 1951 said 襯 was shortened 衬 or 寸. Five years later, the reformer Chén Guāngyáo wrote that the form 衬 was “established by custom” and that “in some department stores, 襯衣 [*chènyī* shirt] is even written 寸衣, because some people from the Wu dialect area pronounce both 寸 and 襯 as *cən* [...]”⁵

The characters are read as follows.

1. Ye 1955, p. 30.
2. Lao She 1957, p. 5. pp. 4-5.
3. Liang 1958.
4. 甜杌 seen at three Guangzhou marketplaces in 1982.
5. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 47.

Suzhou Yangzhou Hefei Hankou Changsha Chengdu Beijing Jinan Nanchang Hengyang
 襯 ts'ən ts'uən ts'ən ts'ən ts'ən ts'ən ts'ən ts'ən ts'ɛ̃ ts'en ts'en
 寸 ts'ən ts'uən ts'ən ts'ən ts'ən ts'ən ts'ən ts'uən ts'uɛ̃ ts'ən ts'uen

So speakers of Wu dialects, here represented by Suzhou, do read 襯 like 寸. But not only they. All the way upstream along the Changjiang, 襯 and 寸 readings are identical (here underlined). It is not surprising that our first record of 衬 or 寸 for 襯 turned up in this area, namely in Shanghai, near Suzhou.

When the Script Reform Committee proposed to simplify 襯 to 衬 in January 1955, this short form turned out to be unfamiliar to many. The script reformer Yi Xiwú from Guangxi called 衬 “a newly created character”, and Zhào Tàimóu from Shandong University in Jinan said that with the scheme, “some unphonetic new phonetic characters have come into being, like 猎 [獵 liè hunt], 邻 [鄰 lín neighbour] [...] 灿 and 衬.”¹ Both ignorants resided outside the presumably 衬-using Changjiang basin. So did even the Script Reform Committee, which hesitated until 1959 before making 衬 official.

Official status for 衬 did not stop 寸 writers. In the Changjiang area, sale of 寸衣 and 寸衫 (*chènshān* shirts) has continued.²

稱 称 秤 *chèn* fit *chēng* weigh, name
 稱 秤 称 *chèng* scales

Dictionaries distinguish between 称 (稱 *chēng/shō* to weigh, a name) and 秤 (*chèng/hakari* scales). This distinction has not always been made. True, ‘to weigh’ is certainly the original sense of 稱, which depicts a hand (𠂇) lifting some item (冉) later specified as grain (禾). By the Han dynasty, however, one could also read about directives to 角斗稱 (harmonize scales).³

Even 秤 has been used in both senses. When it appeared some time by the Sui dynasty, it was first used as a short form for ‘scales’, yes, as befits a character made up of 禾 (grain) and 平 (balance).⁴ Soon, however, we find 秤 even in phrases like 天將秤其德 (heaven will weigh his virtue).⁵ Not only the *chèng* section, but also the *chēng* section of *Jiyùn* complained: “稱 is customarily written 秤. This is not correct.” Still in 1916, the *Zhōnghuá dà zìdiǎn* called 秤 a “vulgar” variant of 稱, not of any specific sense of it.

The short 称 is found in Chinese vernacular blockprints from the Song dynasty

1. Yi 1955, p. 99. Zhao 1957, p.166. Yi had written about Guilin dialect and is presumably from those parts.
2. 寸衣 seen 1981 in Zhuzhou in Hunan, 1982 in Xingyi in Guizhou, Wanxian in Sichuan, and Wuhan in Henan. 寸衫 seen 1982 in Hangzhou in Zhejiang and 1986 in Yongxin in Jiangxi.
3. *Huainan zi*: 五: 時則. The commentator Gao You 高誘 says: “斗稱 is a weighing instrument.”
4. Perhaps the oldest extant 秤 is found on the AD 609 Lü Hu 呂胡 epitaph. Fushimi 1988, p. 752.
5. Wenji shendao stele 溫佶神道碑 (833). From *Ciyuan*, 禾 section.

and in Japan from the Muromachi onwards.¹ 称 is a slow and careful version of the cursive 稱, which in its turn is a fast and slipshod version of the clerk style 稱, in which ㄨ has been contracted to ㄣ, 丨 written before 冂 and the closing 二 abandoned.

In 1946, the Japanese Language Council simplified 稱 to 称 with a straight 一 on top right. The Script Reform Committee of China differed in writing 称 with ㄣ.

程 程 chéng course

In 1981, a notice entitled 课程 was displayed at the campus of Beijing University. Obviously it was a 课程 (*kèchéng* curriculum). This use of 程 was known from letters sent to the Script Reform Committee in 1960 from Liuan in Anhui and the not too distant Duchang in Jiangxi.² Interviews plotted on Map 17 show that informants from that area, and only they, identify 程 as 程.

程 does look like a local Hubei, Anhui and Jiangxi form. This picture is disturbed only by the 课程 written by some member of the Beijing University staff. I mentioned this linguistic anomaly to a teacher at the Chinese Department. He said: “Jiangxi? But that is where we stayed.” During the Cultural Revolution, that is.

In some other parts, 程 is used for 稻 (*dào* q.v.).

懲 懲 chéng punish

The Japanese dictionary form 懲 is somewhat shorter than the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* form 懲, which has a 一 between 山 and 壬.

The Japanese form is not a shortened 懲. Han, Jin and Tang calligraphers agreed in writing 懲 without 一. It was in the Song dynasty that dictionaries began to prescribe 懲 with 一, denouncing the 一-less 懲 as “vulgar”.³ This idea may have been picked up in *Shuōwén*, which said 懲’s top 徵 (*zhēng* solicit) “is written with a shortened 徵.”⁴ 一 made the top agree somewhat better with *Shuōwén*’s etymology.

While the Japanese Language Council shortened 懲 by reinstating the Han and Tang standard, the Script Reform Committee of China had access to a still shorter alternative. In documents from the Taiping rebellion, 懲 is written 懲, analogously with the older 征 for 徵.⁵ This 懲 endured and the committee made it official with the first batch of characters in February 1956.

1. In 1568 copy of *Wa-Kan rōei shū shichū* 和漢朗詠集私注, acc. to Yamada 1958, p. 30.

2. Letters dated 1960.6.22 and 1961.11.16.

3. *Longkan shoujing* (997) and *Yupian* (1013) said 懲 without 一, *Jiyun* (1039) 懲 with 一. *Zijian* (c. 1330) called 懲 “vulgar”.

4. This does not convince Shirakawa, who means 徵 depicts a moving (彳) and thumping (攴) long-haired (山) man (壬), perhaps a beggar. Shirakawa 1994, p. 604.

5. Qiu 1974.

乘 乘 *chéng* ride

The Japanese dictionary form 乘 is shorter than the Chinese 乘. As we shall see, however, 乘 is not a shortened 乘.

乘 originally meant ‘to ascend’. This is borne out by the Zhou form 𨔵, which depicts a man straddling the branches of a tree. In Han seal style this became 乘 or 乘. The clerk forms 乘 and 乘 and the later square form 乘 are based on the latter.

Square forms with 北 appear later, first as 乘 on a statuette from the Eastern Wei.¹ 乘 and 乘 are imitations of the seal 乘, where the legs in the branches have been taken for two men (北), “lying in ambush” according to the sense given by *Shuōwén*. In dictionaries, we find 乘 with 北 from the Ming *Zihui* onwards.² However, dictionary promotion of 乘 did not prevent 乘 from living on in handwriting, and in 1948 the Japanese Language Council decided to make the shorter form official. The council was not followed by the Script Reform Committee of China, which saw no point in shortening the character by one single stroke and left it as 乘.

癡 痴 *chī* foolish

We know 痴 from 1008, when *Guāngyùn* said 痴 reads like 癡 and means “unclever”. In other words, 痴 was an alternative to 癡. This is confirmed by examples like 我風我痴 (I am crazy and out of my mind) from Yuan dramas.³

In December 1955 the Script Reform Committee abolished 癡 and retained the shorter 痴 variant which “the people have long been used to writing”.⁴

遲 遲 遲 遲 迟 *chí* be late

Shuōwén says: “This character means ‘to walk slowly’. It is written with 辵 and the phonetic 犀. [...] 遲 is also written with 犀. [...] In the Zhòu script, 遲 was written with 犀.”

Three variants then, according to Xǔ Shèn. The second one is confirmed by Yin bones, the third one both by Yin bones and Zhou bronzes. It is only the first variant, the one written with 犀, which is absent in pre-*Shuōwén* records. Why then did Xǔ choose this unusual or unknown form as standard? Perhaps because it was the only one he could interpret. While 遲 was an uninterpretable man (尸) on top of an unidentified object (辛 or 𠂔) on the move (辵) and 迟 the same moving man on top of another man (匕), 遲 was a logical signific-phonetic compound just to Xǔ’s taste, with a signific 辵 and a phonetic 犀 (*xī* < *sei** rhinoceros).

It is after being promoted by *Shuōwén* that 遲 with ‘rhinoceros’ appears in our

1. Li touzu statuette 李頭族造像 (Eastern Wei 534–550).
2. Earlier dictionaries like *Jiyun* and *Yupian* said “乘 is also written 乘.” The latter, hardly ever used form is based on *Shuowen*, which says the character “is written with 入 and 乘.”
3. In Yuan print of drama “Chuangshifan” “窗事犯”. *Quanyuan zaju* 1962, Part 1, p. 2413.
4. Zhonghua renmin gongheguo wenhuabu 1955. Zhang Zhou 1956, p. 19.

records.¹ As one could expect, however, it did not completely replace the much simpler 遲 and the somewhat simpler 遲, which have coexisted with 遲 to this day.

The three forms mentioned by Xǔ Shèn were not the only ones known in his time. When Xǔ wrote about his seal forms, characters in this style were already old-fashioned. The common clerk wrote in the new clerk style and shortened 遲 to 遲 or 遲.² Later again, Yuan blockprinters shortened 遲 further to 遲 or 遲 with 半 or 丰.³

In our oldest Japanese records, ‘be late’ is already shortened to 遲 with 羊.⁴ This practical form remained popular in that country, and when time came for reforms, the authorities were in no doubt which short form to select. The 1919, 1923, 1926, 1942 and 1946 schemes all proposed 遲 with 羊, and this form is today the official one.

Chinese reformers were less decisive. In 1935, the reformers at *Tàibái* chose to adopt 遲 with 羊, while their fellows in the Education Department chose 遲 with 丰. Twenty years later, the choice had become simpler. By then, the shorter alternative 迟 with the simple phonetic 尺 *chǐ* had come into popular use.⁵ The Script Reform Committee welcomed this new form and proposed in January 1955 to make 迟 official. Objectors pointed out that this form broke one of the laws of calligraphy by containing two *nà* (丿) strokes. Accordingly, the committee changed 迟 to 迟 and made this more law-abiding form official already with the first batch of characters in February 1956.

齒 齒 齒 齿 *chǐ* teeth

On Yin bones, 齒 is written with the bottom part, an image of the teeth. The top phonetic 止 *zhǐ* was added in the Zhou dynasty.⁶

In clerk style the form became 齒. Already in the Han dynasty, some scribes dropped the line between the teeth and wrote 齒, dropped a tooth and wrote 齒, or flattened the teeth and wrote 齒.⁷ 齒 endured and was condemned as “vulgar” by the Tang writing guide *Gānlù zìshū*. *Gānlù zìshū*'s Yuan successor *Zìjiàn* did not

1. The next 遲 with ‘rhinoceros’ on record are the Shangzun hao stele 上尊號碑 (after 220) and the Huangdi sanlinbiyong stele 皇帝三臨辟雍碑 (278). *Li bian*, 1-24. Fushimi 1989, p. 707.
2. Forms with 羊 are found on a wood slip from early Wu di (140–93 BC) period excavated at Yinqueshan (c. 130 BC. Li 1996, pp. 38–39) and on a wood slip (80 BC–AD 23) from Dunhuang, with 夫 or 大 on slips no. 55.11, 133.23, 231.2 from Juyan site A8 (69 BC–AD 29).
3. *Quanyuan zaju*, Part 1, p. 4641. Liu 1930, p. 95. Yang and Shao 1952, p. 19.
4. On the Bussokuseki ka stele 佛足石歌碑 (c. 753) and the Jōsuiji nandaimon stele 上水寺南大門碑 (c. 800).
5. 迟 is mentioned in Xu 1934, p. 1006, Huang 1951 (1950), p. 14, and Tai 1951.
6. Inscriptions from the Western Zhou dynasty and Spring and Autumn period are missing. Our first teeth enlarged with ‘foot’ are from the Warring States period. See Gao 1980, p. 92.
7. 齒 on Juyan slip no. 148.27 from site A10 (90–77 BC), etc. 齒 on slip 65.7 (79 BC), etc. 齒 on Juyan from slip from AD 27 in “Donghan jian” 1986, etc.

mention any 齒 problem, but criticized instead the form 齧 which had made its appearance by then.¹

While some scribes shed strokes, others introduced new ones and wrote forms like 齒 or 齧. By the sixth century, some writers had reduced the teeth (人) in the latter form to dots and mashed the whole core into ‘rice’ (米).² The resulting 齒 came to be very popular. In Ming and Qing blockprints, for example, Liú Fù found no other short form than 齒. It is not surprising then that this was the form the Japanese Language Council proposed to make official in its 1923, 1926, 1938 and 1942 schemes, and that it entered Japanese dictionaries in 1946.

Even in China the road seemed paved for 齒. The enthusiasts who published lists of short forms agreed that the short form for 齒 was 齒 and none else.³ When *Tàibái* and fourteen other Shanghai journals introduced simplified characters in 1935, 齒 was their obvious choice.⁴

齒’s monopoly was challenged in 1950 when a *Wénhuì bào* article reported the short form 𪗇 with 𠂇.⁵ Perhaps the Script Reform Committee looked to this when it proposed in January 1955 to simplify 齒 to the still shorter 𪗇 with 人. This 𪗇 seems to have been a novelty. The reformer Jīn Míngshèng said 𪗇 was “simply made up by the Script Reform Committee,” his colleague Chén Guāngyáo called it a “newly coined signific-phonetic compound”, while the non-reformer Zhào Tàijùn said 𪗇 was one of several “simplified characters I have not seen, or newly created characters”.⁶ These reservations may explain why the committee waited until June 1956 before it granted official status to 𪗇.

衝 冲 冲 *chōng* surge *chòng* forcefully

Shuōwén says 衝 means ‘crossroads’ and 冲 ‘to surge’. This distinction had already been violated, for example in *Sūn zǐ bīngfǎ* (*Sūn zǐ*’s Art of War) which says 衝其虛 (charge your enemy’s weak points) with 衝. Later dictionaries like the Song *Yùpiān* provided for this by giving 衝 or 衝 the sense of ‘charge forward’ and 冲 that of ‘surge upwards’. In the Ming dynasty, a phrase like 衝撞 (*chōngzhuàng* collide) could be written 衝撞 in one novel and 冲撞 in another.⁷ In the nineteen fifties, the reformer Chén Guāngyáo pointed out that “words like 衝犯 [*chōngfàn* offend] and 衝突 [*chōngtū* clash] are customarily written 冲犯 and 冲突.”⁸

In February 1956, the Script Reform Committee put an end to this vacillation

1. We first find 齧 in Southern Song blockprints. Liu 1930, p. 132.
2. We find our first 齒 with 米 in the character 齡 (齡 *líng* age) on the Wang Yuansui 王元粹 epitaph (Wei 386-587) from Ruyang. Qin 1985, p. 450.
3. Xu 1934, p. 1006. Ouyang 1936, p. 16. *Xin zidian* 1948. *Jianbizi* 1951, p. 46.
4. “Tuixing shoutou zi” 1935.
5. Huang 1951 (1950), p. 15. This form was even mentioned in Chen 1955, p. 127.
6. Jin Mingsheng 1955. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 46. Zhao 1957, pp. 165-166.
7. 衝撞 in *Shuihu zhuan* 水湖傳 and 冲撞 in *Baitu ji* 白兔記, acc. to Li 1996, p. 40.
8. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 25.

and prescribed 冲 in all contexts (冲 with 彳 was a variant of 冲 which had been on record at least since the eleventh century).¹

In Japan, 衝 is read *shō* and 冲 *chū* so substitution is not on the agenda.

虫 蟲 *chóng* insect

In 1946, the Japanese Language Council shortened the official 蟲 to 虫, followed by the Script Reform Committee of China in 1956. One reformer explained: “虫 (蟲) is a character established by custom. Note: 虫 was originally the same as 虺 [venomous snake], which is read *huī*. However, customarily 虫 has been used as a short form for 蟲. Dictionaries like *Liùshū zhèng'é*, *Jíyùn* and *Yùnhuì* all agree that 虫 is short for 蟲.”

True, dictionaries have distinguished 蟲 and 虫 as *chóng* and *huī*.² However, the Song philologist Dài Tǒng already pointed out: “There are no cases of 虫 being used for 虺 in ancient books. 虫 is [on the other hand] phonetic in 融 [*róng*]. Because of this we know that 虫 [...] is short for 蟲. They are not different characters.” Or, as Karlgren put it: “*Shuōwén* considers this [虫] as the primary form of 虺, but there are no text examples of this. Its role as a phonetic [in 融 and 融 *tóng*] on the contrary shows that it was the primary graph of c. [蟲] below.”³ In other words, 虫 is not a shortened 蟲, it is 蟲 which is an enlarged 虫.

These conjectures are borne out by excavated texts. In the early Han *Lǎo zǐ B* manuscript from Mawangdui, ‘hibernating insect’, 蟄蟲 (*zhéchóng*) in the dictionary, is written 𧈧虫, and a wood slip from the early Eastern Han dynasty excavated at Wuwei recommends cures to apply when 喉中如百虫鳴狀 (the throat feels like a hundred squealing insects).⁴ From this early period we are on the other hand short of records of the allegedly older 蟲.

醜 丑 *chǒu* repulsive

In 1955 丑, originally the second of the twelve Earthly Branches, was said to be “in common use” for its homonym 醜.⁵ This practice had been seen in vernacular blockprints from the early Qing dynasty onwards. In January 1955, the Script Reform Committee proposed to make it official. There were some objections, summarized by the committee as follows: “Some characters should rather be

1 *Da guang yi hui Yupian* 1013, 彳 section: “冲 [...] is a vulgar form of 冲.”

2. The revised *Shuowen* says 虫 “is the same as 虺 [*fu Agkistrodon halys*, a relative of the North American copperhead snake], [a creature] three inches thick with a head as big as a thumb. [...] This character is read 許偉切 [*h-uěi*]”, while a creature or insect “with legs is called 蟲 [...] This character is read 直弓切 [*zh-óng*].” On this basis later dictionaries held 蟲 and 虫 as different. The basis is weak since readings were absent in the original version of *Shuowen*.

3. *Liushu gu* c. 1270, vol. 20, p. 1a. Karlgren 1964 (1957), item 1009.

4. “Lao zi yi ben”, line 88 upper part, lower part. “Dong Han jian ‘Wuwei’” 1986, pp. 64-65. Other examples of early 虫s are found in Sano 1991, p. 635.

5. Chen 1955, p. 120.

simplified as to their shape. Examples of this are the substitution of 鬱 [yù exuberant] with 玉 [yù jade] and 醜 with 丑. This can easily cause misunderstanding. For example, 小丑 and 小醜 mean different things, the former is the name of an opera character, while the latter is ‘a repulsive wretch’ ”.¹

Disregarding objectors, the committee confirmed the change in February 1956.

齣 出 *chū*

In January 1955, the Script Reform Committee proposed to simplify 齣, the classifier for theatre plays, to 出 analogously with 齿 for 齒. Debaters found even 齣 too complex and suggested instead the homonym 出.² The committee agreed and shortened 齣 to 出 already in February 1956.

This 出 was actually the older form for the classifier. In the Song novel *Jīngdé chuándēng lù* Master Shèng tells Yàoshān that he can act as a lion. Yàoshān asks: 弄得幾出 (How many acts can you perform?). Shèng answers: 弄得六出 (I can perform six). Records of 齣 start much later, with Qing works like *Zihuì bǔ* (The enlarged Zihui), *Rúlín wàishī* (The Scholars) etc.³

Although adopted by dictionaries, 齣 never replaced 出 completely as a classifier. Still on the eve of the reform, many knew no other form for it than 出, like one comrade who “was reading out documents at a meeting. When the phrase 这真是一齣怪戏 [this is really an extraordinary spectacle] appeared in the text, he read 齣 as *jù*. Afterwards I wanted to tell him that 齣 is not read *jù*. He spoke first, however, with a deep sigh: ‘Why do some characters have to be changed into ancient style as soon as they appear in a document?’ I said: ‘What is in ancient style?’ He said: ‘I mean, when watching plays we all say *yì chū xì*. Why on earth must this be changed to *yí jù xì* in books and newspapers?’ The other comrades laughed and told him that this was the character *chū*, not *jù*. He was very surprised to hear this.”⁴

𪛗 𪛘 𪛙 𪛚 𪛛 𪛜 𪛝 *chú* hay

雛 雛 雛 雛 *chú* chick

In 1959, the Script Reform Committee simplified 𪛗, 雛, 趨 (*qū* hurry), 鄒 (*Zōu*) and other characters written with 𪛗 to the customary short forms 𪛛, 雛 etc.

It is hard to see how 𪛛 can spring from 𪛗. Reformers explained 𪛛 as a square form of a cursive form of 𪛗.⁵ We shall see, however, that 𪛛 has developed not from 𪛗, but from the older 𪛗.

In the Yin form 𪛗, a hand is grasping two straws of grass. By the Han dynasty,

1. “Ge di renshi” 1955, p. 38. In the event, 鬱 was changed to another homonym, namely 郁.

2. Guan 1955 (a), p. 40.

3. Examples from *Hanyu da zidian*. The full passage says: 藥山又問聞汝解弄師子是否師曰是曰弄得幾出師曰弄得六出.

4. He 1964. The text continues: “Later, when the simplified characters were announced [...]”, hence the dating of the incident.

5. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 47. Li 1996, p. 41.

this character component had come to be written 𦉳, 𦉴 or 𦉵.¹ In the first we, who have just seen the Yin form, can recognize two hands (𠂇) holding straws of grass (艹). Xǔ Shèn, who had seen no Yin bones, conjectured instead that this character had “the shape of bundles of straw.” Some clerk and square style writers conformed with this etymology and wrote 𦉵 with 𠂇, which is what ‘bundle’ looks like in square style. Records of this start with a 𦉵 on a stele from AD 174.² This 𦉵 with ‘bundle’ was the form the ‘hay’ component was given in *Gānlù zìshū*, *Lóngkān shǒujìng* and later dictionaries.

Many writers stuck to the shorter 𦉳, however, or made it still shorter by contracting the two | to write 𦉳, by dropping | altogether to write 𦉳, or by dropping 一 to write 𦉳.³ By the the Tang dynasty, contraction of the top of 𦉳 had given us forms with 𦉳 and 𦉳, and by the Yuan dynasty contraction of 𦉳 had produced 𦉳, which some contracted to 𦉳.⁴ The latter became the more common form and the Script Reform Committee’s choice in 1955 of 𦉳, 𦉳, 𦉳, 𦉳 etc. caused no stir.

礎 础 *chǔ* foundation stone

The 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme proposed to shorten 礎 to 础, a form we have no former record of. The reformer Yì Xīwú called this 础 a “newly created” character. He was contradicted by his colleague Chén Guāngyáo who said 础 was “established by custom”.⁵

础 employs the short phonetic 出, which is read *chū* in mandarin. A third reformer, Jīn Míngshèng, meant that “as far as the southern reading is concerned, the distance to the reading of the original character is really too great.”⁶ (In southern dialects, 礎 ends in a vowel, 出 in *-t* or *-ʔ*.) This may explain why 础 was familiar to the Beijing-based Chén Guāngyáo but unfamiliar to the Guangxi-based Yì Xīwú.⁷

The choice of 础 was not obvious, and the committee waited until June 1956, until the second batch of characters, before it made 础 official. As one might expect, southerners hesitated. In 1962, a letter informed the *Wénzì gǎigé* that students in Zhejiang – where 出 ends in the glottal stop *-ʔ* – had invented their own short form 礧 by dropping the bottom 疋.⁸

1. 𦉳 zōu, 𦉳, 𦉳 etc. on steles in Fushimi 1989, p. 678, 718, 782, and on wood slips in Sano 1991, pp. 693, 731, 797.
2. On the Fan Yang ling Yang jun 繁陽令楊君 stele. In *Li bian*, 1-43.
3. 𦉳 on the Zhangqian 張遷 stele (186). 𦉳 on the Kongzi miaotang 孔字廟堂 stele (626). 𦉳 on the Shixing Zhongwu wang 始興忠武王 stele (522).
4. 𦉳 (𦉳) in the Kushu fu 枯樹賦 (630). 𦉳 on the Dong Weijing 董惟靖 stele (Tang). 𦉳 in blockprint *Sanguo zhi pinghua* (1321–1328). 𦉳 in blockprint *Taiping yuefu* 太平樂府 (Yuan).
5. Yi 1955, p. 99. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 47.
6. Jin Mingsheng 1955.
7. See note to 襪 *chèn*.
8. Zhang 1962.

儲儲儲 *chǔ* store up

After the publication of the 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme, a letter to *Yǔwén zhīshí* pointed out:

Among the two thousand common characters announced by the Education Department, there are quite a few which have not been simplified, like 疑 [yí, 聚, 靜, 隸, 鼻, 傲, 儲, 塞, 賽, 戳 [...], while characters which are not common, like 嘖, 燬 [...], have been so. I wish the Script Reform Committee could first make an effort to simplify those of the two thousand common characters which contain more than ten or twelve strokes, so that they can be easy to use for common people.¹

The committee was at a loss, however, and could offer nothing shorter than 儲 with a shortened 言 inside.

Bankers needed a shorter way to write 儲蓄 (*chǔxù* deposit) and found one. In 1960, letters from Jilin, Anhui, Fujian, Guangdong and Inner Mongolia informed the committee that one could see 儲 written as 儲.² This 儲 is made up with the phonetic 出 *chū*, which fits 儲 *chǔ* reasonably in northern China. In the south, however, 出 ends in a consonant and differs markedly from 儲. We would therefore expect 儲 to be less spread in the south than in the north. However, when we first hear about 儲 in 1960, it was already used all over China, even in areas such as Anhui, Fujian and Guangdong where the phonetic 出 does not fit make the local reading:

	Hefei, Anhui	Fuzhou, Fujian	Meixian, Guangdong
儲	ʧʰu	ʧy	ʧu
出	ʧʰuəʔ,	ʧʰou,	ʧʰut,

The committee did not hesitate to select this widespread form for its 1977 simplification scheme. It abstained in 1981, however.

處處處 *chǔ* stay *chù* place

In February 1956, Chinese reformers substituted the official 處 with 处, claiming that this character “was originally written 处”.³ This seniority claim is based on *Shuōwén*, which says: “𠂔 means ‘to rest’. Rest is what you do when you find a stool. The character is [therefore] written with 几 [stool] and 夊 [walk up from behind]. [...] 处 is also written with the phonetic 处.” *Shuōwén* holds 𠂔 (处) for the standard and, by inference, older form. This inference seemed to be confirmed in 1974, when by the Lǎo zǐ B manuscript from about 200 BC was excavated at

1. Wu Jing 1955.
2. 儲 in letters dated 1960.6.25 from Baotou, 1960.9.30 from Songxi-Zhenghe, 1960(c) from Changchun. 儲 in letters 1960.7.20 from Meixian, 1960.8 from Hefei, 1960(m) from Anqing.
3. “Hanzi jianhua fang’an” 1956, p. 49. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 24.

Mawangdui in Hunan and turned out to contain the form 册 for 處.¹

However, 処's seniority is anything but confirmed by the somewhat older Lǎo zǐ A manuscript and the much older Zhou bronzes, where the tiger top is always present.² 処's claim to seniority is therefore ill-founded. The topless 册 or 処 appeared some time before or during the Qin dynasty, but disappeared again in the Han dynasty, presumably because Lǐ Sī, who disregarded southern forms, had prescribed the tiger top.

Lǐ Sī prescribed the tiger top and Han writers applied it. So why did Xǔ Shèn go against this current and advocate the topless 𠂔? Perhaps because he found no logic in 處. The explanation he produced, that 處, at the time read something like *χo, is phonetic in 處 (*t'io) has not convinced commentators and must have made even Xǔ himself uncomfortable. Xǔ's contemporaries ignored his 処 and continued to write tiger tops as prescribed by Lǐ Sī.

If the norm was set, why do some dictionaries, like the *Xīnhuá zìdiǎn*, contain the alternative complex forms 處 and 處?

Both forms can be traced back to the Western Han dynasty. We have seen that Han writers took care to write the top, but that does not mean that they wrote uniformly. The top could come out as 𠂔, 𠂔, 𠂔 or 𠂔, the bottom as 処, 𠂔, 𠂔 or 𠂔.³ 𠂔 is thus a contraction of 𠂔 and of 処.

Since the Han dynasty, 處 and 處 have competed. The Jin and Tang model writers Wáng Xiànzhī, Ōuyáng Xún and Chǔ Suiliáng promoted 處 with 𠂔, and this was the form endorsed in the *Zhēn-cǎo qiān zì wén* model text. The problem with the 𠂔 bottom, however, was that it did not fit *Shuōwén*'s man-on-stool etymology.⁴ Accordingly, dictionaries like the *Lóngkān shǒujìng*, *Guǎngyùn*, *Yùpiān*, *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* and prescribed 處 with 処.

One differed. The 1039 *Jíyùn* advocated 処 only, quoting *Shuōwén*. Mainstream calligraphers ignored this recommendation, however. Song blockprinters, however, picked up the idea and started using 処 in vernacular novels. This practice continued, and by the end of the nineteenth century shorteners had reduced the last stroke of 処 to 丶 and started writing 处.⁵

Twentieth century reformers wavered. In 1935, the script reforming journals *Tàibái* and *Línyǔ* adopted 处 in their columns, while the Education Department later that year chose 処 for its abortive reform scheme. Twenty years later the

1. "Lao zi yi ben", line 37, upper part: 入興册出興反 (entering, one wants to stay, leaving, one wants to return); line 11, upper part: 脩六國郭册六郎廟 (脩其國郭, 處其廊廟 amend the fortifications and set the court on its feet).
2. 處 with 𠂔 in "Lao zi jia ben", line 143.
3. Perhaps the earliest 𠂔 bottom is the one on Juyan slip 516.19 from site A35 (85–2 BC).
4. *Shuowen*'s analysis is disputed. On Zhou bronzes the bottom left, the modern 𠂔, looks like a part of the tiger. Shirakawa means the top is not a tiger but a man dressed in a tiger skin, an actor on a stage. If so, 𠂔 is not a man, as Xu Shen says, but a part of the actor's costume.
5. In 1874 manuscript in "Tongzhai xiansheng wei ke shougao", p. 06.1025, and in blockprint *Lingnan yi shi* (1862-1892), acc. to Liu 1930, p. 68.

Script Reform Committee of China settled for 处.

处 writers did not resign immediately. In 1957, a letter to *Yǔwén zhīshí* complained that many continued to write 处 “according to their own habit”, in 1964 one to *Běijīng rìbào* that “there is no need to create new forms like 阡, 处, 龟 and 卦” for characters which the committee had already simplified to 阶 [jiē layer], 处, 龟 [guī turtle] and 块 [kuài lump]. The following year, *Wénzì gāigé* reminded the public that “处 is not written 处”, and later that year that “the right side is written 卜”.¹ After that we do not hear of 处 for some time. In the nineteen nineties, however, this writer saw a 洽談处 (*qiàtánchù* conference room) in a hotel and another in a factory.² Is this a preserved old habit, or an attempt to revive the ‘old character’ as it is described in *Xīnhuá zìdiǎn*’s 处 (處、處、处) entry?

Japanese authorities were not bothered by this choice. While 处 had spread to Japan by the sixteenth century, the younger 处 never made the trip.³ Accordingly, Japanese reform schemes proposed 处, which finally became official in 1946.

觸 触 chù

See 獨 独 dú

傳 伝 传 佺 仝 chuán pass on

In 1948, the Japanese Language Council simplified 傳 to 伝. This was a new proposal, □unseen both in the council’s 1926, 1938, 1942 and 1946 schemes.

The council’s tardiness is understandable. 伝 was a relatively new form, on record since 1910, when a teacher named Kuroyanagi Isao declared he would not deduct points from pupils who wrote 伝 for 傳.⁴

伝 was not unknown in China. In 1954, one Liú Wényīng lamented in *Zhōngguó Yǔwén*: “The most common characters may be written in two or three ways, and some in as much as six or seven, like 種 稔 种 [zhǒng sort], 廣 广 庌, 與 与 与 [yǔ with], 學 孛 学 [xué learn], 傳 佺 传 [...].”

Neither 佺 nor 伝 satisfied the Script Reform Committee of China, which passed over 傳 in its 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme (except that the cursive 佺 was recommended for handwriting).

An army teacher objected in *Guāngmíng rìbào* that some “short forms which people often use have not been included in the scheme; I think they should be added, for example [...] 佺 (傳), 轉 (轉 [zhuàn turn]) [...]” A *Zhōngguó Yǔwén* article about the new Japanese forms on the other hand declared that forms like 佺 and 轉 “are rather unfamiliar or very unfamiliar to us.”⁵ The committee agreed with the latter and rejected 佺. Instead it modified the cursive 𠄎 and 佺 to 专 and

1. Zhu 1957, p. 55. Lu 1964. “Zhengzi xiao zihui (1)” 1965. Xiao 1965, p. 8. Also Ni 1963.
2. Signs seen in 1994 in a hotel and in an electronics factory in Baoding.
3. 处 in a 1505 edition of the handbook *Ōrai* 往来, acc. to *Kanji hyakka daijiten*, p. 204.
4. Kuroyanagi 1910, p. 11a.
5. Tian 1955. Liu Zexian 1955.

传.

伝 writers did not vanish. In 1962, the handbook *Zhèngquè shǐyòng hànzi* (Correct Use of Characters) published in Harbin in the north eastern province of Heilongjiang urged “everybody to take care and correct [...] mistaken forms” like 伝 etc.¹ Ten years later, the journal *Hóngqí* received a letter from a miner in Benxi in the north eastern province of Liaoning with views on the “new simplified characters in use among the masses”. Guō Mòruò answered

among the simplified characters (concerning those mentioned in the letter), there are some which have come from Japan, like 伝 for 传, 转 for 转 and 沢 for 泽. These simplified characters are probably used in the North East, and not too widely, and are of course not worth promoting.²

The latter point was also made by the teacher Qiáo Guìwǔ from Shenyang – also in the North East – who spotted 伝 in the works of his students.³

Guō Mòruò’s North East theory explains why views on 伝 diverged. This character was unfamiliar to the editors of *Zhōngguó Yǔwén* because they lived further south, in Beijing. The theory is further confirmed by informants, who tell us that 伝 was known in the North East and only there (see Map 11).

That is not to say that other areas have followed the orthography strictly. In 1981, this writer saw a 传呼电话 (*chuánhū diànhuà* [public] telephone for conveying messages) sign in Guangzhou, the following year a 祖传中医 (*zǔchuán zhōngyī* Chinese medic of ancestral tradition) sign in Lianyungang in Jiangsu, an appeal for more 宣传 (*xuānchuán* propaganda) outside a street committee in Huzhou in Zhejiang, and a 传达室 (*chuándáshì* reception office) in Huaiyin in Jiangsu.

传 was noticed in 1956 by the linguist Fù Cháoyáng, who complained in *Guāngmíng rìbào* that “some see 團 simplified to 团, think that every 專 can be shortened to 才, and write 傳 as 才.” We hear of it again in 1960, when a letter from a middle school student in Huaiyin in Jiangsu informed the committee that 才 was “used by most people”, as did another from a military recruitment office in Wuhua in Guangdong. In 1977, the Guangdong *Hànzi chángshí* (Common Knowledge about Characters) said: “One should not write those simplified characters which were current in society before, but which have now been abolished. For example, now that the character 傳 has been simplified to 传, there is no need to write the irregular 才.”⁴

Our records of 才 are limited to Jiangsu and Guangdong. The interviews presented on Map 12 show, puzzlingly, that 才 is recognized by informants from these quite disparate areas only.

1. Xiao 1962, p. 60.

2. Guo 1972, pp. 84–85.

3. Letter to the Script Reform Committee dated 1977.10.7

4. Fu 1956. Letters dated 1960.5.28 and 1960.7.20. Guangdong shifan 1977, p. 49.

Fù above may be right taking 𠂔 for an analogy to 囿. If so, it is not improbable that it emerged in connection with the reform, as Fù wrote.

Interviews shown in Map 13 prove even 𠂔 to be a local form, known in Jiangsu and Shandong and only there. Although even this form lacks pre-1955 records, it is hard to believe that someone invented the seven-stroke 𠂔 after the six-stroke 𠂔 had been launched by the authorities.

窻 窻 窗 窻 *chuāng* window

The *Xīnhuá zìdiǎn* says ‘window’ is written “窗 (窻、窻、牕)”. Here 窗 appears as a short form for one of the three latter, but is not. The Character Simplification Scheme never touched 窗, which was the dictionary form both before and after 1956. So whence those variants with ‘heart’?

The heart is present in early inscriptions, which start in the sixth century with 窻 and continue in the Sui and Tang dynasties with 窻, 窻 and 窻.¹ Of the *Xīnhuá zìdiǎn* forms, 窻 is thus the oldest on record.

The heart-less dictionary form 窗 is conspicuously absent on these steles. When we meet 窗 in the 997 *Lóngkān shǒujìng*, it is only mentioned as an example of an “ancient form” of the “correct” 窻 or 窻.² *Lóngkān shǒujìng*’s “ancient” source must be *Shuōwén*, which said “[an opening] in the roof is called 窗. [...] 窗: the character is also written with 穴.” Obviously 窗 is a square version of 窗. The 1039 *Jìyùn* elevated 窗 from an ancient to a contemporary variant: “窻 [...] is also written 窻 or 窗.” Even the 1615 *Zìhuì* treated 窗 as a variant: “窗 is the same as 窗.” The Script Reform Committee decided to regard 窗 the standard and keep it. After all, 窗 was mentioned in *Shuōwén*. The Japanese Language Council chose on the other hand to make the more common 窻 official in 1946.

The variation in the middle element in 窻, 窻 and 窻 is described in 聰 *cōng* below.

牀 牀 牀 牀 *chuáng* bed

On Han wood slips and stone steles, the plank on the left of ‘bed’ is written 𠂔, later 𠂔. The Tang *Gānlù zìshū* called 牀 with 𠂔 “vulgar”, prescribed 牀 with 𠂔 and was followed by later dictionaries. As it seems, the *Gānlù zìshū* editor wanted to get closer to *Shuōwén*’s 𠂔.

The variant 牀 with 广 for 𠂔 has been used at least since the time of Wáng Xīzhī. In 1946, the Japanese Language Council chose this form as a Character for Current Use. Nine years later, even the Chinese Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme proposed to replace 牀 with 牀, saving one stroke. A *Guāngmíng rìbào*

1. 窻 on the AD 555 Dou taiqi Lü heinü 竇泰妻婁黑女 epitaph. 窻 on the 597 Dong meiren 董美人 epitaph. 窻 on the 666 Zeng taishi Kong Xuan gong 贈泰師孔宣公 stele. 窻 on the 723 Yu shi Tai Jingshe 御史臺精舍 stele.
2. *Lóngkān shǒujìng*: “窗 and 窻 are ancient forms. 窻 and 窻 are correct. The reading is 窻.”

reader objected: “Older people are not familiar with 疗 [療 *liáo* medicare], 床, 恣 [恣 *tài* form] and 卫 [衛 *wèi* defend].”¹ In spite of this, the List of the First Batch of Regulated Character Variants in December that year prescribed 床, merging the Chinese and Japanese forms.²

創 創 創 *chuàng* start

See 倉 倉 *cāng*.

脣 唇 *chún* lips

Shuōwén says 脣 with ‘meat’ below means ‘lips’ while 唇 with ‘mouth’ is ‘shake’. The latter early came to be applied for ‘lips’, like in the phrase 唇吻 (*chúnwěn* lips) used by Wáng Chōng (AD 23–c.97) in *Lùnhéng*. ‘Shake’ has in its turn come to be written 振.

Later authorities like *Jíyùn* and *Liùshū gù* held 脣 and 唇 as identical in sense and sound. In 1955, the Script Reform Committee decided to abolish the former and use the shorter 唇 in all senses.

This character was not one of the 1850 Characters for Current Use selected by the Japanese Language Council in 1946, so the council wasted no effort on regulating its form. Dictionary editors preferred 脣, however. This was even the form the council prescribed when ‘lips’ became a Character for Common Use in 1980.

辭 辭 辭 辭 辭 *cí* word

The left side of 辭 is a jumble of threads (𠂔) between two hands (𠂔 又), the right, a needle or implement. The character thus seems to have meant ‘disentangle’. *Shuōwén* says ‘argue’, modern dictionaries ‘take leave’ or ‘words’.

Already on our earliest inscriptions on Western Han wood slips and Eastern Han stone steles, the threads are written simpler as 冫 or 冫 and the whole character 辭 or 辭.³ Later writers shortened the left side further and wrote 辭.⁴ Amputation of the bottom of 𠂔 resulted in the now so familiar 辭, which we first encounter on a stele from AD 300.⁵ This 辭 even spread to Japan, where it actually is the oldest form on record.⁶

1. Yue 1955.

2. “Di yi pi yitizi zhengli biao” 1955.

3. 辭 on *Yili* wood slips from Wuwei (32–6 BC), 辭 and 辭 on Eastern Han slips from Juyan. Forms with complete 𠂔 appear later, in a 辭 on the Huashan miao 華山廟 stele from AD 161. The 又 (right hand) below is here substituted by 寸 (thumb). *Shuowen* said 辭 and 辭/辭 were different characters, meaning ‘argue’ and ‘decline’ respectively. *Li bian* pointed out, however, that the two are used interchangeably on Han steles, that 其辭曰 (its words are) on the Huashan miao 華山廟 (AD 161) correspond to 其辭曰 on the Zheng Gu 鄭固 stele (158).

4. 辭 on the Ren cheng dashou furen 任城大守夫人 stele (272).

5. 辭 on the Zhang Lang mu 張郎墓 stele (300). Fushimi 1989, p. 691. Li Leyi says a similar form is found on a Han bamboo slip from Shulehe. Li 1996, pp. 47–48.

6. On the steles Chōkokuji hokke sessō zuki 長谷寺法華說相圖記 (686) and Shōmu tennō

Shuōwén said: “In the Zhòu script, 辭 was written with 台.”¹ Wáng Xīzhī (d. 379) embraced this idea and wrote 辭 with 台 even in square script. This promotion proved effective, and in blockprints from the Song and Yuan dynasties, 辭 is at least as common as 辞.² In the Ming dynasty, however, 辭 disappeared from blockprints, leaving the field open for 辞, which was the only candidate when characters were up for simplification from the nineteen twenties to the nineteen fifties.³ (True, an alternative is offered by the *Xīnhuá zìdiǎn* which permits the use of homonymous 词 for 辞 in the sense of ‘word’, a practice found already in the Han dynasty).⁴

The modern right side 辛 is shorter than the Han form 𠂔. The shorter 辛 is first found on a stele from AD 188, and was prescribed by dictionaries from the 997 *Lóngkān shǒujìng* onwards, presumably because this form was more compatible with *Shuōwén*’s 𠂔 than 𠂔 was.⁵

聰 聰 聰 聰 *cōng* hearing

聰 was simplified to 聪 by the Japanese Language Council and to 聰 by the Script Reform Committee of China. It is hard to see how either 公 or 𠂔 could emanate from 囟. Below we shall see that neither did.

In *Shuōwén*, Xǔ Shèn wrote this character with 囟, a component he defined as ‘window’. His contemporaries, however, wrote 聰, 聰, 聰, 聰 or 聰 with 匆, 公, 𠂔, 厶, 田 or 𠂔, and 總 and 緝 with 𠂔 or 一 for the analogous 總 (*zōng* total).⁶ These ‘windows’ do not look much like *Shuōwén*’s 囟. Particularly deviating were those forms which were to become the more common, namely 聰 and 聰. The Tang writing guide *Gānlù zìshū* called for rectification: “聰 聰 聰: the first and second characters are current, the last one is correct. All characters written with 忝 are like this.” In other words: 聰 and 聰 are written with 公 but they should be written with 囟. Writers paid no attention and stuck to 聰 or 聰. So did even dictionaries like the 997 *Lóngkān shǒujìng* and the 1007 *Guāngyùn*. True, in 1039 聰 did appear in *Jíyùn*, but only in the capacity of relic: “In ancient times 聰 was

chokusho dōhan 聖武天皇敕書銅版 (749). Kitagawa 1991, p. 345.

1. *Shuowen*, 14 下. We have no pre-Qin record of a seal form of 辭 in this sense, only in the sense of ‘I’ on the Zhu gong Keng zhong 邾公輕鐘 from the Spring and Autumn period. Ma 1990, item 825.
2. Liu Fu found 辭 in four Song and Yuan blockprints, 辞 in two. Liu 1930, p. 136.
3. The Chinese simplification scheme of 1935 and the Japanese schemes of 1919, 1923, 1926, 1938 and 1942 all proposed 辞.
4. The AD 174 Lou Shou 婁壽 stele says 其詞曰, as compared to 其辭曰 on the 161 Huashan miao stele. *Li bian*, 1-32.
5. 辭 on the Zhang na gongde prologue 張納功德叙. This stele is extinct but reproduced in *Li bian*, 1-32. *Longkan shoujing* says: “辭: read 詞 [...]. 辭: same as last. 辭: ancient script.”
6. 聰 on the Yi lang yuan bao 議郎元寶 stele (AD 159). 聰 on the Guo Youdao 郭有道 stele (169). 聰 on the Yang Shugong 楊叔恭 stele (171) etc. 聰 on the Li Yi furen 李翊夫人 stele (c. 170). 聰 on the Zhang Qian 張遷 stele (186) etc. 總 on wood slips from Wuwei. 緝 in the “Lao zi yi ben” manuscript (c. BC 200). Fushimi 1989, pp. 564, 582-583. *Li bian*, 1-7.

written 聰”.

Some took delight in relics, however, and started writing with this 囟.¹ In 1615, *Zihuì* set up 聰 with 囟 as standard. Two years later, *Zì kǎo* supported it by condemning the former dictionary forms: “聰 is written with 聰. 聰 is wrong. [...] 窻 is written with 囟. 窻 and 窻 are both wrong. Today these [latter two] are used in [reprints of] classics and historical books. There is no need to persist with that.”

Not surprisingly, some found 窻 and 聰 too long. Already Ming blockprinters reduced the former to 窻 and the latter more or less analogously to 聰. By the twentieth century, forms with 囟 had become the more common short forms in China.² Consequently, both the Education Department in 1935 and the Script Reform Committee in 1955 endorsed 聰, which is today the official form.

聰 and other 囟 forms seem not to have crossed the sea. In early twentieth century Japan, forms with 公 dominated handwriting and even occurred in print.³ Accordingly, the 1919, 1923, 1926, 1938, 1942 and 1946 reform schemes chose 聰, 窻 and 總, which are now the official Japanese forms.⁴

忽 忛 匆 悤 cōng hurried

Song calligraphers wrote 忽 or 忛.⁵ Later, *Zihuì* and *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* prescribed the more *Shuōwén*-like 悤 form. This process is analogous with that of 聰 above.

The heart-less 匆 is seen in calligraphy from the twelfth century onwards.⁶ It was opposed by the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn*: “悤 [...] is popularly written 匆. This is wrong.” The Script Reform Committee slighted that dictionary, declaring the shorter 匆 correct and 悤 and 忽 void in 1955.⁷ The Japanese Language Council in its turn declared nothing, leaving dictionaries and printers to write 忽.

葱 蔥 cōng onion

While the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* insisted upon the *Shuōwén*-based forms 窗, 聰 and 總, it for some reason allowed 葱 to be written with the traditional 匆, and referred to the *Shuōwén*-based 蔥 only as an “ancient form” for 葱. The latter has therefore been the form used both in Japanese and Chinese print, except for some months in 1977 and 1978, when the Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme advocated 葱.

1. The Yuan calligrapher Zhao Ziang wrote 聰 (窗).
2. In manuscripts in *Fujian geming shi* we find two 總, one 摠 (總) and one 总, but no forms with 公 or 匆.
3. Typeprinted 窻 in the magazine *Shinjoen*, 4:5 (1940), p. 257.
4. 聰 was not endorsed before 1951, in the Supplementary List of Characters for Use in Personal Names 人名用漢字別表. Inokuchi 1982, p. 227.
5. 忽 by Mi Fu 米芾 (1051–1107) and Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036–1101). 忛 by Wu Ju 吳琚 (c. 1200) and Zhao Mengjian 趙孟堅 (1199–?).
6. Calligraphy of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200).
7. “Di yi pi yitizi zhengli biao” 1955.

We saw in 聰 *cōng* above that the 叕 phonetic was written 匆, 公, 忪, 厶, 田, 𠂔, 𠂔 or 一 in Han clerk style. By the Song dynasty, it had been standardized, like in the *Jiyùn*, which wrote 窻, 聰, 忽 and 葱 with 匆. This unity was shattered by the attempts to adapt these square forms to *Shuōwén*. The *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* came to contain two shapes of the phonetic, namely 囟 in 窗, 聰 and 聰 but, as we just saw, 匆 in 葱. The Japanese Language Council gave it three forms, namely 厶 in 窻, 公 in 聰 and 總, and 匆 in 忽 and 葱. So did the Script Reform Committee of China, which applied 囟 in 窗, 𠂔 in 聰 and 總, and 匆 in 匆 and 葱.

从 從 從 從 *cóng* follow

When the Script Reform Committee proposed to simplify 從 to 从 in 1955, some grumbled that this was “a restoration of ancient ways”.¹ They were right. The two men appear already on Yin bones as 𠂔. On some of the bones, however, the ‘follow’ sense is elucidated by a third man, by a step (modern 彳), or by a foot (止). Zhou writers upheld these variants, and also added a fifth with both step and foot.² Lǐ Sī preferred this more elaborate form, carved 𠂔 (從) on the Taishan stone in 219 BC and set that norm.

Clerk style records start about 200 BC with 從 and 從 in the *Lǎo zǐ* manuscripts from Mawangdui. The former is a clerk version of Lǐ Sī’s 𠂔 with step intact, men and foot, while the latter’s foot has already been contracted to the diffuse 乙. The next component to be contracted was the men, which were written 𠂔 in the 從, 從, 從 or 從 we find on Han wood slips and stone steles.³ The latter form was promoted by Wáng Xīzhī, the *Qiān zì wén* and *Yùpiān* and became the most common form in the Sui and Tang dynasties.⁴

Some were uncomfortable with the unetymological 從. The Tang writing guide *Gānlù zìshū* argued: “從從從: the former two are common, the latter is correct.” 從 could certainly use some promotion. Before the *Gānlù zìshū*, we find this form in one inscription only.⁵ Promotion did not change the situation. Even in the following years 從 is hard to find, as we saw in Table 7 above. It was not before the Song dynasty that handwriters, printers and dictionary editors adopted the etymologically correct 從.⁶

Use of 從 and 從 continued in spite of dictionary disapproval. Likewise in Japan, where the Interim Committee on the Japanese Language proposed to make

1. “Chen Zhongfan daibiao de fayan” 1955, p. 77.
2. Early example on the Maifang ding 麥方鼎 (Kang wang, 1018–992 BC). Ma 1988, item 68.
3. Early example of 從 on 32–6 BC wood slips from Wuwei in Sano 1991, p. 297.
4. 從 in “Yupian Lingjuan”, p. 311. This was changed 縱 to in the Song version.
5. Gao Jin epitaph 高緊墓誌 (612). Fushimi 1964, p. 789.
6. 從 in *Longkan shoujing* (997) and *Guangyun* (1007). In Zhou 1990, 從 is found on five 11th c. steles (pp. 1307, 1305, 1307, 1323, 1324), 從 on three (pp. 1314, 1319, 1324), 從 on two (pp. 1320, 1329). In the later prints in *Southern Song Printing at Hangzhou* (Edgren 1989), 從 is found in seven items (plates 1, 3, 5, 10, 17, 22, 23), 從 and 從 in none. See also Table 7.

the latter official in 1923 and 1926. Subsequent simplification schemes, however, including the winning 1946 one, refrained from measures against 從. It was only at the last minute, at the drafting of the List of Forms of Characters for Current Use in 1948, that the Japanese Language Council introduced 從 into its orthography. This change of mind may have been brought about by a change in writing habits. 從 was now the more common short form.¹

從 was common even in China.² Chinese reformers had access to a shorter alternative, however. *Shuōwén* said that 𠂔 (从) meant ‘comply with’ and differed from 𠂔 (從) ‘follow’. It also used 从 in phrases like 遲从是 (遲 is [written] with 是) and thus saved it from oblivion. In the Ming dynasty, 从 could be seen in vernacular blockprints, in the twentieth century, in the handwriting of savants like Lǚ Xùn.³ This presence induced the reformers in the periodicals *Tàibái* and *Lúnyǔ* and in the Education Department to chose 从 for their abortive 1935 simplification schemes, and the Script Reform Committee for its 1956 scheme. Writers welcomed 从 and swiftly abandoned the ten-stroke 從.⁴

叢 叢 叢 从 丛 *cóng* collection, thicket

Records of this character begin with a Han 叢, and continue with 叢, 叢 and 叢 in the Jin and Wei periods.⁵ Neither of these forms matches *Shuōwén*, which tells us to write with 𠂔 and the phonetic 取. Accordingly, *Shuōwén* fans wrote 叢, a form on record from the Tang dynasty onwards.⁶ This 叢 was the form recognized by Song dictionaries like *Jiyùn*, which also added: “叢 is customarily written 叢. This is not correct.”

Twentieth century writers found a shorter alternative. According to the reformer Chén Guāngyáo, “叢書 is usually written 从書 in second-hand book shops”.⁷ In February 1935, *Tàibái* and fourteen other periodicals decided to adopt this short form in their columns. When the Education Ministry announced its own simplification scheme later that year, it shortened 叢 less radically to 叢, which was still in use.

- 1 In 1868–1945 letters in *Enshū komonjo sen: Kindai hen*, 從 appears in one item from 1884 only, 從 in items from 1869, 1887, 1918 and 1939 (nos. 4, 16, 41 and 59).
- 2 In manuscripts by Mao Dun in *Lunyu* 2:5 (1935), by Hong Shen 洪深 in *Lunyu* 2:6 (1935), and by Zhou Muzhai 周木齋 in *Taibai* 2:6 (1935).
- 3 In Yuan blockprint *Chaoye xinsheng taiping lefu* 朝野新生太平樂府, acc. to Liu 1930, p. 7 (who also found 從 in seven prints and 從 in four). 1910 and 1934 examples in *Lu Xun shougao quanji*, vol. 1, pp. 12, 16, vol. 5, p. 313. 1943 example in *Jiangsu kangzhan*, item 326.
- 4 My latest record is a 從 in a 1957 stencil from Guangzhou. Zhang 1957, vol. 1, pp. 9, 15.
- 5 叢 on the Yao Keng stele 叢阮碑 (AD 181), acc. to *Li bian*, 1-6. 叢 in Wang Xizhi (d. 379) inscription. 叢 on the Sima Jing he qi epitaph 司馬敬和妻慕墓誌 (514), the Yuan Gu epitaph 元固墓誌 (527), 叢 on the Meng Jinxun 孟敬訓 epitaph (Eastern Wei 534–550), etc.
- 6 Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (597–649). Kong Yingda 孔穎達 stele (648). Yan jia miao 顏家廟 stele (780).
- 7 Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 50.

As the scheme failed, it was up to the Script Reform Committee to make a new choice twenty years later. The committee chose the simpler 从.

Some feared this might create ambiguity. The linguist Róng Gēng, a short form enthusiast, said: “If 叢 is substituted with 从, will then 从林中出来 mean ‘come out of the thick forest’ or ‘come out from the forest’?”¹ A correspondent to *Zhōngguó yǔwén* wrote: “If 从 substitutes 叢, a phrase like 這頁是從書裏掉出來的 [zhè yè shì cóng shū lǐ diào chu lai de] becomes ambiguous”, meaning either ‘this page has fallen out of a book’ or ‘this page has fallen out of a book series’.²

The committee listened and prescribed instead 𠂇 with a distinguishing 一 below.³ Of this 𠂇 we have no former record. Its newness was confirmed in 1957 by Zhào Tàijùn, who said he had never seen this character before, and in 1961 by the committee member Zhōu Yǒuguāng, who called it “a recently created character” with “no base in usage”.⁴ This may be the reason why the committee did not give 𠂇 official status until May 1958.

Writers seem to have accepted 𠂇 fairly quickly. We find no complaints about use of 叢 or other competing forms in the following years.

竄 𠂇 *cuàn* flee

In the short form, the rat (鼠) heading for the hole (穴) is substituted by a phonetic 串 *chuàn*. This 𠂇 was recorded by Chén Guāngyáo in 1931.⁵

Another indication of a pre-1949 history of 𠂇 is the character’s existence in Taiwan. Luó Jiālún, a local advocate of character simplification, wrote in 1954 that 𠂇 was used in the armed forces of Taiwan, and stressed its importance: “Assume that the bandit enemy makes a rushing advance [竄進) and the situation is urgent. If we have to write all the strokes in 竄, the enemy may rush in before we finish writing the character!”⁶

Taiwanese servicemen are still burdened with 竄, unlike their mainland counterparts who were allowed to write 𠂇 in June 1956.

荅 答 *dā, dá* answer

The *Xīnhuá zìdiǎn*, *Xiàndài Hànyǔ zìdiǎn* and other thorough dictionaries say 荅 is a variant of 答. Neither is the original form. On a bamboo slip version of *Sūn Bīn bīngfǎ* (Sūn Bīn’s Art of War) from about 130 BC, 答曰 (*dá yuē* answer) is written 合曰 with 合, an image of a lid (△) closing an opening (□).⁷ Presumably 合 was read **gap* (corresponding to modern *hé*) in the sense of ‘join’ and **tap* in

1. At a meeting in Guangzhou. Renmin zhengxie Guangdong sheng weiyuanhui mishuchu 1955.
2. Guan 1955, p. 40. Similar points made by Wang Zhipei 1955 and Xu Shisong 1955, p. 41.
3. Reason given by Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 50.
4. Zhao 1957, pp. 165-166. Zhou 1979 (1961), p. 340.
5. In *Jianzi lunji* 簡字論集, acc. to Li 1996, p. 51. Also in Ouyang 1935, p. 15.
6. Luo 1954, pp. 17-18. Luo Jialun, president of the Kuomintang Control Yuan, advocated simplifying characters, until the People’s Republic actually did so in 1955-1956.
7. *Sun Bin bingfa* 1975, plate 3, slip 12.

the ‘reply’ sense seen in 合曰. At some point scribes added a top to the latter to distinguish it from the former.

We assume that this top was 𦵑 (bamboo). We cannot show that, however, since the oldest tops on record are 艹 (+ grass) on wood slips from the first century BC.¹ Later, writing models like the Han Xiping Stone Classics, the Sui *Zhēn-cǎo qiān zì wén* and the Tang *Yùpiān* set up the grass-top as the norm.² These were contradicted by Song dictionaries like *Guāngyùn* and *Jíyùn*, which prescribed 答 with ‘bamboo’ and were followed by later authorities.

The shorter grass top lived on, however. The 1610 writing guide *Súshū kānwù* complained: “答 is customarily written 荅. This is wrong.” Its 1933 successor, *Zì biàn*, lectured writers that “according to custom, 答 is written with 𦵑, not with 艹”.³ Later standardizers, however, have been very close to approving the 艹- topped 荅 in the simplification schemes of 1935, January 1955, 1977 and 1981.

達 达 𨔵 dá attain

達 is made up of the signific 辵 (move) and the phonetic 奎 dá (lamb), which is made up of the phonetic 大 dà and the signific 羊 (sheep). The sheep is a Zhou addition; Yin forms consist of 辵 and 大 only.

In the nineteen thirties, the press reported that 達 was shortened to 𨔵 by some, and to 达 by others.⁴ 𨔵 writers omitted the bottom left of 土 and the top of 羊, while 达 writers substituted the phonetic 幸 with the shorter 大. The latter idea may have been picked up from *Shuōwén*, which says “達 may also be written with 大”, or from later dictionaries reiterating this. Xǔ Shèn’s 达 with 大 must have been very rare and old-fashioned at his time; our latest records of it are found on one thousand years older Yin bones.

𨔵’s career got a better start than 达’s: in 1935, the journal *Lúnyǔ* announced that it would thenceforth use 𨔵 in print. After a few issues, however, *Lúnyǔ* abandoned its short types. That is also the end of 𨔵 records.

This left the field open for 达, which was adopted already in February 1956, hailed as “the original form of 達.”⁵

Some found 达 too barren. An *Yǔwén zhīshí* reader from Suzhou pointed out that many preferred to write 达 with an extra 丿 “according to their own habit”, and the same observation was made by a teacher from Zhejiang.⁶ As late as 1981, this writer saw 达 on signs in Nanchang, Guangzhou and Zhangzhou.

1. *Yili* slips from Wuwei (32–6 BC). Sano 1991, p. 555.

2. The Xiping Stone Classics says 荅, the *Zhen-cao qian zi wen* and *Yupian* (p. 20) 荅.

3. Xie 1933, p. 3.

4. Letters to *Lunyu* and *Xiandai*. 𨔵 in Hai Ge 1934, p. 657, and Hu 1935, p. 52. 达 in Xu 1934, p. 1006.

5. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 11.

6. Zhu 1957. Fan 1957.

戴 六 裁 代 *dài* wear

Preparing its new simplification scheme, the Script Reform Committee in 1960 invited the public to report short forms in common use. At least six correspondents said 戴 was shortened to 六, three to 代, two to 裁, one to 裁 and one to 裁.¹

This was not news. The 田-less 裁 was known to the reformers from military documents from the late Ming dynasty. 六, the left hand corners of 戴, was called “a simplified character now in use among the common people” by professor Qián Xuántōng in 1922. 裁 with 又 was recorded by the character collector Ōuyáng Zhēn in 1935. 代, a homonym to 戴 meaning ‘substitute’, was said to be “in common use” for 戴 in 1954.²

The eight-stroke 裁 and 裁 and the twelve-stroke 裁 were of no interest to reformers. The committee member Dīng Xīlín instead recommended 代, a form “widely used by the masses”.³ A teacher at the Chinese Department of Hangzhou University objected: “To change 戴草帽 [*dài cǎomào* wear a straw hat] to 代草帽 [substitute a straw hat], what a joke! This is very unscientific. For a long time, people whave written 戴 as 六. Now that is a good form!”⁴ Nonetheless the committee proposed in 1962 to simplify 戴 to 代, on the following grounds: “代 has been in use in society for a long time and the meanings [of 戴 and 代] are related. There is another simplified form, 六, but that form is difficult to read, understand and write so we have not adopted it.”⁵

These words were forgotten by 1973, when the committee chose 六 for a dictionary it was preparing.⁶ However, when the Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme was published in 1977, 代 was back, provoking new protests. A meeting in Shanghai declared: “Against some of the characters in List 2 the masses demonstrate fervent reactions and their objections are quite strong. For example, if 戴 is changed to 代, it will be hard to distinguish a 代局长 [*dài júzhǎng* acting office director] from 戴局长 [office director Dai]. The sense of 戴表 [*dài biǎo* wear a watch] will be hard to distinguish from the task of 代表 [represent]. The character 戴 is already commonly written 六 by the masses, and this form is easy to read and easy to remember.”⁷ Similar objections were voiced

1. 六 in letters 1960.5.22 and 1960.5.30 from Shanghai, 1960.7.7 from Zhangzhou, 1960.7.28 from Jinan, 1960(d) from Hangzhou and 1960(n) from Rugao. 代 in 1960.7.9 from Ürümqi, 1960.8.4(a) from Changsha and 1960(c) from Changchun. 裁 in 1961.2.17 from Beijing and 1960(n) from Rugao. 裁 in 1960(o) from Shaoyang. 裁 in 1960.9.18 from Rongjiang.
2. Jiang and Shao 1952, p. 20. Qian 1922, p. 162. Ouyang 1935, p. 9. Chen Guangyao 1955 (a), p. 85.
3. Ding Xilin 1960.
4. Ding Chen 1960.
5. *1962 ni gongbu di yi pi jianhua hanz biao*, p. 4.
6. Described in Martin 1982, p. 239.
7. “Shanghai shi jiji kaizhan ‘Di er ci hanzhi jianhua fang’an (caoan)’ de pinglun gongzuo” 1978, p. 30.

by the education bureaus of Jiangsu and Fujian.¹ The Zhejiang bureau wrote: “In Southern China 戴 is written 大. Why not adopt that character?”²

In Southern China? Is this a quarrel between regions? Let us look closer at our records of 大 and 代.

The 1960 reports of 大 came from Shanghai, Fujian, Shandong, Zhejiang and Jiangsu. Qián Xuántōng who put 大 on record in 1922 lived in Beiping, but came from Wuxing in Northern Zhejiang. Later 大 was reported by character collectors from Shanghai and Zhejiang.³ In 1958 Zhōu Qǐfèng, a teacher in Wan’an in Southern Anhui, reported that his students wrote 大 for 戴 in their compositions.⁴

The alternative 代 was mentioned in letters from Sinkiang, Hunan and Jilin in 1960. In Hebei, the place name 北戴河 (Beidaihe) is shortened 北代河 with 代.⁵

大 records are concentrated in eastern China. Interviews show that this is not accidental. Map 14 shows that 大 is recognized by informants from Anhui, Jiangsu and Zhejiang but not by others.

Why do just easterners cling to 大? Perhaps because they shun 代. In the Wu dialects of Zhejiang, Shanghai and Southern Jiangsu, the initial of 代 is voiced and different from that of 戴. This disqualifies 代 as a substitute for 戴. But not 大.

帶帶帶帶帶帶 卍 帛 帛 *dài* girdle, carry

帶 consists of a girdle (卍) fastening a skirt (帛) made of cloth (巾). The Japanese Language Council has simplified the girdle to 卍 and the Script Reform Committee of China to 卍. This has given us the norms 帶 and 帛.

Even the previous dictionary form had emerged under competition. In the Han dynasty, the character was written 帶, 帶, 帶, 帶, 帶 or 帶.⁶ The latter came to be the most common and was prescribed by the the Sui model text *Zhēn-cǎo qiān zì wén* and the Tang dictionary *Yùpiān*.⁷ For writers, 帶 looked like a safe choice.

The boat was rocked in the Tang dynasty by Yán Yuánsūn, whose *Gānlù zìshū* called 帶 “vulgar” and in its stead prescribed 帶 with a 卍 top. This was something

1 Jiangsu sheng geming weiyuanhui jiaoyuju 1979 (1978), p. 23. Fujian sheng jiaoyuju 1979 (1978), p. 25.

2 Zhejiang sheng jiaoyuju, Zhejiang sheng wenzi gaige bangongshi 1979 (1978), p. 30.

3 Shanghai records in Fang and Ma 1927, p. 27, Hu 1928, p. 55, Xu 1934, p. 1006, and Huang 1951 (1950), p. 14. Zhejiang record in Hu 1935, p. 52.

4 Zhou 1958, p. 22.

5 Seen by RB in 1982 on road sign in Qinhuangdao.

6 帶 in the “Lao zi yi ben” manuscript from Mawangdui. 帶 on *Yili* wood slips from Wuwei and Juyan slip 505.34. 帶 on Juyan slip 333.8. 帶 on Dunhuang slip and on the Kong Biao 孔彪 stele. 帶 on the Zhang Qian 張遷 stele. 帶 on Juyan slip 148.26.

7. Extant fragments of the old *Yupian* do not contain 帶, only the derived form 帶. “Yupian lingjuan”, p. 181.

of a provocation. How could this Yán denounce as “vulgar” a character used by Wáng Xīzhī, king of calligraphy, and Lǐ Shì mǐn, emperor of the Tang dynasty? Only by leaning on the still greater Xǔ Shèn, who had given this character a 卍 top in *Shuōwén*.

Standardizers began to waver. The Liao *Lóngkān shǒujìng* prescribed 帶 with 卍, *Jìyùn* 帶 with 卍, and the Song version of *Yùpiān* 帶 with 卍. The latter gained acceptance and was unchallenged in dictionaries till the script reforms mentioned above.

But outside the dictionaries competition remained. Yuan blockprinters wrote 帶, 帶 or 帝 with 卍, 卍 or 戈, and their Ming successors added 帶 with 世 to the variant stock.

According to the Song *Jìyùn*, 帶 did not rhyme with 代, which seems to have had a more closed vowel than 帶. Later both 帶 and 代 came to be read *dài*. Some Qing blockprinters took advantage of this likeness and used the shorter 代 for both.¹

Although short 代 did not satisfy reformers. The Nanjing Education Ministry’s 1935 simplification scheme avoided loan characters “used in one area only, like 代 which is used for 帶 in Beijing”.² And not, we understand, in the vicinity of Nanjing and Shanghai, where 代 is voiced and not fit as a substitute for the unvoiced 帶.

By the next simplification drive in the nineteen fifties, some writer had noticed that the top of 帶 was unique and exploited that fact. In 1950, the character collector Huáng Ruòzhōu reported that one could see 帶 written as 卍 in Shanghai. Later reports of 卍 come from Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanxi.³

The 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme rejected 卍, 帶 and 代 and left 帶 alone. The Language Department of the People’s University in Beijing objected to this resignedness, championing 代 which “is already in use”.⁴ The Script Reform Committee reacted by adopting the more conventional 帶 and made this form official in 1958.

Adoption of 帶 did not eradicate 代 and 卍. In 1984, *Rénmín rìbào* complained that signs like 海代 (海帶 *hǎidài* kelp), 代鱼 (帶鱼 *dàiyú* hairtail) and 代料加工 (*dài liào jiāgōng* processing of cloth brought [by customer]) were displayed in Beijing shops. As late as 2005, The Sichuan Language and Script Network warned against writing 帶子 (belt) with 代.⁵ Even 卍 remained in use, sometimes shortened further to 卍.⁶

1. In the early Qing novel *Mulianji*, according to Liu 1930, p. 123.

2. Jiaoyu bu 1935.

3. Huang 1951 (1950), p. 14. Letter 1960.11.26. Zhang 1962, p. 17. Ni 1963, p.15.

4. Zhongguo renmin daxue yuwen jiaoyanshi yuke xiaozu 1955.

5. Wang 1984. Wenzī – rongyi wuyong” 2005.

6. 卍 seen by RB in the side texts at the opera in Shanghai in 1982. 卍 mentioned in letters 1960(e) and 1977.9.12, and in Chen 1985.

On top of that, new alternatives turned up. In 1960, letters from Hunan and Guangxi told the committee that there were those who wrote 带 as 𦉳. Five years later, a teacher in Wenzhou in Zhejiang wrote that “spontaneously created simplified characters” like the 𦉳 in 𦉳子 (带子 belt) were seen in shops and were quickly spreading.¹ For example to Jiangxi and Guizhou, where this writer saw posters phrases like 𦉳来 (carry) and 磁𦉳 (*cídài* magnetic tape).²

The phonetic top 代 *dài* in 𦉳 is not shorter than the official top 𠂔. Someone noticed, however, that 大 *dà/dài* is. In 1960 and 1961, letters from Wuhua and Gaozhou in Guangdong told the committee that some people shortened 带 to 𦉳, and teachers at Dongguan Normal School in Guangdong complained of students writing 𦉳 for 带, “deliberately” at that. In 1981, this writer saw a beer case labelled 蓝𦉳 (*Lándài* Blue Ribbon) on a boat from Hongkong to Guangzhou, and the following year a 宝𦉳 (precious belt) in a stencilled libretto bought in Guangzhou.³

These records are all from Guangdong. Informants confirm that 𦉳 is used for 带 in most of this province and in southern Fujian, as shown on Map 15. Outside this area, informants identify 𦉳 as 幕 (*mù* curtain), as they had been taught by the Second Character Simplification Scheme in 1977. Residents on the margin of the two areas waver. In 1982, for example, our informant in the Western Guangdong border town Zhaoqing was certain that 𦉳 meant 带. Yet the local theatre advertised a 四𦉳喜剧 and expected this to be read 四幕喜剧 (*sì mù xǐjù* comedy in four acts).

Do southerners use the 大 phonetic because it fits in their speech? Let us look at some readings. Identical readings are underlined.

	Beijing	Yangjiang	Guangzhou	Meixian	Chaozhou	Xiamen
带	<u>taɪ²</u>	taɪ ²	taɪ ²	taɪ ²	taɪ ² _(lit.) tua ² _(coll.)	taɪ ² _(lit.) tua ² _(coll.)
大 in 大小	ta ²	taɪ ²	taɪ ²	t'ai ²	ɛ'tai ² _(lit.) tua ² _(coll.)	taɪ ² _(lit.) tua ² _(coll.)
大 in 大夫	<u>taɪ²</u>	taɪ ²	taɪ ²	t'ai ²	taɪ ²	taɪ ²

No, they do not. Local use of 𦉳 seems to be accidental.

We have seen that the official Japanese form 帶 had been used in China since the Yuan dynasty. The official Chinese form 带 had on the other hand been used in Japan at least since the fourteenth century.⁴ The choice of different forms for the two scripts was accidental.

1. Huang 1965, p. 15. Letters dated 1960.8.4 (a) and 1961.2.3.

2. 1981: 海带 in Yueyang market. 1982: 带来 on Guiyang poster. 1986: 磁带 in Ganzhou shop, 带客 in Jinggangshan sight-seeing bureau.

3. Letters 1960.7.20 and 1961.6.12. Dongguan 1961. “Bao lian deng” [1982?].

4. In 1335 circular in *Enshū komonjo sen: Yōshiki hen*, item 3, and in 1349 circular in *Enshū komonjo sen: Chūse hen*, item 51.

單 單 单 單 *dān* single

𠂔 was a picture of a cicada, which scribes loaned for the sense of ‘single’. In clerk script, the tentacles on top became 𠂔. Already in the Han dynasty, writers reduced this to 𠂔 or 𠂔 and wrote 單 or 單, to which later writers added the variants 單 and 單.¹

In early twentieth century Japan, the character components 单, 單 and 單 were all in use.² The simplification schemes of 1926 and 1937 proposed a modest simplification of 單 and 單 to 單 and 單 with 𠂔. From this the following 1942 and 1946 schemes refrained. The more radical change to the now official 单 with ㄣ was not advanced before the 1948 List of Forms of Characters for Current Use.

Even in China, both 單 and 单 were in common use.³ Disregarding its Japanese counterpart, the Script Reform Committee of China selected the shorter 单 and made that form official in 1959.

擔 担 担 *dān* carry *dàn* weight of one hundred jin
膽 胆 *dǎn* gallbladder

担 and 胆 are seen in vernacular blockprints from the Yuan dynasty onwards.

担 is a measure of weight. For such a common character, merchants will look for an even shorter alternative. We learn of one in a Japanese manual for China traders from 1906, which reproduces an order form for 參拾担川三斤 (*sānshí dān sānshí sān liǎng* thirty dan and 33 liang) of cowhides, a price quote of 每担 (*měi dān* each dan) of another merchandise, and a receipt of 念壹担六十七斤 (*niàn yī dān liùshí qī jīn* twenty-one dan and sixty-seven jin) of still another.⁴ As late as 1951, the character manual *Jiǎnbǐzì* said 担 was used as a short form for 擔.

Nevertheless, the Script Reform Committee of China chose to simplify both 擔 and 膽 analogously to 担 and 胆, as the Japanese Language Council had done before it.

Since this reform we have no records of 担. This is not surprising. After metrification, the measure dan passed away, and with it the extra short form.

蛋 旦 *dàn* egg

The dictionary says that 蛋 is read *dàn* and means ‘egg’, and that 旦 is read identically but means ‘dawn’. In 2005, students complained that “鸡蛋 [*jīdàn* eggs] becomes 鸡旦 [...] if one takes a walk in the streets of Lishui, one very easily discovers incorrect handwritten characters of this kind”.⁵ Lishui peddlers were not the first to take this short-cut. In 1928, Hú Huáichén wrote: “On restaurant

1. 單 on Juyan slip 89.24 from A10 (90–77 BC) etc. 單 on Juyan slip 173.3 from A21 (11 BC – AD 13) etc.

2. *Enshū komonjo sen: Kindai hen* (1979) 1995, items 41, 51, 60, 61, 64.

3. In Chang 1955, 单 is found in letters on pp. 32, 34, 363, 1540, 单 on pp. 114, 446, 526.

4. *Tōa dōbunkai* 1906–1907, pp. 237, 244, 249. 斤 is short for 兩.

5. “Chengshi bu guifan yong zi heshi xiu?” 2005.

books” in its character simplification scheme.¹ The more radical Script Reform Committee on the other hand did so in its 1977 Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme and legalized 鸡旦 menus for some months.

當当 *dāng* serve as, must *dàng* take as

當 consists of the phonetic 尚 (*shàng* look up to) and the signfic 田 (field). In the early Zhou dynasty, ‘must’ was still written 𠄎 (尚), identically to ‘look up to’.² 田 (田) was added later to indicate the sense of ‘serve as’. When we meet our character in clerk style, it has therefore got the form 當.

While some Han scribes patiently wrote the full 當, others reduced it to 當, 當 or 𠄎.³ The latter is the form on which the cursive 𠄎 is based. Yuan blockprinters turned 𠄎 into the square form 当 which became official in Japan in 1946 and in China in 1956.

黨 党 𠄎 *dǎng* party

党 consists of the phonetic 尚 *shàng* – like 當 above – and the signfic ‘man’. *Jiyùn* said the men in question were the “党項, the name of a northern tribe”. These Dangxiang people created the Western Xia state in 1038 but were wiped out by the Mongols in 1227. The character thus became available. Yuan blockprinters took advantage of this and used the simple 党 for the 黨 which meant ‘party’.

This practice continued and spread. The Japanese Language Council found the choice simple. Its reform schemes of 1923, 1926, 1938 and 1942 all contained 党 for 黨, as did the winning scheme of 1946. Even the Chinese Education Ministry proposed in 1935 to replace 黨 with 党.

By this time, the character for ‘party’ had become worn. When Chinese reformers were preparing their next attack on characters, a still shorter form for 党 had emerged. In 1951, the *Dàgōngbào* complained: “Some writers think only of their own convenience [...] and do not care whether the reader understands or not, for example when they write 黨員 (party member) as 丁○. [...] These [...] incomprehensible ‘characters’ have lost their role as transmitters of language.” 丁 is the *t* in *tang*, the traditional transcription for 黨. ○ is a circle, a 圓 *yuán*, and can therefore serve as 員 *yuán*. Some months later, a teacher at Harbin Special Normal School wrote: “If we use simplified characters indiscriminately or create them at will, we can cause big problems for others. May we ask, for example, those who write 幹部 as 干𠄎, 歷史 as 庾, 共產黨 as 共产丁 and 問題 as 問: how many can recognize characters like these?” In 1955, a professor at Jiangsu Normal

1. Hu 1928, p. 69. Jiaoyu bu 1935.

2. Early Zhou example on the Hu ding 魯鼎 (Yìwang, 917–908): 弋(必)尚卑(俾)𠄎處 ([We] must allow [these people] to stay). Ma 1988, item 242.

3. 當 on Juyan slips 33.9 (36 BC), 157.24A (35 BC) etc. 當 on Juyan slip 303.12 (78 BC) etc. Contracted forms of 𠄎 on Juyan slips 140.2 (14 BC), 181.1A (11 BC) etc.

Institute repeated the point: “At the same time, everybody keeps creating characters freely. Striving for simplicity, they write 國民黨 [*Guómíndǎng* Kuomintang] as 口民丁, [...]”¹

Unsurprisingly, the script reform committee rejected this 丁 and made 党 official in February 1956.

The simpler 丁 did not disappear immediately. In 1960 a teacher at Jinzhou Middle School Number Five in Liaoning complained that some comrades “show their originality by creating characters at will, like 丁 (党) [...]”, and in 1962 a teacher at Ningbo Cadre Education School wrote that “some students have created characters by themselves, like 口 (国) 丁 (党) [...]”.² Here the trail of 丁 vanishes. Expectedly, since young writers saw no link between 丁 and a character which in the new pinyin transcription was written *dǎng*.

導 孛 导 *dǎo* lead

A stencilled paper named *Minnán kuàibào* (The Southern Fujian Bulletin) from 1948 carries a 綜合報導 (*zōnghé bàodǎo* comprehensive report) on local resistance against Kuomintang “mopping up” operations.³ The 导 here used for 導 is a topless square style version of the cursive 導 (which itself is a contracted 導 deprived of its fifth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh strokes). 导 was also known in Shanghai, where Huáng Ruòzhōu explained its appearance: “Today is the age of democratic action, so nouns like 領導 [*lǐngdǎo* leadership] and 擁護 [*yōnghù* support] often come into use. However, since these characters contain many strokes, short forms like 拎导 and 拥护 have emerged.”⁴

An alternative short form can be traced further back to 1943, when a handwritten pamphlet from the anti-Japanese resistance in Jiangsu called for a strengthening of the militia’s 领孛.⁵ In the latter form, the phonetic 道 *dào* has been substituted with the shorter 刀 *dāo*.

Could there be still older records of these forms which we have missed? Probably, but not much older. In 1920, Qián Xuántōng proposed to shorten 導 by replacing it with 道.⁶ This saved only three strokes, however, not much effort. 道 is not much shorter than 導, and its reading *dào* is not identical with the *dǎo* of 導. If 导 or 孛 had been known to Qián, he would have suggested one of these.

The Script Reform Committee knew both and selected 孛 for the 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme. A letter to *Guāngmíng rìbào* objected: “The new signific-phonetic compound 孛 is not as common as 导. It is better to use 导.” At a meeting of The Chinese Committee for the Promotion of Democracy

1. Yuan 1951. Bai 1951. Jin Lunhai 1955.

2. Li 1960, p. 23. Wang 1962, p. 15.

3. Facsimile in *Fujian geming shi*, p. 317.

4. Huang 1951 (1950), p. 2.

5. In the “Principles of Administration of Southern Jiangsu”. *Jiangsu kangzhan*, item 326.

6. Qian 1920, p. 113.

“some comrades thought one should follow the habits of the masses” and select 导. A letter to *Yǔwén zhīshí* said “the habitual simplification is 导.” The archivist Yáo Jiāzhēn from Jiangsu wrote: “Some comrades emphasize that one should take account of habit, and hold that 導 should only be simplified to 导, and definitely not to 𠄎. But there are also some comrades who approve of 𠄎, because they are actually used to writing 導 as 𠄎.”¹

Convinced, the committee chose 导 for the final scheme. Even 导 had shortcomings, however. It was not as short as 𠄎, and it was pointed out that in handwriting it could easily be mistaken for 異, the new official form for 異 (yì different).² This may explain why the committee hesitated till June 1956 before giving 导 official status.

Giving 导 this status did not immediately convert 𠄎 writers. Use of 𠄎 was reported in 1957 by an *Yǔwén zhīshí* correspondent from Suzhou, in 1958 by a middle school teacher from Anhui, in 1960 by a teacher at Hangzhou University, and in 1962 by a cadre school teacher in Ningbo. As late as 1974, a *Guāngmíng rìbào* article urged writers to “keep the standard forms 𠄎 and 导 and do away with the nonstandard 𠄎 and 𠄎.”³ This time, they did.

蹈 蹈 蹈 𠄎 *dǎo* tread

稻 稻 𠄎 𠄎 *dào* rice

The right side of 蹈 and 稻 consists of 𠄎 (爪 claw) and 臼 (mortar). Early scribes wrote the latter as 臼, with the stroke order | — —, differently from the 冂 | — order taught today. Some scribes contracted the second and third strokes and wrote 臼 as 旧, like in 兒 for 兒 *ér* below. Others dropped the two points in 𠄎 and wrote 夕, like in 爭 for 爭 (*zhēng* strive) and 隱 for 隱 (*yǐn* hidden). These processes had given us forms like 蹈 and 𠄎 by the sixth century.⁴

These shorter forms even gained some foothold in dictionaries. A Tang transcript of *Yùpiān* says 說文稻餅也 (*Shuōwén* [says 糴 means] ‘rice cake’), the *Lóngkān shōujìng* 稻稻音道 (稻 and 稻 are read 道).⁵ Later dictionaries stuck to forms with distinct 𠄎 and 臼. The 1610 writing guide *Súshū kānwù* explained the importance of writing with 𠄎: “All characters of the 𠄎 [tāo crumpled]/ 蹈 group should be written with 𠄎. [...] This is because it is the characters of the 陷 [xiàn fall]/ 諂 [chǎn flatter]/ 閻 [Yán] group which are written with 𠄎.”⁶

旧 bottoms evaded the attack and survived until the twentieth century. In 1919,

1. Liu Naizhong 1955. *Zhongguo minzhu cujin hui zongbu* 1955. Yu 1955, p. 29. Yao 1955.

2. Qiu 1957.

3. Zhu 1957, p. 55. Zhou 1958, p. 22. Ding Chen 1960. Wang 1962, p. 16. Xiang 1974.

4. 蹈 in the Qi jun wang fei Chang shi epitaph 齊郡王妃常氏墓誌 (523). Luo 1917, vol. I.

渚 (渚 *tāo* flood over) in the Zhu Ge zi Heng statuette 諸葛子恆造象 (593). Qin 1985, p. 247.

5. “Yupian lingjuan”, p. 86. *Longkan shoujing*, 禾 section, 上 tone.

6. *Sushu kanwu*, 平 tone, rhyme 13.

the Japanese Education Department's Proposal for the Regulation of Characters recommended permitting 稭 alongside 稻. Forty years later its List of Forms of Characters for Current Use prescribed 稭 as the only official form.

Simplification by one little stroke did not interest the Script Reform Committee of China. In 1955, the reformer Chén Guāngyáo instead suggested the much shorter 禾 with the phonetic 刀 *dāo*.¹ By 1960, quite a few handwriters had adopted this idea, as we can see in letters sent to the committee.² In 1965, a teacher at the Sichuan Institute of Agriculture proposed to make “habitually used short forms” like 禾 official.³

There were other habits, however. Also in 1960, nine letters to the committee reported the form 禾 for 稻. The following year, a teacher from Zhejiang wrote in *Wénzì gǎigé* that students wrote 禾 for 稻 at their university entrance exams.⁴

The committee had already been criticized for its excessive use of 又 in 鄧 for 鄧, 难 for 難, 戏 for 戲 and so on (see 鄧 *dèng* below). Understandably, it shunned 禾. The unpublished 1962 simplification scheme and the thoroughly published 1977 scheme both advocated 禾 and the analogous 𪛗. The Anhui Education Bureau objected: “One is used to writing 稻 as 禾. To simplify to 禾 is not habitual.”⁵ But was not 𪛗 “habitually used” in Sichuan? Do habits differ from province to province? Let us look closer at our records.

禾 was reported in 1960 from Guangdong, Hunan and Fujian, in 1961 from Guangdong, in 1965 from Sichuan, in 1974 from Shanxi, in 1975 from Shandong and Hubei, and in 1976 from Shandong,⁶ while 禾 was seen in 1960 in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shaanxi, Anhui, Hubei and Hunan, in 1961 in Zhejiang, in 1975 and 1976 in Zhejiang, and in 1977 in Anhui and Jiangsu.⁷ In 1981, this writer saw 禾罗 (*dàoluó* rice sieves) for sale in Yixing in Jiangsu.

禾 reports are confined to East and Central China. Interviews shown on Map 18 confirm that 禾 is known only in these areas. In this case habit does depend on geography.

禾 has also been used for 程 (see *chéng* and Map 17).

道 𪛗 *dào* road

𪛗 with the phonetic 刀 *dāo* has been used for 道 since the late nineteen fifties. In 1957, a middle school teacher in Zhejiang wrote in *Guāngmìng rìbào* that some of his students wrote 𪛗 for 道 in their compositions. The following year, the *Yǔwén*

1. Chen Guangyao 1955, p. 103.

2. Letters 1960.4.19, 1960.7.26, 1960.9.8, 1960.9.22, 1960.9.30, 1960.11.25, 1960(i), 1961.6.12.

3. Sun 1965.

4. Letters 1960.5.28, 1960.8.4 (b), 1961.6.22; 1960.11.29, 1960 (d); 1960.11.24; 1960.6.22; 1960.7.14; 1961.11.15. Zhang 1962, p. 18.

5. Anhui sheng jiaoyuju 1979 (1978), p. 27.

6. Zhang 1974. Shandong shifan xueyuan 1975. Letters 1975.5.6 and 1976.3.2.

7. Letters 1975.5.6, 1976.9.2, 1977.5.17; 1977.10.24.

xuéxí said 辺 was used in slogans, announcements and the like. In 1960, the Script Reform Committee received letters reporting 辺 from Inner Mongolia in the north to Guizhou in the south.¹

These records may prove that 辺 had appeared in 1957, but not that the form was unknown before that year. We can show, however, that 辺 was not recognized as 道 as late as 1955. That year, *Zhōngguó Yǐwén* published an article on Japanese script reform, saying Chinese readers could “easily recognize” the official Japanese form 辺 as 邊 (which was usually written 边 in China. See *biān*).² Later they came to recognize it as 道.

The 1977 Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme proposed to make 辺 official. Critics found 辺 too similar to 边.³ Others reacted against its phonetic. A *Guāngmìng* reader asked: “How can you talk sense (道理) with the help of a knife (刀)?”⁴ These arguments caused 辺 to be thrown out of the revised 1981 scheme.

德 德 忒 *dé* virtue

In 1949, the Japanese Language Council shortened the official form 德 by 一 to 德. This was no innovation. Actually our earliest inscriptions, Yin forms like 𠄎, 𠄏 and 𠄐 (德), have no component corresponding to 一.

We can infer that these Yin forms were already shortened. The phonetic in this character is 直 *zhí* < **d'isək*. 直 consists of 省 (*shěng* observe) and a stroke below denoting some object, without which this component at the time would have been undistinguishable from 省. The 一 component must therefore have been present earlier on.

心 (heart) is on the other hand a later addition. Forms like 德 (德) with 心 do not appear before the early Zhou dynasty.⁵ The heart may have made the character more rational, but also more laborious. Pragmatic scribes saved some labour by shedding 彳 in its stead. By the late Zhou dynasty, we thus find forms shortened to 𠄑 (德), 𠄒 (德) and 𠄓 (德), in addition to 德 (德), 德 (德) and 德 (德). Some scribes thus restored 一, at the expense of 彳 or 心.

Of all these alternatives, the standardizer Lǐ Sī selected the Qin form 德 (德) with 彳 but without 一, wrote thus in his Taishan inscription and set the norm. This 一-less norm was followed by Western Han wood slip scribes.⁶

1. Fan 1957. Xiong et al. 1958, p. 16. Letters 1960.6.25, 1960.9.18 etc.
2. Liu Zexian 1955, p. 30.
3. Jilin sheng 1979 (1978), p. 15. Hubei sheng wenzi gaige lingdao xiaozu 1979, p. 39. Sichuan sheng wenzi gaige gongzuo linshi xiaozu 1979, p. 46. Yunnan sheng wenzi gaige lingdao xiaozu 1979, p. 33.
4. Ye 1978. Same point in Yunnan sheng wenzi gaige lingdao xiaozu 1979, p. 33.
5. The Da yu ding 大盂鼎 (Kang wang, 1042–1018 BC), Qiang pan 牆盤 (Gong wang, 946–918), Mao gong ding 毛公鼎 (Xuan wang, 827–782).
6. True, some wrote 德, 德 or 德 without 彳, as we have seen in Table 6, in what the

But not by Xǔ Shèn. His *Shuōwén* said: “禱 [...] is written with 彳. 憇 denotes the sound”, 憇 “is written with 直 and 心”, and 直 “is written with 丩, 十 and 目.” So he prescribed 禱 with 彳.

Forms with 丩 or 一 turn up on steles in the second century AD – after *Shuōwén* – alongside more common forms without 一.¹ Later norm-setters wavered. The Han Xiping Stone Classics, the Sui *Qiān zì wén*, the Tang *Yùpiān* and *Wújīng wénzì* prescribed 德 without 一, the Three Kingdoms Zhengshi Stone Classics and the Tang *Gānlù zìshū* 德 with 一. From the Song dynasty onwards, however, dictionaries complied to *Shuōwén* and wrote 德 with 一 (see Tables 6, 7 and 8 above).

That is not to say that handwriters complied. Even in the twentieth century, 德 was a common sight in Chinese and Japanese writing. While the Japanese Language Council succumbed to this habit and made 德 official in 1949, the Script Reform Committee of China refrained from this one-stroke simplification. In 1960 the committee got a hint of something more radical, when a correspondent related that some writers peeled the top and left side off 德 and wrote 忈.² Seventeen years later, it included this form in List 2 of the Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme, the list the public was invited to debate further. The debate revealed that 忈 was little known. The Education Bureau of the Revolutionary Committee of Jiangsu Province wrote: “Seeing characters like 兕 (微), 卦 (韩), 忈 (德) [...], there is absolutely no way to make out which complex forms they have been simplified from.”³ The Guangxi Script Reform Supervisory Group said: “One should not create new characters, like 天 for 寡 [guǎ alone], 忈 for 德, [...]”⁴ In consequence, 忈 was omitted from the revised 1981 scheme.

Paradoxically, 忈 had lost exactly the parts which were present in the oldest known form 𠄎 (徠).

鐙 燈 灯 dēng

‘Lamp’ was originally written 鐙 with the 金 (metal) signific.⁵ 燈 with the shorter 火 (fire) signific is found in inscriptions from the seventh century onwards.⁶ This new form was condemned by Xú Xuàn in his 986 edition of *Shuōwén*: “Today 鐙 is also vulgarly written 燈. This is wrong.” *Guāngyù*, however, ignored Xú Xuàn, prescribed 燈 and was followed by later dictionaries.

Zhengshi Stone Classics call “ancient script”.

1. With 丩 on the 孔宙 Kong Zhou stele (AD 165). With 一 on the Xia Cheng 夏承 stele (170). Etc.
2. Letter 1960 (i). Also letters 1976.1.20 1976.5.6.
3. Jiangsu sheng geming weiyuanhui jiaoyuju 1979 (1978), p. 24.
4. Guangxi zhuangzu zizhi qu wenzi gaige lingdao xiaozu 1979 (1978), p. 42.
5. 華鐙 (decorated lantern) in the Han *Chuci*, acc. to *Li bian*, 2-54. Originally, 鐙 indicated a ritual vessel.
6. Zheng shan ji epitaph 鄭善妃墓誌 (617). Yan ta shengjiao preface 雁塔聖教序 (653). Ji zi sheng jiao xu 集字聖教序 (672).

燈 was shortened more radically by Yuan blockprinters, who substituted the clumsy 登 phonetic with 丁 *dīng* and wrote 灯.¹ In China this form became official in 1956, unopposed.

In Japan, 灯 appeared already in 1496 in one version of the *Setsuyōshū* dictionary.² In 1919 and again in 1938 the Education Ministry proposed to permit this form. However, when character simplification was actually realized in 1949, 燈 slipped through unchanged. It was pointed out to the Ministry that 灯 appeared nevertheless in at least one of its textbooks on the Japanese language.³ When the newspapers' organisation suggested amendments to the Characters for Current Use in 1954, 灯 was one. The Language Council complied and prescribed 灯 in the 1981 List of Characters for Common Use.

等等寺寺专寺 *děng* rank, wait

Initially, 等 meant 'the step of a stair', so scribes gave it a bamboo top. By the Han dynasty, most writers had substituted this with the shorter grass top.⁴ Throughout the Jin, Sui and Tang dynasties, the bamboo top remained a rare sight. Even in our Tang transcript of the dictionary *Yùpiān*, 'rank' is written 寺 with 'grass'.⁵ Since then, however, the promotion of 等 by the *Gānlù zìshū*, *Guǎngyùn* and later dictionaries has decimated but not eradicated grass top writers.

The next component to sustain attack was the middle 土, which Jin writers contracted to 厶, and their Ming colleagues to 一.⁶ The result was 寺 and 寺.

In the Tang dynasty, 寺 with 厶 and 一 was so common that this came to be the form first adopted in Japan.⁷ Even 寺, and of course the cursive 寺', made their way across the sea. In Japan, the latter very often came to be written 寺 even in square style texts.⁸

When the Japanese Education Ministry started looking at script reform early in the twentieth century, many of these short forms were still in use. In the archives, we find notices about a 高等女學校 (*kōtō jogakkō* girls' high school) from 1938, 一等地 (*ittō chi* first class land) from 1932 and the 青年将校寸' (*seinen shōkōra* young officers) from 1936.⁹ In the last example, 寸' (等) is a plural suffix. In the

1. 灯 in blockprint *Quan xiang Sanguo zhi pinghua* 全相三國摯 (1321–1328) etc., acc. to Liu 1930, p. 52.
2. The Meiyō 明應 version. In *Kohon setsuyōshū roku shū*, p. 33.
3. Ōiwa 1949, p. 53.
4. Of fifty-eight 等 on Western Han wood slips in Sano 1991, two have bamboo (竹) tops, fifty-two grass (艹, 艹 or 艹) tops, and four no tops.
5. Three text examples on p. 295 of "Yupian lingjuan".
6. 寺 used by Wang Xizhi (d. 379). 寺 in blockprint 嬌紅記 (1426–1435) etc., acc. to Liu 1930, p. 61.
7. Of seven 8th c. steles in Kitagawa 1991, five contain 寺 or 寺, two indistinct forms.
8. Early examples on 8th c. wood slips from Fujiwara Palace and Heijō Palace, acc. to Kajihara 1990, p. 75. Late example in 1515 document in *Taikei Komonjo jisshū*, item 55.
9. Documents 県庁戦前 B 2955 (1938) and 1101 (1932) in Yamaguchi Prefectural Archives.

1946 orthography, grammatical words were to be written with hiragana, in this case ろ, which is shorter than both 等 and 寸'. This lessened writers' burden and permitted the Language Council to leave 等 as it was.

The Script Reform Committee of China was not helped by any ろ. The 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme proposed instead to simplify 等 to 等 with the short 卩 top, analogously with 答, 第 and 篇 to 荅, 第 and 篇. This change was rejected in the final 1956 scheme. The committee's next chance came in 1962, when it proposed 𠄎, a square style version of the handwritten 𠄎, an analogy to 𠄎 for 𠄎. Even this scheme was rejected. By this time, the committee had received reports of a still shorter form, namely the 土-less 𠄎.¹ This 𠄎 was selected for the 1977 Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme under the designation "frame character". Objectors saw no frame and indicated that "such characters are not well received by the masses."² This devastating judgement barred 𠄎 from the revised 1981 scheme.

凳 櫪 杙 *dèng* stool

Thorough dictionaries register the variants 凳 and 櫪. The 1955 List of the First Batch of Regulated Character Variants abolished 櫪 and retained the shorter 凳.³ This leaves the impression that 凳 is a simplified form of 櫪. This is not so. Records of the shorter form go back to the Tang dynasty, of the longer, only to the Song dynasty.⁴ Even structure testifies about 凳's seniority; its 'stool' signific (几) reveals that it must have meant something like that to begin with.

At the time, the Script Reform Committee already had information about a genuine simplified form. The 1951 glossary *Jiǎnbìzì* said there were those who wrote 凳 as 杙. In 1960, two letters to the committee confirmed this.⁵ In 1982, this writer passed a Beijing shop exhibiting 元杙 (*yuán dèng* round stools).

These are meagre records. Not surprisingly, only three of more than fifty informants could identify 杙 as 凳. More informants actually identified it as 橙 (*chéng* orange q.v.). Even less surprisingly, the committee never contemplated giving 杙 official status.

鄧 𠄎 𠄎 *Dèng*

On Zhou bronze vessels, the place- and surname 鄧 *Dèng* is written with its left part only. This part originally meant some kind of ritual vessel and consisted of feet (𠄎 in the modern form), a vessel (豆) and, at that time, also of hands (双 or 卩). The city wall (邑) was added in the Spring and Autumn period, apparently to

1936 entry in diary of Kido Kōichi 木戸幸一, *Enshū komonjo sen: Kindai hen*, item 56 (イ).

1. Zhang 1962. Letter 1977.2.10.

2. Jiangsu sheng geming weiyuanhui jiaoyuju 1979 (1978), p. 24.

3. "Di yi pi yitizi zhengli biao" 1955.

4. 凳 is mentioned in *Tangyun*, 櫪 in *Pei xi* 佩觿 by Guo Zhongnu 郭忠恕 (d. 977), acc. to *Hanyu da zidian*.

5. *Jianbizi* 1951, p. 17. Letters 1960.5.22 and 1960.8.6.

distinguish the name Dèng from the vessel deng.¹

The character was now overloaded with components. Someone reduced this load by dropping the hands. On Han steles we therefore meet the character as 鄧. This was still too elaborate for the common scribe, who contracted the feet and wrote 鄧 on his wood slips.²

鄧 was too complicated even for the Script Reform Committee of China, which chose to simplify it to 邓. Of this choice Chén Yuán, former head of the Institute of Applied Linguistics at the Chinese Academy of Social Science, has given an account:

About the 邓 in 邓小平 and how it came to be this character there is an inside story. For 鄧, there were different simplification proposals. At the time, both 又 and 丁 were used [for the left side], and there were also some other ways to write it. When the proposals were sent to the central authorities, Chairman Máo asked: “Dèng Xiǎopíng, what do you think?” (I was not there, this is something I heard.) Dèng Xiǎopíng answered: “This one.” And that was the present form.³

We can confirm the beginning of this story. Both 邓 with 又 and 邓 with 丁 were in use. 邓 had been observed by the signature Hǎi Gē in 1934, 邓 by the reformer Chén Guāngyáo in 1936. The latter has even been found in documents from the Taiping rebellion by Lǐ Lèyì.⁴ Of “other ways to write it” we have no record, nor of any 1955 meeting between Máo and Dèng to discuss individual characters, which we should expect to find for example in *Jiànguó yǐlái wénzì gǎigé gōngzuò biānnián jìshì*.

The records we do have are as follows. The 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme proposed 邓. Some complained that the component 又 appeared to often and too erratically in the draft, in 对 for 對, 欢 for 歡, 难 for 難, 戏 for 戲, 仅 for 僅 etc., and suggested instead 邓, which was at least analogous with the draft’s 灯 for 燈.⁵ The Script Reform Committee disregarded this, declared in October that 邓 was the “more common” form and kept it in the scheme.⁶ Yet the committee hesitated until June 1956 before making 邓 official.

Later records seem to confirm that 邓 had been the less common form. A few years after the reform, even pros did not recognize the rejected form, like the

1. With 邓 on the Deng gong ding 鄧公鼎 and the Guo Ziwu ding 鄧字午鼎 from the late Spring and Autumn period. Ma 1990, items 772 and 773.
2. Juyan slips 230.1下 (A8, 68 BC–AD 29) and 214.2A (A8).
3. Interview with Matsuoka Eiji 松岡榮志 in “Chūgoku no kanji: kako – genzai – mirai (ge)” 1994, p. 10.
4. Hai Ge 1934, p. 657. Also in Ouyang 1935, p. 11. Chen 1936, unnumbered page. Li 1996, p. 59.
5. Zheng 1955. Renmin zhengxie Guangdong sheng weiyuanhui 1955.
6. Quote from *Hanzi jianhua fang'an (xiuzheng caoan)* 1955.

author of this 1964 letter to the *Běijīng rìbào*:

I am a proofreader. In my work I have encountered all kinds of randomly used and randomly created irregular simplified characters. This has not only created problems in our work, but also led to mistakes. Once when we were proofreading, we came across a place name. It should have been 𠄎, but the author had written 𠄎. We thought oh, a place name, in those any weird character may occur, so we took it to be correct. The result was an error [in the printed text].¹

The following year, a teacher from Wenzhou said he had seen 𠄎 in a worker's notebook. In 1974 again, the *Guāngmíng rìbào* found it necessary to urge readers to “do away with the nonstandard 𠄎 and 𠄎”.² Later it did not have to.

糶糶 糶 dí buy grain

糶 means to purchase (入) grain (米) and is read *dí* like its right side 翟, which is written that way because it means ‘the feathers (羽) of a pheasant (雉)’. In the Han dynasty, most scribes shed the least conspicuous of these components – 入 – and wrote 糶, as we can see from wood slips from that period.³

Later shorteners were more audacious. The Tang writing guide *Gānlù zìshū* warned against the “vulgar” form 糶, a 糶 without its fourteen-stroke right side. In vain, since 糶 was “often seen” as late as 1950.⁴ This suited the Script Reform Committee, which gave 糶 official status in 1959.

敵 敌 dí enemy

In the Western Zhou dynasty, ‘enemy’ was written with the left side only, an emperor (帝) and a mouth (口).⁵ This character also had other meanings, like ‘only’. By the Warring States period, the ‘enemy’ sense had been emphasized with an appropriate ‘man’ (亻) signific.⁶ At some point a ‘beat’ (攴) signific appeared as an alternative to the ‘man’. The form with 攴 survived into the Han dynasty, when the character turns up in clerk style as 敵.

In the nineteen thirties and forties, enemies abounded and so did their character. The complex 敵 turned into a burden. Some lessened the burden by dropping the second, third, fourth and fifth strokes and stretching the first stroke to 一. The result was 敌. The Script Reform Committee member Lín Hàndá said this 敌 “came into use in the old liberated areas”. This agrees with our records, which start with a vow to 消滅敌人 (*xiāomiè* annihilate the enemy) in a 1934 transcript of an Oath of the Pioneers of the Red Guards of Fujian. 敌 spread, however, and

1. Hua 1964.

2. Huang 1965, p. 15. Xiang 1974.

3. Of twelve Han wood slips in Sano 1991, eleven have 糶, one 糶.

4. Huang 1951 (1950), pp. 1, 17. Also mentioned in Ouyang 1935, p. 4.

5. *Di zì yin* 隄資籒 (Muwang, 973–947 BC). Ma 1988, item 176.

6. The Zhongshan wang ding 中山王鼎 (c. 310 BC).

was brought to Taiwan by the Kuomintang forces in 1949. In 1954, the politician Luó Jiālún wrote: “敵 written as 敌 is something one can see in every military report [here in Taiwan].”¹

敌 stirred up no debate and became official in the People’s Republic in February 1956 with the first batch of simplified characters.

敌 did not spread to Japan, where 敵 remained the official form.

遞 遞 遞 遞 *dì* deliver

In 1946, the Japanese Language Council changed the dictionary form 遞 to the shorter 遞. The shorter form is actually the oldest to be found in our sparse records, which start in the fifth century AD.² The right side of 遞 is hard to recognize as the ‘tiger’ prescribed by *Shuōwén*. We understand, however, that there must have been rule-abiders who wrote more recognizable tigers, since the 997 dictionary *Lóngkān shǒujìng* said 遞 was a “common” variant of the “correct” 遞. While *Guāngyùn* and later dictionaries promoted the etymologically transparent 遞, handwriters stuck to the shorter 遞 and even shortened it further to 遞, a form we find in Yuan and Ming blockprints.

The Script Reform Committee of China chose instead 递 with the phonetic 弟 *dì*, a form which is absent in Japanese records and rare in Chinese ones. Like 遞, 递 is first found in the *Lóngkān shǒujìng*, which called it an “ancient” form of 遞. *Jìyùn* reformulated this to “遞 [...] is also written 递.” Nevertheless we find no text examples of 遞 from that time. In fact we hear nothing of 遞 before the 1948 dictionary *Xīn zìdiǎn* said both 递 and 遞 were vulgar variants of 遞. Two years later the *Wénhuìbào* said 递 was “often seen” in Shanghai.³ Whether 递 writers had got this idea from *Jìyùn* or whether they had thought of the 弟 phonetic themselves is an open question.

The Script Reform Committee of China preferred the new but explainable 递 to the traditional but confusing 遞 and made it official in 1959. Since then reports of 遞 have ceased.

第 第 第 第 弟 弟 弟 弟 *dì* number

第 consists of a ‘bamboo’ signfic over a shortened 弟 *dì* phonetic. Xǔ Shèn’s *Shuōwén* says this 弟 means “the sequence in a leather bundle”, taking it as the primary form of 第. Fond of ancient forms, Xǔ Shèn prescribed 弟, not the more common 第, for ‘number’.

Xǔ Shèn was not the only adherent to the topless 弟. On Han wood slips we find passages like 第一車 (carriage number one), 第廿三部 (detachment number

1. Luo 1956, p. 66. *Fujian geming shi* 1987, p. 174. Luo 1954, p. 17.

2. 遞 or 遞 in the Diao bi gan ming inscription 弔比干銘文 (494), Shimen inscription 石門銘 (509), Li Bi epitaph 李壁墓誌 (520), Su Xiaoci epitaph 蘇效慈墓誌 (603), Kong zi miaotang stele 孔子廟堂碑 (626). and Duobao ta stele 多寶塔碑 (751).

3. *Xin zidian* 1948, p. 563. Huang 1951 (1950), pp. 1, 13.

twenty-three) and so on.¹ This minority of 弟 writers persevered for centuries.² Our last evidence of it is a 1950 *Wénhuì bào* article which said 弟 was “often seen” for 第.³

Already in the Han dynasty, however, the overwhelming majority of writers added a signfic on top. But which one? When we first encounter the character on Han wood slips, scribes had already shortened this top from ‘bamboo’ to ‘grass’, writing 第 or 弟.⁴ Even in the more formal seal style, ‘number’ was written with ‘grass’.⁵

While writers agreed how to write the top, standardizers did not. The Xiping Stone Classics advocated 第 with ‘grass’, the Zhengshi Stone Classics 第 with ‘bamboo’, *Yùpiān* 第 with ‘grass’.⁶ This slackness annoyed Yán Yuánsūn (d. 714), who said in his *Gānlù zìshū*: “第第: the former is vulgar, the latter is correct.”

This instruction had little effect. Even Yán’s famous nephew, Yán Zhēnqīng, the one who passed this advice on by inscribing the *Gānlù zìshū* on a stone in 774, ignored it and continued to write 第 with ‘grass’ in later inscriptions.⁷

It was in the Song dynasty that bamboo tops became standard in dictionaries, printing and handwriting. Some handwriters stuck to the shorter 弟, however. Knowing this, the Script Reform Committee chose this shorter form for its Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme, together with 荅, 荅, 篇 and 荅 and for 荅 etc. A letter to *Guāngmíng rìbào* objected:

As a matter of fact, quite a few characters have already been simplified rather thoroughly by the people, like 倉 which has been simplified to 仓, 兩 [*liǎng* two] to 两 and 第 to 弟. However, in the draft these characters have been changed to 仓, 兩 and 第. [...] People who have been using simpler characters will of course not start using characters which are harder to write. This way, double forms may emerge.⁸

Yes, people wrote 弟, a 第 without the centre, and had been doing so for more

1. Juyan slips 29.9 and 210.2. Also on slips 25.23, 26-6, 35.7 71.35, 76.8, 227.12 and 231.7.

2. 章第一 (chapter number one) etc. in Dunhuang *Bai hang zhang* 百行章 manuscript. Deng 1964, plate 6. 第一 in Yuan drama *Bian Yelang* 貶夜郎. *Quanyuan zaju*, Part 1, p. 3674. 弟四人 in c. 1888 manuscript in “Ye lu shan fang congshu”, p. 09.1134.

3. Huang 1951 (1950), pp. 1, 13.

4. In Sano 1991, p. 552–554, we find more than a hundred 第 and 弟 but no 第 with ‘bamboo’.

5. On bronze vessels in Rong 1931, ‘number’ is written with 𦰩 or other variants of ‘grass’ on vessels 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 23, 49, 70, 76, 79, 80, 81, 84, 93, 94, 106, 113, 162, 163, 248, 256, 272, 270, 277, 285, 301, 305, 321, 339, 342, 345, 355, 357, 358, 376, 379, 381, 383, 397 and 727, with ‘bamboo’ on none.

6. The Tang fragments in “Yupian lingjuan” contain the chapters 第一百 (number 100), 第二百八十三 (number 283) etc.

7. In 779 on the Qin li stele 勤礼碑 and in 780 on the Yan jia miao stele 颜家廟碑. Shen 1993, p. 481.

8. Dong 1955.

than seventy years.¹ This explains why use of 弟 for 第 disappeared about this time: a shorter alternative had appeared. Now the committee abandoned 第 and left 弟 unchanged, together with 答, 等 and 篇, in the final 1956 scheme.

Next time, the committee opted for something simpler. In List 2 of the abortive 1977 simplification scheme, the list of characters to be discussed further, both 第 and 弟 (*dì* younger brother) were written 弟, with the top and bottom of 弟. This form was shorter even than 弟, but much less used, being mentioned only in three of the letters we have access to.² Not surprisingly, the revised scheme of 1981 passed over 弟 in silence.

Although shorter than 弟, 弟 was not the shortest form on record. In 1960, a letter told the committee that the masses of Changchun in the North East wrote 第 as 弟, a form which even this writer has seen in Shenyang and Dalian in North East China and in Tainan in Taiwan.³ It is no accident that these records turn up in areas which were once run by Japanese. 弟 is very common in Japan, where we find it from the thirteenth century onwards.⁴ In China our oldest record of it is on the other hand a 弟一 in the 1912 diary of the writer Lǚ Xùn, who had studied, you have guessed it, in Japan.⁵

點 点 点 点 diǎn point

點 consists of the signfic 黑 (black) and the phonetic 占 *zhān* < **tiam*. Yuan blockprinters omitted part of the black and wrote 点, and later 点. By the time reforms set in, both Chinese and Japanese writers had also started writing 点.⁶ 点 and 点 are analogies to older 魚 and 隼 for 魚. 隼 is short for the Tang variant 隼.

Both the Japanese Language Council and the Script Reform Committee of China simplified 點 to 点 without recorded discussions. To the public the case was less obvious. Soon after the reform, *Guāngmíng rìbào* reported that a confused typeset had delivered 点 types instead of 点. Although printers have learned their lesson, handwriters still produce signs advertising 駕駛証专点 (point specialized in [photographs for] driving licences) and the like.⁷

Even less surprisingly, many have found the still shorter 点 convenient. So has even the committee, which proposed to make this form official in its 1977 Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme. Objectors pointed out that the scheme substituted 一 for 一, in 点, for 茂 in 尸, for 亠 in 宀, for 頁 in 沝, for 豕 in

1. 弟一樓 in running style in a 1881 manuscript in “Y anshan conggao”, p. 08.0437.

2. Letters 1960.6.28, 1977.2.10, 1977.4.25.

3. Letter 1960 (c).

4. 不便之次才 *fuben no shidai* (ill-suited reasons) in 1278 document in *Enshū komonjo sen: Shōen hen*, item 50.

5. *Lu Xun shougao quanji*: 日記, vol. 1, p. 8. Lu Xun also writes 二弟 (my second younger brother) for 二弟.

6. Index of journal *Shin joen* 4:5 (1940). *Jianbizi* 1951, p. 45.

7. Article by Chen Yue 1956. Ad seen in 1994 by RB in Bazhou.

苙 and for 異 in 北 and thus stereotyped writing.¹ Consequently, these forms were removed in the revised 1981 scheme.

殿 展 *diàn* hall

殿 has been written without its right side in blockprints from the Yuan dynasty onwards. By our time, the old *diàn* style assembly halls have become rarities, and so had the character, both in its complex and short form. In 1957, a contributor to the *Wénzì gǎigé* was surprised that “in letters and documents I have received recently, there are many new simplified characters. Some of them I have made out, like 宀(宣), 狎(街), 霸(霸), 展(殿).....etc.”² Not frequent but at least used, 展 was proposed in the 1977 Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme.

澱 淀 *diàn* sediment

澱 is not a character much in demand, except to write ‘starch’ (澱粉 *diànfěn*) Those in that trade got around 澱 by writing 淀, a rare homonym which according to *Yùpiān* means ‘shallow waters’. This sense is very close to 澱, and already the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* dubbed the two characters identical. In 1956, the Script Reform Committee chose to write 淀 for both.

電 电 电 *diàn* lightning, electricity

At the script reform conference in October 1955, the delegate Chén Zhōngfān defended “the adoption of ancient original characters, like [...] 云 and 电 for 雲 and 電 [...]. Some mean this is to restore ancient ways. However, [...] 云 and 电 have been in use in society all the time and do of course not present any problem.”³

It is plausible that the bottom 电 is the “ancient original character” for 電. *Shuōwén* said 電 “is written with 雨 and 申”, taking 电 to be phonetic and identical with 申 *shēn*, the ninth of the earthly branches, an alternative to the numeral nine. On Yin bones this branch is written 𠄎. This zig-zag line looks more like a lightning than a numeral. 𠄎/申/电 must have started its career in the sense of ‘lightning’, and later have been loaned for the earthly branch. Some time after that a 雨 (rain) top was added to distinguish the original sense of ‘lightning’.

Chén’s claim that 电 had “been in use in society all the time” is harder to swallow. The existence of the early character 电 is all conjecture. In our records, ‘lightning’ is always written with the rain top, until 1935 when the Shanghai semimonthly *Lúnyǔ* adopted the printed form 电 for 電.

Why did writers put up with the thirteen-stroke 電 for so long? Because they did not need to write it before it acquired the sense of ‘electricity’ some hundred years ago.

Having emerged before 1949, 电 managed to catch the boats to Taiwan, where

1. Xu 1978, p. 65.

2. Ma 1957, p. 9.

3. “Chen Zhongfan daibiao de fayan” 1955, p. 77.

it is now used by some writers.¹ Here, however, it faces competition from the more widespread but less short 電, a character presumably imported from Japan, where it is very common.

The Script Reform Committee preferred 电 to *Lúnyǔ*'s 电 and made that form official in February 1956. A spokesman explained:

For 電, the simplified forms 电, 电 and 电 are in use in society. Since all three types are in use, we could, and had to, select one of them. If we omit the 雨 top from the regular square or clerk script form, the remainder is 电. But if we look at the ancient forms 𠩺 and 𠩻, it becomes obvious that we should write 电 or 电. Out of consideration for the stroke number in the printed form and for the convenience of learners, the present form 电 was finally selected.²

Since then, the tracks of 𠩺 and 𠩻 have disappeared. True, in 1981 a warning sign displaying the character 𠩺 and an arrow pointing to the ground beneath could be seen in the Xiamen street leading to the university. The sign looked age-old, however, just as it did six years later, when it was still conveying its message.

疊 疊 疊 疊 疊 *dié* pile up, repeat

疊 is believed to consist of jewels or other objects piled on an altar (宜). In dictionaries, the objects are written either 田 or 日. Both forms have been in use since the Han dynasty, when both 疊 and 疊 were carved on stone steles.³

Is 疊 with 日 short for 疊 with 田? No, says *Shuōwén*, it is the latter which is an innovation: “Yáng Xióng’s explanation says that when judges passed sentences in ancient times, offerings (宜) were made three days (日) later. The character is therefore written with 晶 and with 宜. In the bygone Xin dynasty [AD 9–23], writing 疊 with three 日 was regarded as too excessive (盛), so one changed this to three 田.” On this confusing basis, Xǔ Shèn prescribed three 日 (日) on top.

This prescription did not eradicate 田 forms. The 997 *Lóngkān shǒujìng* included both 疊 and 疊 entries. To the latter, however, the editor added a reservation: “The correct form is today written 疊.” This judgment was followed by the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* and later dictionaries.

Many found both 疊 and 疊 bothersome. For convenience, some dropped two of the three objects and wrote 疊 with 日, a form mentioned already in the *Lóngkān shǒujìng*. Others wrote 疊 with 田, like the seventeenth century Japanese copier of the writing guide *Unshū Ōrai* and, much later, the Chinese archaeologist Róng Gēng in his *Jiǎnǐ zìdiǎn*.⁴ Yet others retained three objects, but shortened

1. A 1986 ad for vacant jobs in Yingge displayed numbers preceded by 电 (Tel.).
2. Chen Yue 1956, p. 20.
3. With 日 on the Yiyang 乙瑛 stele (AD 153) and the Kong He 孔鯀 stele (153), with 田 on the Tang Fu stele 唐扶頌 (183). The latter two according to *Li bian*, 5-70.
4. In 1542 version of *Unshū Ōrai* 雲州往来 according to *Kanji hyakka daijiten*, p. 320. In Rong 1936, p. 48.

each one to 又 and wrote 叠, a form criticized in the Yuan writing guide *Zhijian* but used in its Edo counterpart *Wakai seika*.¹ In the nineteen thirties, Chinese hands shortened this 叠 analogously with 量 and 量 to 叠, as we learn from contemporary articles in *Lúnyǔ* and *Wénhuìbào*.²

In Japan, 疊 has been extensively used as the character for *tatami* (floor mat). It is therefore not surprising that Japanese writers have contrived yet another short form, namely 疊 with two points for each of the lower objects, as we can see in a 1505 copy of the *Unshū Ōrai*, in a 1540 copy of the *Nihon shoki* (Chronicles of Japan), etc.³ This form is analogous to other Japanese short forms like 壘 for 壘, 撰 for 攝 etc.

Over the choice between 疊, 叠 and 疊, Japanese reformers hesitated. In 1919, the Education Department proposed to permit 疊, in 1923 疊, in 1926 and again in 1938 疊. In 1948, the Language Council finally settled for the shorter 疊.

The first Chinese attack on 疊 was made by the Shanghai journal *Tàibái*, which decided to substitute it with 叠 in its columns. In 1955, the more radical Script Reform Committee proposed instead to substitute 疊 with the simpler homonym and almost-synonym 迭 (to alternate). Substitutions of this kind were perhaps the least popular part of the proposed Character Simplification Scheme, so the committee offered in August 1957 to revoke 迭 and twenty-seven similar substitutions, like 出 for 齣, 云 for 雲 etc.⁴ However, as we have seen in Chapter I, the political situation came to block all amendments. In 1964, the substitution of 迭 for 疊 was implemented together with the last remaining proposals from 1955. True, one restriction was added: in cases when 迭 and 疊 might be confused, one should use 叠, a form which had not been mentioned in 1955. This rule was repudiated in 1986, when the State Language Commission prescribed 叠 for all cases of the former 疊.

In the nineteen seventies, the Script Reform Committee contemplated shortening the character more radically to 叠, as seen in a dictionary draft prepared by the Script Reform Publishing House in 1973.⁵ This idea was abandoned in the 1977 Second Character Simplification Scheme.

諜 諜 諜 *dié* spy
牒 牒 牒 *dié* tablet
蝶 蝶 蚩 *dié* butterfly
碟 碟 砵 *dié* plate

The phonetic 葉 consists of a tree (木) supporting branches with leaves which one

1. *Zhijian* c. 1330, vol. 5, 入 tone, sect. 30. *Wakai seika* 1753, p. 25b

2. Hai 1934, p. 657. Huang 1951 (1950), p. 14.

3. In 1505 version of *Unshū Ōrai* 雲州往来, according to *Kanji hyakka daijiten*, p. 320. In the Kawasuke 兼右 copy of *Nihon shoki* 日本書記, according to Satō 1987, p. 200.

4. Cao 1957 (b), p. 28.

5. Short forms found in this dictionary are described in Martin 1982, p. 239.

can see in seal forms like 卅. In Qin and Han clerk style, 卅 became 卅, 卅, 卅, 卅 or, rarely, 卅. The most common form came to be 卅.

Accordingly, standard forms with 卅 and 葉 were prescribed by the Han Xiping Stone Classics, the Sui *Zhencao qian zhi wen*, the Song *Jiyun* and *Yupiān* and the Yuan *Zhijian*. This tide was stemmed by the Ming writing manual *Sushu kanwu*: “世 is customarily written 卅 or 卅. Both are wrong.” *Zhui, Kangxi zidian* and later dictionaries agreed, acknowledged the perhaps more seal-like 世 and prescribed the now so familiar 世, 蝶, 碟 etc.

So 卅 is not a shortened 世. Shortened forms of 卅 soon appeared in compounds, however, 諫 and 膝 with 云 for 卅 from the second century onwards, 葉 (葉 yè leaf) and 碟 with 卅 from the sixth.¹

By the twentieth century, these modestly shortened forms had fallen out of use. In their absence, the 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme recommended writing the 葉 component as 葉, a square version of the cursive form, leaving the printed form as 葉. As we know, plans for different standards for handwriting and print were abandoned. 葉 forms were not abandoned by handwriters, however, who gladly went on writing 碟 and the like.

Some write still simpler. In 1960, a teacher from Zhongshan in Guangdong informed the committee that he had seen 蝶 written as 蚩.² This has been confirmed by this writer, who has seen plates labelled 支蚩 (餐碟 *cāndié*) and butterfly-shaped cookies labelled 蚩酥 (*diésù*) for sale in Guangzhou, flowers labelled 蚩蚩草 (蝴蝶草 *húdiécǎo*) in Nanning, and plates with dragon ornaments labelled 龙蚩 in Shaoguan.

These records are all from Guangdong and Guangxi. This is not accidental. Interviews show that 蚩 is known to informants in Guangxi and in the western, Cantonese-speaking, part of Guangdong (see Map 19).

At first glance, 蚩 and 蚩 make no sense. Spontaneously, we read *rù* in accordance with the right side. Does the southerner read something else into these characters? Let us look at local readings.

	Yangjiang	Guangzhou	Huizhou	Chaozhou	Meixian	Ganzhou	Chenzhou
蝶/碟	<i>tʰip₂</i>	<i>tʰip₂</i>	<i>tʰiəp</i>	<i>tʰiəp₂</i>	<i>tʰiəp₂</i>	<i>tʰieʔ</i>	<i>tʰieʔ</i>
入	<i>jəp₂</i>	<i>jəp₂</i>	<i>ziəp</i>	<i>zip₂</i>	<i>ɲip₂</i>	<i>lu</i>	<i>lu</i>

蚩 and 蚩 are used in the two first areas. Here, local readers do get some help from the 入 phonetic, which ends in *-p*, like 蚩 and 蚩. However, this is the case even in Huizhou, Meixian and Chaozhou where 蚩 is not known.

1. 諫 on the Yao miao 堯廟 stele (AD 167), in *Li bian*, 5-69 and 5-71. 膝 on the Dao yin fashi 道因法師 stele (663). 葉 on the Longcan si 龍藏寺 stele (586). 碟 by Yan Zhenqing (708-784) in the Jian zhong gao shen tie 建中告身帖 and in Japanese land rent document from 915 reproduced in *Enshū komonjo sen: Shōen hen*, item 4.

2. Letter 1960.7.26.

The Beijing-based Script Reform Committee had no sympathy for these southern forms. When it adopted 𠂔 in the 1977 Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme, it was not for 𠂔, but for the unfrequent character 𠂔 (*rú* wriggle).

東东 *dōng* east

The cursive 东 has been used since the Han dynasty.¹ On this basis, the Script Reform Committee proposed in January 1955 to prescribe 东 as a norm for handwriting but retain 東 in print. This scheme was abandoned and forms like 东, 陈, 栋 and 冻 were ordained for all kinds of script. Still doubtful, the committee hesitated until 1964 before finally adopting these and other cursive-based forms like 车, 仓, 贝, 门.

董董苳苳 *Dǒng*
懂懂惛惛 *dǒng* understand

董 and 懂 have been shortened 董 and 懂, analogously with 勁 for 動 below.² This was not good enough for the Script Reform Committee, which let the 1956 reform pass over 董 and 懂.

Other characters containing 重 were dealt with, like 種 *zhǒng* and 腫 *zhǒng* which in 1956 became 种 and 肿 with the simpler phonetic 中 *zhōng*. Soon after, the committee received reports that some of the masses analogously wrote 董 and 懂 as 苳 or 惛.³ Yet others wrote 苳 and 惛 with the simpler phonetic 冬 *dōng*.⁴

Now the committee act. In 1962, it proposed to make 惛 official, in 1977, 惛 and 苳. Regrettably, the 冬 phonetic was criticized for misleading learners to read these characters in the first tone.⁵ Consequently, the 1981 Revised Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme left 董 and 懂 alone.

動勁动 *dòng* move

This is perhaps the most common of characters containing the burdensome 重 component. Yuan and Qing blockprinters lessened the burden by writing 動, 勁, 勁 and the like. Later scribes transformed the cursive form into square style and wrote the left side as 垂. A song text from about 1932 urges the Red Army soldier to 行動听命令 (*xíngdòng tīng mìnglìng* act [only] on orders), and a 1936 *Gōngnóngbào* (Workers and Farmers Daily) article reports that the Fujian guerillas had 消滅反勁保長蔡水基 (*xiāomiè fǎndòng bǎozhǎng Cài Shuǐjī* eliminated the reactionary local constable Cài Shuǐjī).⁶

1. On wood slip 233.1A from Juyan site A21 (11BC-AD13).

2. For example in handwritten foreword to Rong 1939, pp. 3, 6.

3. 苳 in letters 1960.7.12(b), 1961.5.14, 1977.2.10. 惛 in 1960.9.24, 1960.12.23,

4. 苳 in Huang 1965, p. 16, and in letter 1977.5.17. 惛 in letters 1960.4.18, 1960.7.7, 1960.7.23, 1960.12.23, 1977.5.17.

5. Yu 1978, p. 129.

6. *Fujian geming shi*, p. 87. *Minbei Minnan Mindong geming genjudi juzhi*, p. 28.

Campaigns for different 運動 (movements) and against everything 反動 (reactionary) prompted a simpler solution, however. A photograph from 1939 shows a transparent urging all compatriots to 緊急動員 (*jǐnjí dòngyuán* quickly mobilize), a slightly younger pamphlet from a Save the Countryside League in Shanxi explains 怎样发动农民 (*zěnyàng fādòng nóngmín* how to mobilize the peasants), and so on.¹ This 动 was not as original as it may look. The reformer Chén Guāngyáo has pointed out that 动 for 動 is analogous to 耘 for 種, a short form on record since 1932.²

The Script Reform Committee chose the most recent 动 form and unhesitatingly made it official with the first batch of simplified characters in February 1956. After that, 動 writers seem to have thrown in the towel. Others picked it up, however. In 1962, the writing manual *Zhèngquè shǐyòng hànzi* condemned “made-up short forms often seen”, like 勅 for 动.³ This 勅 for 動 is an analogy to 种 for 種, which had been bestowed with official status six years before. Condemnation helped, however, and we have no later records of 勅.

竇 窠 *dòu* hole

In 1956, the Script Reform Committee decided to simplify 賣 to 卖 and, analogously, 竇 to 窠. This change was not implemented until eight years later.

Someone pointed out that “even after simplification, this character is still very difficult”.⁴ 窠 is a rare character, however, so the difficulty affected few outside the medical profession, which has to deal with 鼻竇炎 (sinusitis). Unsurprisingly, it was a member of this profession who informed the *Guāngmíng rìbào* that there were those who wrote 竇 as 窠.⁵

This 窠 with the 豆 *dòu* phonetic was no novelty. In an 1893 manuscript, we find the phrase 窠中 (in a cave), the *Ming Zihui* said 窠 was “vulgar” for 竇, and the 1039 *Jiyun* said 窠 was read like 竇 and meant ‘a pit’, identifying it with 竇.⁶

After the script reform, a still shorter *dòu* phonetic turned up, as 鬥 (*dòu* struggle) became 斗. This inspired medics to write 鼻竇炎, like in this writer’s case book.⁷

鬪鬪鬪鬪鬪鬪鬪鬥斗 *dòu* struggle

The *Xīnhuá zìdiǎn* says: “斗 (鬥、鬪、鬪)”. So the present standard form is 斗, and that the former one was ... yes, what?

1. *Taihang geming genjudi huace*, p. 97. *Zhandou zai Changcheng neiwai* 1987, p. 80 (鬪 means 發). Further 1943 and 1944 examples in *Jiangsu kangzhan*, items 326, 343, 353, 382.
2. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 12. 耘 appears in the dictionary *Guoyin changyong zihui*, p. 179.
3. Xiao 1962, p. 62.
4. A Zheng 1966.
5. Zeng 1964.
6. 窠中 in “Yanshan conggao”, p. 08.0312.
7. Actually 鼻竇炎 (1981).

The earliest standard form we know to have been set up for square style is the 鬪 with 鬥, 𠂔 and 斤 in the Tang writing guide *Gānlù zìshū*. Its 837 successor the *Jiǔjīng zìyàng* on the other hand called 鬪 “a clerk style abbreviation. This form is wrong, as it is written with 鬥.” This because *Shuōwén* had said: “This character is written with 鬥, and 鬪 [zhuó] denotes the sound.” For that reason, *Jiǔjīng zìyàng* prescribed 鬪 with 鬥, and was followed by later dictionaries. True, the 1008 *Guǎngyùn* still prescribed the *Gānlù zìshū*’s 鬪 with 鬥, but excused itself that this was only because “characters [which ought to be] written with 鬥 are nowadays written with the 鬥 meaning ‘gate.’” This concession to popular usage was abandoned in the 1039 *Jìyùn*, which denounced the 鬥-framed 鬪 as “not correct”, prescribed 鬪 with 鬥 and was followed by *Zìhuì* and *Kāngxī zìdiǎn*.

This would have settled the matter, were it not for the following *Shuōwén* entry: 鬪 兩士相對兵杖在後象鬥之形凡鬥之屬皆从鬥 (鬪 is two men confronting each other, with batons behind [them]. This is an image of a fight. All characters of the 鬥 type are written with 鬥). Here Xǔ Shèn seems to be describing the component 鬥, not the character 鬪. However, the Song editors of *Shuōwén* took this passage to mean that 鬥 was identical with 鬪, gave it the latter’s reading and were followed by later dictionaries. This made 鬥 another standard form for ‘struggle’.

鬪’s claim to standard status is weaker. 鬪 is mentioned in dictionaries, yes, but always with the discrediting characterization “vulgar”, which has followed it since its appearance in the Song dictionary *Piānhǎi*.

Before the twentieth century, it is hard to find a writer who has observed either of these standards. *Gānlù zìshū*’s 鬪 is absent on Han wood slips and Sui and Tang steles, where ‘struggle’ is written 鬪 or 鬪. Why then did Yán prescribe the uncommon, if not unknown, 鬪 with 鬪? Obviously because *Shuōwén* said the phonetic was just 鬪.

Jiǔjīng zìyàng’s 鬪 with 鬥, 𠂔 and 斤 was even less mainstream, with at least two components disagreeing with common usage. While dictionaries, as we have seen, followed its prescription, writers and printers did not. In the anthology *Zhōngguó bǎnkè túlù* we find one ‘struggle’ among the Ming and Qing type prints, and that one is written 鬪 with 鬥, 豆 and 斗.¹

Even the third standard form referred to, 鬪, is hard to find either in print or in handwriting. The closest we find are the 鬥- and 鬥-framed 鬪 and 鬪 in Yuan, Ming and Qing blockprints.

One form that we do find in handwriting is 鬥. When the 1916 *Zhōnghuá dà zìdiǎn* said 鬥 was identical with 鬪, both printers and handwriters welcomed this chance to write shorter. Even the ten strokes of 鬥 turned out to be too many, however. When calls were made for struggle against landlords and capitalists in the nineteen thirties, some writers turned to the ancient blockprinters’ 鬪 and

1. Page of *Xi an ji* 西菴集 (1503) reproduced in *Zhongguo banke tulu*, item 605.

wrote 鬪争,¹ others to the almost-homonym 斗 (*dǒu* ten litres) and wrote 斗争 and 奮斗.²

When the Education Department launched its simplification scheme in 1935, use of 斗 for ‘struggle’ was still a novelty. The department therefore chose to shorten 鬪 more cautiously to 鬥. As we know, the department’s reform was abandoned. When the Script Reform Committee picked up the simplification task twenty years later, 斗 was on the other hand well established, and the committee adopted this form already in February 1956.

鬪, 鬪, 鬥 and, most recently, 斗 spread even to Japan.³ We first find the latter in the diary of a Japanese soldier serving in Nanjing, who described a 見苦しい 戦斗 (*migurushii sentō* dreadful fight) in 1938.⁴ Perhaps it is no accident that this diary was written in China. The grain measure 斗 is read *to* in Japanese and few would think of using it for 鬪 *tō*. Except, perhaps, someone who had noticed this practice in China.

Japanese script reformers had already proposed 鬪 in 1923, 1926 and 1938, and 鬥 in 1942. In 1948 the Japanese Language Council finally settled for 鬪, although the chairman mentioned forms like “厂 (歴), 斗 (鬪), 云 (言), 県 (縣), 庁 (廳) etc. which are in use in society today”.⁵ This has not prevented new proposals for 斗.⁶

獨 独 *dú* alone
觸 触 *chù* bump into

The phonetic 蜀 is today read *shǔ*. In our earliest records, and today, it means ‘Sichuan’. This contradicts *Shuōwén*, which says “caterpillar”. The latter must be the original sense, since the caterpillar’s head (now 𧈧) and body (𧈧) are quite distinct in Yin inscriptions. 虫 is an addition first seen in the early Zhou dynasty.⁷

Already on Yin bones, this character was loaned for the place name Shu. By the late Zhou, 蜀 (蜀) had been loaned even for ‘alone’.⁸ The same character thus

1. In 1932 issue of the Fuzhou *Gongnongbao* 工農報 and in 1933 leaflet from Central Fujian Workers and Peasants Guerilla Detachment No. 1. Facsimiles in *Fujian geming shi*, pp. 153, 164.
2. 奮斗 in announcement of a 1932 meeting of the young workers of Fujian and Jiangxi. 斗争 in 1933 transcript of telegram to meeting of workers, peasants and soldiers from Fujian, Zhejiang and Jiangxi, and in 1933 issue of the Fuzhou *Gongnongbao*. Facsimiles in *Fujian geming shi*, pp. 166, 145 and 155.
3. The 1699 *Seizoku jirei* says 鬪 is vulgar for 鬪, the 1803 *Shōbun sankō* says 鬪, 鬪 and 鬪 are. Kanno Michiaki’s *Jigen* from 1923 says 鬥 is the same as 鬪.
4. *Nanjing da tusha tuzheng*, p. 158.
5. Chairman Andō Masatsugu 安藤正次 at council meeting on 1 June, 1948.
6. In 1957 by the editors of *Shinbun kenkyū* 新聞研究 in “Nihon no ryakuji” (1957), p. 8.
7. Used for place name in the Ban gui 班簋 inscription (Mu wang, 973–947 BC). In Ma 1988, item 168.
8. The “Shiguwen” carving from the Eastern Zhou dynasty says 射其獮(堅)蜀 (shoot among those [animals] a sturdy and solitary one). The original text is in seal style.

came to be used both for ‘caterpillar’, ‘the land of Shu’ and ‘alone’. To distinguish the latter sense, some started writing it with, for some reason, the 犛 (dog) signfic. We first find such enlarged forms in the Mawangdui silk manuscript from about 200 BC, where ‘stand alone’ is written 獨𠂔 (獨立), as well as 蜀左 (獨在) in the old fashion.¹ After that, we find only 獨 with 犛.

Song blockprinters found this enlarged 獨 too laborious and shortened it to 独 by dropping 犛, which happened to be the original part of the character. Analogously, 觸 was shortened to 触, as we see in blockprints from the Yuan dynasty onwards.

独 and 触 were included in all Japanese and Chinese simplification schemes, became official in Japan in 1946 and in China ten years later without controversy.

蠹 蠹 蠹 dù vermin

According to *Shuōwén*, 蠹 had a shorter variant 𧈧 (蠹), “written with 木, as insects inside wood.” Of this 蠹 we are short of text examples. True, the Liao dictionary *Lóngkān shuōjīng* mentioned 蠹, but called it an “ancient” form for 蠹, as did its Qing successor *Kāngxī zìdiǎn*. This “ancient” simply means that the character is found in *Shuōwén*.

The 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme proposed to make *Shuōwén*’s 蠹 official. Objectors wanted something still shorter and suggested 𧈧 with one 虫 only.² Undecided, the committee refrained from reforming 蠹 altogether.

蠹 is uncommon even in Japan, so the Japanese Language Council did not include it in the Characters for Current Use and made no decision about its form. Nevertheless, printers have adopted the shorter 蠹 with 土 on top. This form is known from the Yuan dictionary *Yùnhuì*, which says 蠹 “is also written 蠹. This is wrong.”

短 短 𠂔 duǎn short

In Han inscriptions, the ‘arrow’ component in 知, 矩 and 短 is written 夫 or 𠂔 at least as often as 矢. When 短 writers dropped another 丩, they ended up writing 短, a form appearing in inscriptions from the Eastern Han dynasty onwards.³ In 1008, 短 found its way into the dictionary *Guāngyùn*, which said it was the same as 短. By that time, however, use of 短 with 𠂔 was about to disappear.⁴

Modern shorteners have instead attacked the character from the right side. In 1950, the form 𠂔 with 卜 was “often seen” in Shanghai.⁵ The new 𠂔 was not picked up by the Script Reform Committee before 1977, when it was included in the Second Character Simplification Scheme. Critics thought the 卜 *bǔ* component

1. 獨𠂔 in the 道原 chapter, 蜀左 in 十六經 chapter in the “Lao zi yi ben” manuscript.
2. Renmin zhengxie Guangdong sheng weiyuanhui mishuchu 1955. Fan 1955.
3. Early records on the (illegible) Lin wei fu tong zuo feng ji 口臨為父通作封記 (AD 163) and Han Ren ming 韓仁銘 (175) inscriptions.
4. Late records of 短 with 𠂔 on the Gao Zhen 高貞 stele (523), Lü bo sheng 閻伯昇碑 stele (540), and the Lu Jianzhi wen fu 陸柬之文賦 inscription (Tang).
5. Huang 1951 (1950), p. 17.

gave misleading clues to pronunciation, so 𠄎 was removed from the revised 1981 draft.¹

斷 断 *duàn* break, break off

A sutra written by the duke of Wei in AD 256 urges not to 滅愛斷想 (eradicate love and suspend consideration).² In the 斷 used here, the threads (纆) cut by the axe (斤) in 斷 have amalgamated to 米 (rice), analogously with the somewhat older 繼 for 繼 *jì*.³ The Tang writing guide *Gānlù zìshū* called this 斷 “vulgar” and its 776 successor *Wǔjīng wénzì* condemned it as “wrong”. This did not sway educators. On a Dunhuang scroll from 851, a teacher has written 繼 with 米 in a string of character examples for his student to copy properly.⁴ Dictionaries on the other hand continued peddling 斷 until 1956, when the Script Reform Committee of China abolished the longer form in favour of 断.

The oldest ‘break’ on record in Japan is a 断 with 米 on a stele from 778.⁵ This form was still popular in the twentieth century and the Japanese Education Department proposed to make it official in 1923, 1926, 1938, 1942 and, finally, in 1946.

隊 队 *duì* team

We first find the short form 队, a man behind a fortification, in documents from the war years, like in a handwritten proclamation from about 1944 instructing the 人民抗日自卫队 (*Rénmín kàng Rì zìwèi duì* People’s Self-Defence Force for Resistance against Japan) of the Huaibei and Jiangsu-Anhui Border Area to 给军队带路 (help the troops by serving as guides).⁶ By 1955, 队 had become familiar to most readers. That year, an army teacher wrote that “many worker and peasant comrades who were originally illiterate, could even before the literacy campaign recognize some simple characters, among them short forms from the draft, like 学习 [*xuéxí* study] and 突击队 [*tūjīduì* shock troops], but when they met the complex forms individually, these characters which they had originally recognized in many cases became irrecognizable”.⁷ 队 was an obvious choice for the Character Simplification Scheme and became official with the second batch of simplified characters in June 1956.

1. Huang 1978, p. 24. Xinjiang Weiwuer zizhiqu wenzi gaige weiyuanhui 1979 (1978).

2. *Piyu jing* 譬喻經. Shimonaka 1931, vol. 4, plate 3.

3. On the Chen Qiu hou stele 陳球後碑 (AD 179).

4. Written by the teacher An Wende at the dictation of his pupil Song Wenxian. *Dunhuang baozang*, item 705.

5. Uchikawa Magaikyō 宇智川磨崖經 stele (778).

6. *Jiangsu kangzhan*, item 390.

7. Xu Zhiqing 1955, p. 40.

對對对对 *duì* toward

Yin and Zhou forms show a hand or thumb or man on the right holding an object resting on earth on the left. A construction worker punching clay with an implement, says Shirakawa. In Han clerk style, this became 對, 對, 對, 對 and the like, almost anything, it seems, except the later dictionary form 對. In Wei, Sui and Tang square style, 對 with 业, 厶 and 土 came to predominate, and was the form recommended by the *Zhēncǎo qiān zì wén*. Not, however, by the *Gānlù zìshū*, which called it “vulgar” and prescribed instead 對 with a 厶 centre, which was closer to the *Shuōwén* seal form than the 厶 in the common but “vulgar” form. This prescription was followed by Song and later dictionaries.

Both 對 and 對 were too arduous for Yuan blockprinters, who contracted the still bulky left side and wrote 对 with 又 or 对 with 文. The 又 form came to predominate in China and the 文 form in Japan.¹ Following custom, Japanese simplification schemes proposed 对 and Chinese ones 对, giving us the different official forms we have today.²

The alternative short forms seem to have died out in both countries. True, in 1961 we do find a complaint in the *Nánfāng rìbào* of confused individuals who write 对, but that is our last record of this form.³

噸吨 *dūn* ton

In June 1956, the Script Reform Committee changed 噸 to 吨, a form said to be “established by custom”.⁴

蹲踞跣 *dūn* squat

In 1964, a reader from “a unit of the People’s Liberation Army” wrote in *Wénzi gǎigé* that short forms like 踞 and 于. “are used very widely” for 蹲, 街 etc. in the armed forces.⁵ The right side of 踞 is a square version of the cursive 𠂔, an analogy to the 𠂔 which had been drafted nine years earlier from 𠂔.

The 1977 Second Character Simplification Scheme turned 踞 down, however, promoting the slightly shorter 跣 with the phonetic 屯 *tún*, a form of which we have no previous record. Reactions to 跣 were negative. The education offices of fourteen provinces suggested writing 踞, making it analogous with 𠂔 for 尊.⁶ In spite of this massive antagonism, the signific-phonetic compound 跣 was retained in the committee’s revised 1981 scheme.

1. On pre-1949 Chinese documents in *Fujian geming shi huaji*, 对 is found in seven items (pp. 40, 75, 169, 179, 214, 228, 323), 对 in two (pp. 125, 317). In pre-1945 Japanese manuscripts in *Enshū komonjo sen: Kindai hen 2*, 对 is found in five (items 42, 45, 56, 60, 63), 对 in none.

2. 对 in Japanese 1919, 1942 and 1946 schemes, 对 in Chinese 1935, 1955 and 1956 schemes.

3. Dongguan shifan yuwenke sannianji jiaoxue xiaozu 1961.

4. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 34.

5. Zhou 1964, p. 5.

6. *Wenzi gaike* 1979:3-4, pp. 4, 6, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 33, 35, 39, 42, 46.

奪 夺 *duó* seize

奪 consists of a hand (寸) grabbing a bird (隹) caught in a net (衣). Some of the sense was lost in the small seal, when the bottom of the net dropped out and it came to look like ‘big’. More was lost in the Ming dynasty, when lazy writers shed the bird and wrote 夺.¹ This short form was adopted by the Script Reform Committee of China, which made it official in January 1956.

In Japan records of 夺 were lacking, and Japanese reform schemes never took this form into consideration. Later, however, in 1969, 夺 was said to be used by Japanese students, who allegedly had picked it up from Chinese.² Later records are again lacking.

兒 兒 兒 儿 *ér* son

In the Yuan drama we reproduced in Figure 1, someone 喫一口兒 (*chī yì kǒu ér* eats a mouthful). This 兒 can be traced back to the 256 sutra mentioned under 斷 *duàn* above. It is not easy to see how 兒 could evolve into 兒. Actually it did not. 兒 is a contraction of the Han and Jin form 兒, written with the stroke order | — —, as different from the modern form’s | | —. Contraction of the second and third strokes in 兒 turned it into 兒.

By the Tang dynasty, the contracted form was firmly established. We see, for example, that the Tang teacher Ān Wéndé (the one mentioned under 斷 *duàn* above) taught his student to write 兒 and nothing else. Likewise, the form first exported to Japan was a contracted 兒.³

The Tang *Gānlù zìshū* reacted against these contractions, dismissed 兒 as “vulgar” and endorsed 兒. Liao and Song dictionaries followed it and prescribed forms like 兒 or 兒. Most scribes continued to write 兒 or 兒, however, or shortened these forms further to the 兒 or 兒 we see in Song and Yuan blockprints.

In the nineteen twenties, 兒 was still the common short form in Japan, so Japanese script reformers proposed to make this form official in 1923, 1926 and 1938, and, finally, in 1948.

兒 was common even in China. By the nineteen thirties, however, a still shorter alternative had turned up. When the Shanghai bimonthly *Línyǔ* introduced short forms in 1935, it chose to write 兒 as 儿, the sign for *er* in the National Phonetic Alphabet. Twenty years later, the Script Reform Committee of China followed this suit.

Reformers admitted, however, that 儿 was a “newly coined short form,” while critics pointed out that 儿 might easily be mistaken for 儿.⁴ These concerns may

1. 夺 was found in military documents from the late Ming by Jiang and Shao, 1952, p. 20.

2. Matsumoto 1969, p. 77.

3. Inscription on the sword from Inariyama (AD 471 or 531) etc. Fujisawa 1978, Kitagawa 1991, p. 49, etc.

4. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 50. “*Jianhuazi zongbiao da wen*” 1965. Xu Chuanxing 1955.

manuscripts from the nineteen forties onwards.¹ Contraction of 弓 to | is hardly surprising. The change to 彳 seems less rational, as it gives neither sense to the character nor relief to the writer. 彳 does make some sense, however, if we take it as an offspring not of 弓, but of |. The latter is an unusual component in square style. When it appears, like it does here, on the left side, it is in most cases a handwritten 彳. Like in 油, handwriting for 油. Vice versa, 油 is square style for 油. And, analogizes the scribe, 彳 is square style for 彳.

The bottom right of 發 is a hand (又) swinging a club (几). Already in the Han dynasty, some scribes substituted this 又 with the slightly handier synonym 支 or its contracted form 攴. The latter came to predominate and was prescribed by the writing guides *Zhēn-cǎo qiān zì wén* and *Gānlù zìshū*. 發, however, is inconsistent with *Shuōwén*, which says the phonetic 發 pō “is written with 攴”. Their 776 successor *Wǔjīng wénzì* therefore prescribed 發 with 攴, and was followed by later dictionaries. As we have seen, this has not prevented variants with 攴, 支 and 支 from living on. The latter, the 支 in 發, is neither a synonym nor a short form of 攴 or 支. It may have originated in the same way as 彳 above: writers feel uncomfortable with the unusual component 支 and substitute it with the more familiar 支.

When script reform came up in Japan in the nineteen twenties, writing habits were anything but stereotyped. In manuscripts from those days, 發 is written 發, 發, 發, 發 and so on.² The Education Department chose 發, the most common form, for its 1923, 1926, 1938 and 1942 reform schemes, and finally made this form official in 1946.³

發 has its origins in China, where we can trace it to Ming and Qing blockprints. This puzzling form becomes less puzzling when we find its predecessor 發 in Yuan blockprints. Is not 發 a 發 in which 冫 has lost its 冫, 彳 its 彳 and 攴 its 攴?

Chinese habits were no more homogeneous than Japanese ones. In 1934, the character collector Xú Zémín said “發 has the different forms 友, 發, 發, 發 and 發, with 友 as the most convenient.”⁴ This described only part of the menagerie; in manuscripts, we find even 發, 發, 發, 發, 發, 發 and 發.⁵ There was no predominating form like Japan’s 發, however, so reformers wavered. The first

1. 發付咱 (pay us) in Yuan blockprint of drama *Bian Yelang 貶夜郎*. *Quanyuan zaju*, Part 1, p.3675. Instruction to 發揚人民民主精神 (develop the democratic spirit of the people) in 1944 handwritten proclamation by the party committee of Northern Jiangsu. *Jiangsu kangzhan*, p.116.

2. *Enshū komonjo sen: Kindai hen*, items 42, 45, 48, 59 and 66. Document 県片戦前 B 520 (1942). Tokieda 1922, p. 357.

3. 發 appears in five of the above manuscripts, 發, 發, 發 and 發 in one each.

4. Xu 1934, p. 963.

5. In 1928–1947 manuscripts in *Fujian geming shi*, 發 appears on pp. 75, 228, 發 on p. 169, 發 on pp. 34, 212, 發 on pp. 87, 發 on p. 123, 發 on pp. 214, 248, 324. In 1942–1944 manuscripts in *Jiangsu kangzhan*, 發 and 發 appear on p. 116, 發 on p. 97, and 發 on pp. 108, 110. 發 in Rong 1939, introduction p. 7.

choice was made by the editors of *Tàibái*, who opted in February 1935 for 𦉰. Some weeks later, *Lúnyǔ* followed suit, and asked contributors to use the newly adopted forms in their manuscripts. This was futile. In manuscripts reproduced in the two magazines, we find 𦉰, 𦉱, 𦉲 and 𦉳, just about any form, it seems, except the prescribed 𦉰.¹ This noncompliance was hardly surprising. The twelve-stroke 𦉰 was not much relief from the twelve-stroke 發 and had little hope of ousting shorter variants. Recognizing this, the Education Department in Nanjing chose the shorter cursive-based 发 for its ill-fated simplification scheme later that year.² More significantly, 发 was also the form chosen by the Script Reform Committee for its 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme.

With so many tastes and habits current, objections were inevitable. A correspondent to *Yǔwén zhīshí* wrote that “those who have always used the forms 汗, 𦉰, 导 and 么 do not consent to the adoption of 汉, 发, 𦉰 and 庀.” Another thought forms like 发 “do not agree with the simplified forms which the masses are accustomed to,” since “the habitual simplification is 𦉰.”³ (𦉰, a dismembered 𦉰, can hardly have been the most habitual form, as this is our first record of it.) The committee balked and delayed the official adoption of 发 until 1959.

The introduction of the 发 standard had some stabilising effect. True, still in 1957 the Zhejiang teacher Fán Jiāng noticed that students kept writing 发, 𦉰, 𦉱 and 发, and five years after that the writing guide *Zhèngquè shǐyòng hànzi* still had to include 𦉰 in its black-list of “made-up short forms often seen”.⁴ Since that, however, Chinese records of 𦉰 and 𦉱 have disappeared. More elaborate forms of the 𦉰 and 𦉱 type have not, however. Signs like 冷饮批發部 (*lěngyǐn pīfābù* cold drinks wholesale), 山田電子發展公司 (*Shāntián diànzǐ fāzhǎn gōngsī* Yamada Electrics Development Company), 大發 (big sofa) and 發菜 (*fācài* flagelliform nostoc, an edible alga) keep appearing.⁵

礮 礮 *fán* vitriol

When Huáng Ruòzhōu published his *Jiǎnǐ zì huì* in 1950, he mentioned no short form for 礮. Later he became aware of 礮, and included this form in the 1954 edition of his book. This is our first record of this signific-phonetic compound.

It seems even the Script Reform Committee was unfamiliar with 礮, as the Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme proposed to simplify 礮 to the

1. Manuscripts of Huang Huajie 黃華節, Xia Gaizun 夏丐尊 and Tang Tao 唐弢 in *Taibai* 2:1 and 2:9 (1935). Manuscript on p. 302 in *Lunyu* 79 (1936)
2. Although 发 may have been the most popular cursive form at the time, it is not identical with the classic cursive form 𦉰 as prescribed by the *Zhēn-cǎo qiān zì wén*. 𦉰 is on its part a descendant of 𦉰-like forms found on Western Han wood slips, descendants again of 𦉰-topped forms like 𦉰.
3. Xu Chuanxing 1955, p. 18. Yu 1955, p. 29.
4. Fan 1957. Xiao 1962, p. 62.
5. Beijing street 1994. Beijing street 1994. Wenzhou furniture shop 1988. Guangzhou street stall 1982.

homonym 凡. Reactions to this were negative. True, one *Guāngmíng rìbào* contributor found the “newly created” 凡 “suitable”.¹ Others, however, feared a mixing up of the sense of 凡 (all) and that of ‘vitriol’.² One debater warned that 凡 would cause ambiguity in phrases like 凡是化学藥品, 它一定沒有生命的 (chemical agents definitely have no life) would become ambiguous, as it after such a reform would also cover the sense “vitriol is a chemical agent so it has definitely no life”.³

Instead, critics proposed 矾. The Chinese Department of Zhongshan University wrote: “In Guangdong 礬 is written 矾 and this has already become a custom. Moreover, its meaning is explicit, while in the present list this character has become 凡, which may very easily be mixed up with the other sense of 凡.”⁴ The committee heeded the advice and adopted 矾 in June 1956.

範 范 fàn model

In January 1955, the Script Reform Committee of China proposed to simplify 範 to 范, analogously with 答, 等, 第 and 篇, which were intended to become 荅, 等, 第 and 篇. Critics saw no sense in introducing the new 范, when the homonym 范 *fàn* was already available.⁵ (范 is a plant according to *Shuōwén*, but we know it used only as a place- and surname.) The committee listened and substituted 範 with 范 in February 1956, pointing out that “some of the masses have already starting using this character in this way.”⁶

That was an understatement. Our oldest dated 范 appears on a Han wood slip inscribed 陽朔五年 [...] 卒范客子 [...] (In the fifth year of Yangshuo [20 BC] [...] died the son of the exemplary retainer [...]). 范 had thus already taken on the meaning of 範.⁷ In fact, the full 範 character is nowhere to be seen in Han inscriptions. The oldest akin form we can find is a 範 on a stele from AD 278, identical to the form first proposed by the Script Reform Committee.⁸

飛 𨾏 𨾏 飞 fēi fly

In 1955, the proof-reader Zhào Xī said “some write the character 飛 as 飞, others as 𨾏.” Or, said the reformer Chén Guāngyáo, as 𨾏.⁹

The oldest of these forms is 𨾏, which appears already in the Tang Dù jūn qī Cūi Suǒ epitaph. While 𨾏 disappeared in China, it seems to have lived on in

1. Zhang Yuanti 1955.

2. Renmin zhengxie Guangdong sheng weiyuanhui mishu chu 1955.

3. Guan 1955, p. 39.

4. Pan 1955. Same proposal made by Guan 1955, p. 39, Yuan 1955, and Xu 1955, p. 41.

5. Guan 1955, p. 39.

6. Chen Wenbin 1956, p. 20.

7. Juyan slip no. 28.13. Similar use of 范 on slips 41.18B, 163.16 and 101.24.

8. Huangdi san lin biyong 皇帝三臨辟雍 stele.

9. Zhao 1955, p. 40. Chen Guangyao 1955, p. 124.

Japan. Around 1705 Arai Hakuseki wrote: “𠂇 [is read] *to bu* [and corresponds to] 飛. All characters written with 飛 are [sometimes] written with 𠂇. All this is wrong.”¹ After that, 𠂇 has disappeared even from Japan.

It was in twentieth century China that 𠂇 made its come-back. The signature 龔 Gē wrote that he had seen it in 1934, the paleographer and archaeologist Róng Gēng mentioned it in his 1936 dictionary of short forms.² Had some modern scribe got the same idea as the author of the *Dù jūn qī* epitaph, deleted the centre of 飛 and made this form popular? More probably the first modern 𠂇 writer had seen the form in Luó Zhènyù's 1928 *Zēngdìng Bēibíezì*.³

In 1934, 𠂇 with the signific ‘go’ had already been in use for some years. Phrases like 𠂇身上馬 (*fēi shēn shàng mǎ* he dashed upon his horse) and 𠂇馬出東門 (he dashed out of the East Gate) are found already in blockprints from the late nineteenth century.⁴

𠂇 appeared in Chén Guāngyáo's *Chángyòng jiǎnzì biǎo* from 1936. Chén did not say whether 𠂇 was a character he had seen or one he had coined. The latter is not improbable. Anyhow, we know that 𠂇 had come into use by 1950, when Huáng Ruòzhōu mentioned 𠂇 among “simplified characters often seen”.⁵

When the Shanghai bimonthly *Tàibái* adopted short forms in 1935, 𠂇 had thus just been revived and 𠂇 was probably not invented yet. 𠂇 was therefore the natural choice. When the Script Reform Committee picked up the simplification task twenty years later, the situation had changed. By then, 𠂇, 𠂇 and 𠂇 were, as we have seen, said to be in use. The committee selected 𠂇, the shortest form. Not even reformers argued that this was the most common or the most well-known form. Wèi Jiàngōng wrote that 𠂇 was one of several “newly created forms”, Jīn Míngshèng that 𠂇 had been “simply made up by the Script Reform Committee”. In its defence, Chén Guāngyáo pointed out that 𠂇 was “easy to figure out at first glance”.⁶ Defensively, the committee hesitated until June 1956 before instructing writers to use 𠂇.

Most complied. True, six years later, the writing guide *Zhèngquè shǐyòng hànzì* pointed out that mistakes like 𠂇 and 𠂇 were still “quite common”. This came to be our last record of 𠂇.

Not, however, of 𠂇, which persisted. In 1965, the middle school teacher Sòng Zhòngxīn complained of finding 𠂇 in his students' compositions. In 1986 this writer saw the same form on a sign in Zhanjiang. As late as in 2001 the character collector Yoshida Yoshio saw a price tag marked 𠂇機山竹 (airplane [carried])

1. *Dōbun tsūko* 1760 (c. 1705), vol. 4 p. 28a.

2. Hai Ge 1934, p. 657. Rong Geng 1936, p. 12

3. *Zengding bei biezi* is reedited and reprinted in Kitagawa 1975.

4. On pp. 78 and 79 in 1874 blockprint of *Wagangzhai yanyi*. 𠂇 also in *Lingnan yi shi* 嶺南逸史 (1862–92), acc. to Liu 1930, p. 122.

5. Huang 1951 (1950), pp. 1, 14.

6. Wei Jiangong 1955, p. 6. Jin Mingsheng 1955. Chen Guangyao 1955 (b).

medake bamboo) in a Hongkong market.¹

廢 廢 废 *fèi* cancel

Writers have shortened 廢 analogously with 發 to 廢, 废 and the like. Accordingly, the Japanese Language Council shortened the character to 廢 and the Script Reform Committee of China to 废.

To the council, 廢 was not the shortest form at hand. In pre-1946 documents from electricity suppliers, we find specifications of 广止手教(數)料 (*haishi tesūryō* cancellation fee) for electric power subscriptions.² This 广 was inconvenient as an official form for 廢, however, since other writers, perhaps a majority, used it for 摩 (*ma* sesame) or 廳 (*chō* office).

費 费 弗 *fèi* fee

In January 1956, the Script Reform Committee envisaged a change from 貝 to 贝 and, accordingly, from 費 to 费. This decision was not implemented before 1964.

Before that, impatient writers had already taken justice into their own hands. In April 1957, the committee member Cáo Bóhán complained of the confusion caused by those who “simplify 費用 [*fèiyòng* expenses] to 弗用 [*fú yòng* not used]”. In July that year, the teacher Zhū Qìngxià complained in *Yǔwén zhīshù* that he had seen 弗 used for 費 in stencils, and in November his colleague Fán Jiāng from Zhejiang reported that his students also wrote 弗 for 費.³

By 1977, the committee had quit combating 弗 and included it instead in the Draft of the Second Character Simplification Scheme. Minds changed, however, and 費 was left out of the revised 1981 scheme.

墳 坟 *fén*

In 1958, the Script Reform Committee changed 墳 to 坟, substituting the phonetic 賁 *bēn* with 文 *wén*. This idea can be traced back to the Qing dynasty, when we learn from *Zhèng zì tōng* that 坟 was used as a vulgar form for 墳 (文 is a handwritten variant of 文). In 1922, professor Qián Xuántōng mentioned 坟 as one of many “simplified forms now in use among the people”.⁴

粉 扑 *fěn* powder

In 1986, a shop in Meixian in eastern Guangdong offered 立徃扑. 徃 is a square version of the cursive 法 (德 *dé* virtue), but what is 扑? Farther east, in Longyan in western Fujian, a restaurant advertised 炒扑, and a store 玉米扑. And 丩米扑.

This solved the riddle. 卜 in 扑 was not the phonetic *bu*, but a contraction of the

1. Xiao 1962, p. 60. Song 1965. Yoshida 2003.

2. 1933 and 1941 reports in documents 県庁戦前 B 1100 and 県庁戦前 B 1101 in Yamaguchi Prefectural Archives.

3. Bo Han 1957. Zhu 1957, p. 55. Fan 1957.

4. Qian 1922, p. 162.

cursive 分 (分). 朴 means 粉, and these establishments were selling lithopone, fried noodles and maize flour.

Shops elsewhere do not. Use of 朴 for 粉 is purely local. While local informants tell us that 朴 means *fěn*, those elsewhere say *liáng*, if anything (see Maps 20 and 21). This use of 朴 for 粮 *liáng* is no news, as it was found in Qing blockprints already by Liú Fù.

奮 奋 *fèn* briskly

The 隹-less 奋 became official for 奮 in February 1956. Liú Fù had traced this form to a blockprint from 1862–92.¹ 奋 is an analogy to the older 夺 for 奪 *duó*.

糞 粪 *fèn* manure

Chén Guāngyáo called 糞 a “newly coined” character.² In our records, it is certainly new. Before the reform, we have no record of it. Even the 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme did not mention 糞, which was added in the final 1956 scheme and ratified only in June 1956, with the second batch of simplified characters.

豐 豊 丰 *fēng* abundant

Pre-Qin seal forms depict a receptacle (壺) with contents (丰丰). In Han clerk script this picture was rendered 豊 or, more rarely, 豐.³ The latter is obviously an attempt to keep the clerk form close to the seal. Slighting seal fans, the Xiping Stone Classics set up the more common form 豊 as the norm. This was repealed by *Guāngyùn*, *Jíyùn* and later dictionaries, which prescribed the more *Shuōwén*-like 豐. Not everybody followed that prescription, so the 1610 writing guide *Súshū kānwù* had to spell it out: “豐 is customarily written 豊. This is wrong.”

The disobedient were later joined by Japanese script reformers, who included 豊 in their 1923, 1926, 1938 and 1942 schemes and finally made this form official in 1946.

Chinese writers found a still shorter alternative. The simple character 丰 (beautiful) was read *fēng*. Exploiting this likeness in sound, people started writing 咸丰 for 咸豊 (the Xianfeng period 1851–1861) and 丰顺 for 豊順 (Fengshun county).⁴ Even reformers exploited the similarity and included 丰 in the simplification schemes presented by *Tàibái*, *Lúnyǔ* and the Education Department in 1935. The idea was taken over by the Script Reform Committee of China, which finally made 丰 official for 豊 in February 1956. Only one minor dispute

1. In blockprint *Lingnan yishi* 嶺南逸史. Liu 1930, p. 131.

2. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 33.

3. The twenty-one legible inscriptions on Han slips in Sano 1989 are all 豊. Of sixteen legible inscriptions on Eastern Han monuments in Fushimi 1989, thirteen are 豊, three 豐.

4. 咸丰 in 1925 manuscript 史 5678, p. 6. 丰顺 in 1929 letter reproduced in *Fujian geming shi*, p. 75. Li Leyi found 丰 for 豊 in the Ming blockprint *Qingpingshan tang huaben* 清平山堂话本

came up. The *Zhōngguó yǔwén* pointed out: “Some say that one should restore the top 𠂇 to 一. However, 丰 is already in use among the masses, so there is no need to change it again.” In the end, however, the committee listened to the objectors and changed the form to 丰 eight years later.¹

風 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 𠂇 *fēng* wind

In 1956, the reformer Chén Guāngyáo wrote: “There are many short forms of this character, like 𠂇, 𠂇, 𠂇 and 𠂇, but 𠂇 is the most common. Therefore 𠂇 was selected.”²

Most common, perhaps, but far from oldest. Already Han clerks deprived 風 of 丨 and wrote 𠂇, their successors deleted even 冂 and wrote 𠂇, a form we find in a sutra written in 256, in calligraphy by Suǒ Jīng (239-303) and on a monument carved in 368.³

Chén’s 𠂇 is a contracted 𠂇, his 𠂇, a square version of the cursive form, used by blockprinters from the Yuan dynasty onwards.

As far as we can see, it was also Yuan blockprinters who introduced 𠂇.⁴ How they got that idea is beyond us; 𠂇 is not a contracted 風, nor a part of that character.

𠂇 is found for 風 in letters and documents from the Taiping rebellion onwards.⁵ 𠂇 was not a new design, as it had been used for 鳳 *fèng* since the Yuan dynasty. For some decades after the Taiping rebellion, 𠂇 was used both for 鳳 and 風.

In 1934 a fourth form 𠂇 was recorded in “550 súzì biǎo”. Although new in China, 𠂇 had been known at least since the eleventh century in Japan.⁶ Perhaps the idea to write 𠂇 in Chinese came from that country.

For its 1935 simplification scheme, the Education Ministry in Nanjing selected 𠂇, the most traditional form. Twenty years later, the Script Reform Committee instead picked 𠂇, said to be the most common form. Not too surprisingly, 𠂇 was criticized for its similarity to 𠂇, the form selected for 鳳.⁷ One critic suggested an alternative: “As a common short form, 風 is written 𠂇, while 鳳 is usually simplified to 𠂇. It is better to simplify these two characters in this way, following

1. Chen Wenbin 1956, p. 20. *Jianhuazi zongbiao* 1964, p. 12.

2. Chen Guangyao 1956, p. 33.

3. 風 on the Xian Yu 鮮于 stele (165). 𠂇 in the Piyu sutra on plate 3 in vol. 4 of Shimonaka 1931, in calligraphy by Suo Jing in Lin 1976, pp. 1621–1522, and on the Guang Wu jiangjun 廣武將軍 stele.

4. Yuan examples of 𠂇 in *Quanyuan zaju*, Part 1, pp. 4299, 4300, 4303, Part 2, p. 10, of 𠂇 in Part 1, p. 3677. Ming and Qing examples in Liu 1930, p. 106.

5. Guo 1953, pp. 24 and 26.

6. Xu 1934, p. 1006. In 998–1021 Japanese manuscript of *Midō kanpakki* 御堂関白記 by Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長, acc. to *Kanji hyakka daijiten* 1996, p. 299.

7. *Zhongguo minzhu cujin hui* 1955. Guan 1955, p. 39.

custom.”¹ This implies that 凵 was more customary than 凵, “the most common” according to Chén above. These disputes delayed the adoption of 凵 till 1964.

Since then, 凵 has disappeared. Our last record of this form is a *Wénzì gǎigé* article from 1965 which still found it necessary to point out: “The inside of 凵 is written 凵. [...] The character is not written 凵 or 凵.”²

凵 and 凵 turned out to be more vital. In 1981, this writer saw the former in Nanjing and Guangzhou, the latter in Hengyang, Zhuzhou, Guangzhou, Shantou.

Even in Japan, different forms like 凵, 凵 and 凵 were on record before the reform.³ Neither predominated, however, so reformers gave in and confined itself to a change from 凵 to 凵. We notice only one opponent to this passivity, one Fujikawa Sukezō who suggested a change to 凵 in a 1962 issue of *Kokugo seikatsu*.⁴

鳳 凵 凵 fèng phoenix

Yuan blockprinters contracted the centre of 鳳 to 凵, later ones to 凵. By the Qing dynasty, one could thus see both 凵 or 凵 for ‘phoenix’.

As we saw above, nineteenth century writers found better use for 凵 by substituting it for the more common 凵 fēng. For some years, 凵 was ambiguous, being in use both for 鳳 and 凵. With time, the latter practice came to dominate. The writer Tōngzhái, for example, wrote 凵皇 (鳳凰 fènghuáng phoenix) in an 1861 manuscript, but 凵翔 (凵翔 fēngxiáng flying in the wind) thirteen years later.⁵ By the end of the century, 凵凰 writers had given in. Our last record of 凵 for 鳳 is in the blockprint *Lǐngnán yì shǐ* (1862–1892).⁶ Since that, 鳳凰 has been shortened as 凵凰 only.

The case looked simple and the Script Reform Committee changed 鳳 to 凵 in its 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme. As we have seen, however, 凵 and 凵 were criticized for their similarity and were not adopted until 1964.

佛 仏 𡗗 fó Buddha

𡗗 was used for 佛 from the sixth century onwards. A sutra from AD 550 and a stele from 573 speak of 𡗗弟子 (Buddhist monks), a statuette from 606 of 𡗗恩力 (the grace of Buddha).⁷ After the Tang dynasty, however, this 𡗗 disappears from our Chinese sources. When the Qing dictionary *Zhèngzì tōng* mentioned 𡗗, it was

1. Qiu 1957.

2. *Zheng zi xiao zihui* (1) 1965.

3. 凵 in 1922 manuscript by Tokieda Motoki. Tokieda 1976 (1922), p. 124. 凵 and 凵 in 998–1021 manuscript of *Midō kanpaku ki* 御堂関白記 by Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長, acc. to *Kanji hyakka daijiten* 1996, p. 301. 凵 in Document 県庁 戦前 B 520 (1942).

4. Fujikawa 1962, p. 87.

5. “Tongzhai xiansheng weike gao”, pp. 1.176, 3.213.

6. Liu 1930, p. 112.

7. Pusa chutaijing 菩薩處胎經 vol. 3, in Chion temple, Kyoto. In *Kokuhō* 1984, vol. 10, item 73-2. Gao Qiao zao yiwu quan 高僧造衣物券. In *Chūgoku shodō zEnshū* 1986, vol. 2, item 89. Li Yuan (Tang gaozu) wei zi xi ji shu 李淵(唐高祖)為子祈疾疏. In Sano 1980, p. 19.

as “an ancient character for 佛”.

How could writers do without the short and practical 仏? Because someone had found an alternative. In blockprinted novels from the Ming and early Qing dynasties, 佛 is written 伏 with the phonetic 夭 *yāo*. This form has endured. In 1960, 伏 turned up in a letter to the Script Reform Committee from a teacher from Heyuan, and at the bus stations in Guangzhou, Maoming and Zhongshan one finds timetables to 伏山 (Foshan).¹ Our modern records are all from Guangdong Province. Interviews with informants confirm that 伏 is known just in this province and unknown elsewhere (see Map 22).

So the story of 伏 is fairly clear. As Buddhism dwindled, so did the need for 伏, except in Guangdong, where it was needed to write the name of the city of Foshan.

仏 appeared also in Japan, as far as we can see earlier than the complex form 佛.² Unlike their Chinese counterparts, Japanese writers kept writing 仏.³ It was therefore natural for the Japanese Language Council to make the shorter form official in 1949.

膚 肤 *fū* skin

膚 consists of the phonetic 膚 *lú* and the signific 肉 (meat). *Lóngkān shǒujìng* and *Guǎngyùn* said there was an alternative form 肤 with the phonetic 夫 *fū*.

The 1955 Draft of the Character Simplification Scheme ignored this 肤 and proposed instead to simplify 膚 to 屑, analogously with 虜 and 慮 which were to become 虏 and 虑. In the final 1956 scheme, however, 膚 was substituted by the old 肤, which “is already much used in the medical profession.”⁴ But not outside, it seems, so 肤 was not ratified before 1959.

幅 巾 *fú* width

A Japanese character hand-book says: “巾 is not the character for *haba*. It is read *kin* and means a small piece of cloth.”⁵ We know this from the dictionary of course. 巾 is read *jīn* in Chinese, *kin* in Japanese and means ‘cloth’. 幅 is read *fú* in Chinese, *fuku* or *haba* in Japanese and means ‘width’. So why this additional tutoring? Obviously because some use 巾 for 幅. Like the Yamaguchi prefectural office, which issued a permit in 1938 to exploit 下端川巾 (*katan kawahaba* the lower end of the river width), and the foresters’ organization, which wrote of trees

1. Letter 1960.11.25. Bus stations visited in 1982 and 1986.

2. 仏 inscribed on the Koinnen meidō Shaka zō kōhaiki 甲寅年銘銅釋迦像光背記 (594), 佛 on the Hōryūji hōkō Shaka kōhaiki 法隆寺法興釋迦像光背記 (626) and the Hōryūji bosu Shaka kōhaiki 法隆寺戊子釋迦像光背記 (626). Saitō 1983, pp. 37, 267. Kitagawa 1991, p. 39.

3. 1882 example in manuscript to novel *Agura nabe* 安愚樂鍋, acc. to *Kanji hyakka daijiten* 1996, p. 362.

4. Chen Guangyao 1955 (a), p. 33.

5. Emori 1986, p. 663.

of a certain 巾員 (*fukuin* width) in its economic report of that year.¹ We can trace this practice back at least to 1889, when 巾 appears for 幅 in the manuscript of the novel *Iro zange*.²

福 祐 *fú* happiness

In 1981, a pharmacy in Yueyang was selling the medicine 利祐平 (利福平 *Lifuping*). The substitute 祐 for 福 is first known to us from letters sent to the Script Reform Committee from Linxiang and Changsha. Both Yueyang, Linxiang and Changsha are situated in Hunan. Interviews with informants confirm that 祐 is known only in Hunan (see Map 23). The reason may be that the Hunan (Shuangfeng) *'kəu* reading of the phonetic 古 reasonably fits the *ɕəu* reading of 福.

腐 付 *fǔ* rot

腐 is a common character because it is a constituent part of 豆腐 (*dòufu* bean curd). Restaurants and shops get around these fourteen strokes by writing 豆付 with the shorter 付, which is read *fǔ* but means 'pay'. So did Lǚ Xùn already in a 1928 manuscript.³

婦 妇 *fū* wife

The 冂-less 妇 is found in blockprints and manuscripts from the early Qing dynasty onwards.⁴ In February 1956 this form became official in the People's Republic of China without further disputes.

副 付 *fù* deputy

In decrees and documents from the Taiping rebellion, 副主將 (junior general), 副天官 (deputy head of cadres department), 副典馬 (deputy *dianma*) are often shortened to 付主將, 付天官 and 付典馬.⁵

By the nineteen fifties, 付 (*fù* pay) had come to be "generally used even in government bulletins" for 副.⁶ In January 1955, the Script Reform Committee proposed to make the practice official.

There was a catch. As we shall see below, 付 was also used for 傅 (*fù* master). Róng Gēng pointed out that writing 副主席 (the vice chairman) as 付主席 would mix this phrase up with 傅主席 (Chairman Fu), and was joined by other critics.⁷ Consequently, the proposal was withdrawn from the final scheme. Unauthorized use of 付 for 副 continued, however, so the 1977 Second Character Simplification

1. Documents 県庁戦前 B 2522 and 農業 489 in Yamaguchi Prefectural Archives.

2. In *Iro zange* 色懺悔 according to Endō 1988, p. 5.

3. 豆付 found by Jiang and Lu 1973 in manuscript to "Suibian fanfan" "隨便翻翻".

4. Liu 1930, p. 15. Tao 1892, pp. 48 a, 48 b, 49 a, 51 a.

5. Wu 1958, p. 43.

6. Wu 1958, p. 6.

7. Rong Geng in Renmin zhengxie Guangdong sheng weiyuanhui mishuchu 1955. Liang Zhongmou 梁仲謀 in Renmin zhengxie Guangdong sheng weiyuanhui 1955. Guan 1955, p. 39.

Scheme again proposed to abolish 副 in favour of 付. The idea encountered the same kind of criticism as in 1955 and was dropped in the revised 1981 scheme.¹

傅 付 *fù* master

傅's most common function is to serve as a surname for about six million persons. The more practical of these shorten their signature to 付.² This practice can be traced back to vernacular blockprints from the early Qing dynasty.

List 2 of the 1977 Second Character Simplification Scheme proposed to legalize this habit, together with that of writing 付 for 副. Critics objected that this would amalgamate 傅队长 (team leader Fu) with 副队长 (the deputy team leader) into one ambiguous 付队长, and were listened to.³

復 复 *fù* return
複 复 *fù* repeat

In February 1956, the Script Reform Committee shortened 復 and 複 to 复, called 复 the "ancient original character", since the Qing *Shuōwén* commentator Duàn Yùcái had said: "复 means return, but under 彳 we find even 復 [in the same sense]. 復 has prevailed while 复 has been abolished. I suspect that the 復 with 彳 has been added later."⁴

Duàn has been proved right by Yin bones, where 彳 is absent. The 彳 (step) introduced by Zhou writers was redundant, since the movement was already expressed by the 夂 (foot) in the original form.

The 彳-less 复 was readopted by handwriters long before the 1956 reform, as we see in the 1927 *Píngmín zìdiǎn*.⁵

覆 覆 复 *fù* overturn, reply, return, cover

In late Ming documents, Qing blockprints, Lǚ Xùn's manuscripts and today's Chinese streets, 覆 is sometimes shortened to 覆 with the phonetic 伏 *fú*.⁶

In 1935, the Nanjing Ministry of Education proposed to make this practice official. Twenty years later, however, the Script Reform Committee instead simplified 覆 to 复, merging it with 復 and 複. Another nine years later, the committee admitted that "this can some times cause confusion, one does not for example know whether 复国 means 復国 (restore the state) or 覆国 (overturn the

1. Song 1978. Zhang 1978. Jilin sheng 1979 (1978), p. 15.

2. As mentioned in letters 1975.11.8 and 1977.5.17, and in address left to this author by a person named Fu in 2004.

3. Song 1978. Jilin sheng 1979 (1978), p. 15.

4. Chen Guangyao 1956(a), p. 211. *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 1815 (1776–1807), 夂 section.

5. Fang and Ma 1927, appendix 1 p. 7. Also mentioned in Huang 1951 (1950), p. 15, etc.

6. Jiang and Shao 1952, p. 20. Liu 1930, p. 134. 覆 [...] 信 (write a letter in reply) in *Lu Xun shougao quanji* 1979, pp. 122, 185. 反覆试验 (repeated experiments) described in 1981 Wanxian wall newspaper (the latter 覆 is short for 復).

state)”, and prescribed use of 复 for 覆 only in the senses of ‘reply’ or ‘return’, not in the senses of ‘overturn’ or ‘cover’.¹

In 1981 the committee resumed the 1935 proposal to change 覆 to 覆, excusing itself that a proposal to do this had “slipped through” the 1977 scheme.² As we know, nothing came out of this. Instead the committee restored use of 覆 in all senses in 1986.

富 符 突 fù rich

In October 1957, one Mǎ Gōngyú complained in *Wénzì gǎigé* that he had received a letter containing the incomprehensible character 符. Three months later, an *Yǔwén xuéxí* article complaining of people who “simplify characters at will” identified 符 as 富. These critics could not prevent this 符 from being “widely used by the masses” another year later.³

Some of the masses managed to save one more stroke. In 1958, one Zhào Dì found 富 written forty times as 突 in stencilled librettos and twenty-two times in notes from meetings. Our earliest record of this 突 is Chén Guāngyáo’s *Chángyòng jiǎnzì pǔ* from 1955. As usual, however, Chén did not specify whether he had seen this form or invented it himself.⁴

So, by 1960, both forms were common, and we cannot tell which one was more so. True, in 1960 an teacher at Hefei Normal Institute wrote to the Script Reform Committee that 符 was more often seen in examination papers than 突. He was, however, contradicted by a fellow teacher from the Shibeì South China Normal Institute in Guangzhou, who wrote that 突 was “seen everywhere”, as opposed to 符 which the same correspondent had “also seen”.⁵

For its 1962 and 1977 reform schemes, the Script Reform Committee selected the seven-stroke 突 at the expense of the eight-stroke 符. The phonetic 夫 *fū*, however, was criticized for its misleading first tone, so 突 was withdrawn from the revised 1981 scheme.⁶

For some, two forms were not enough. In 1986, the *Guāngmíng rìbào* complained: “In one street the character 富 [*fù rich*] is written in three ways, namely 突, 交 and 符 [...]. The masses angrily object: ‘When we Chinese read our own language, we must both read and guess.’”⁷

1. Xue 1965.

2. Zhongguo wenzi gaige weiyuanhui 1981, p. 3.

3. Ma 1957, p. 9. Xiong et al. 1958, p. 16. Hao 1959.

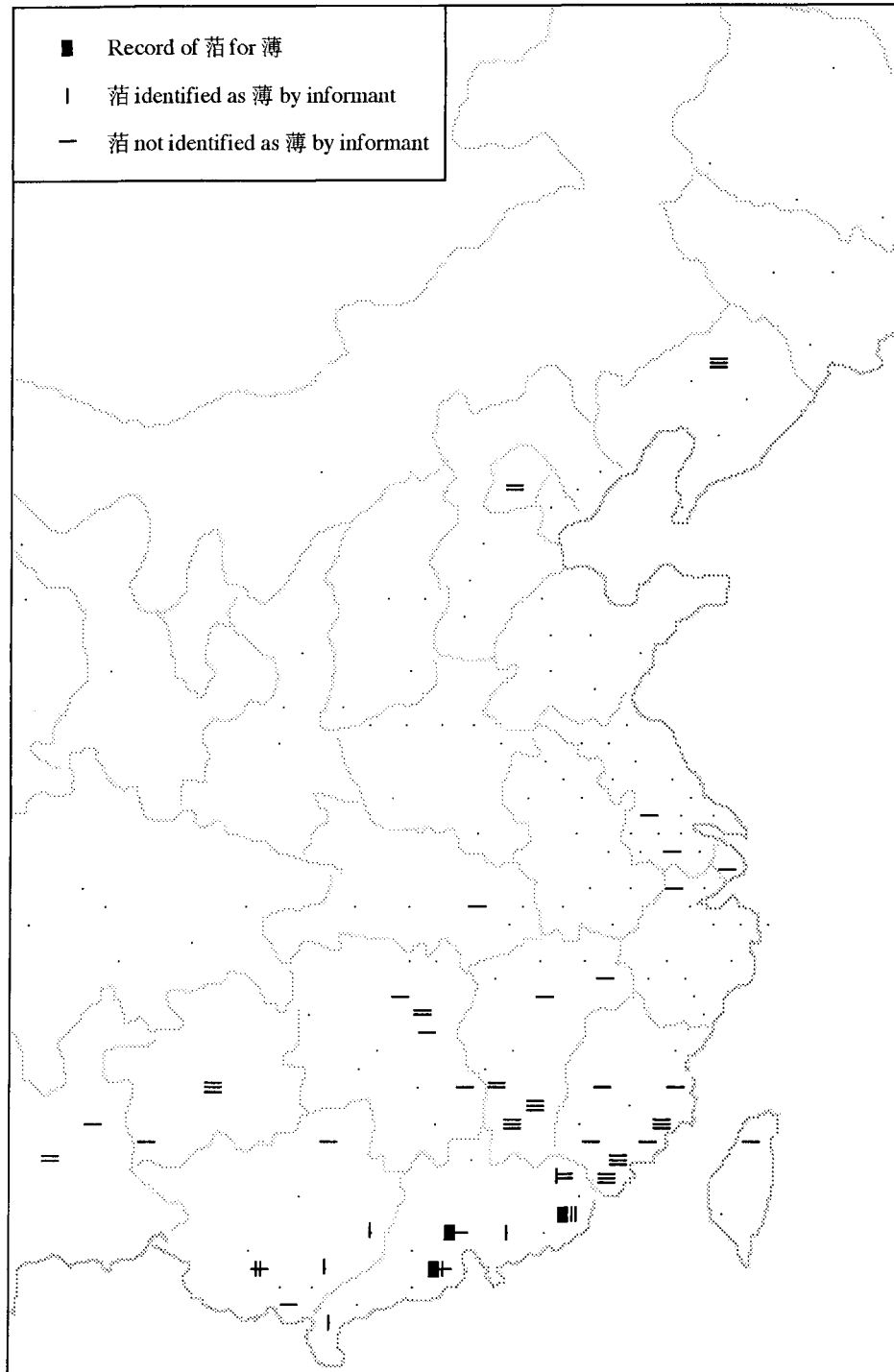
4. Zhao 1958. Chen Guangyao 1955(a), p. 80.

5. Letters 1960.7.22 and 1960(b).

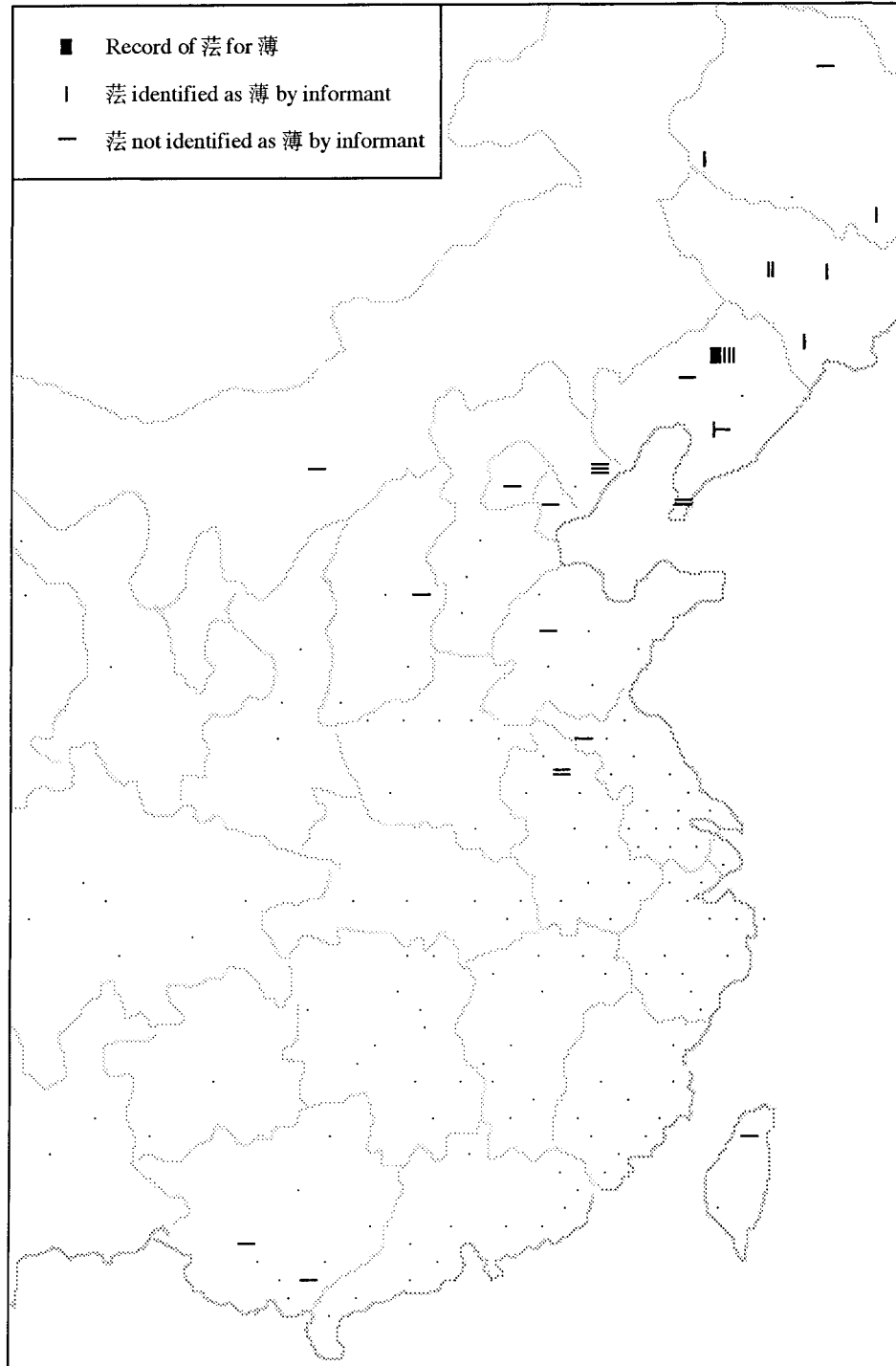
6. Yu 1978, p. 129. Yunnan sheng 1979 (1978). Zhongguo wenzi gaige weiyuanhui 1981.

7. “Nuli jiuzheng shehui yong zi hunluan xianxiang” 1986.

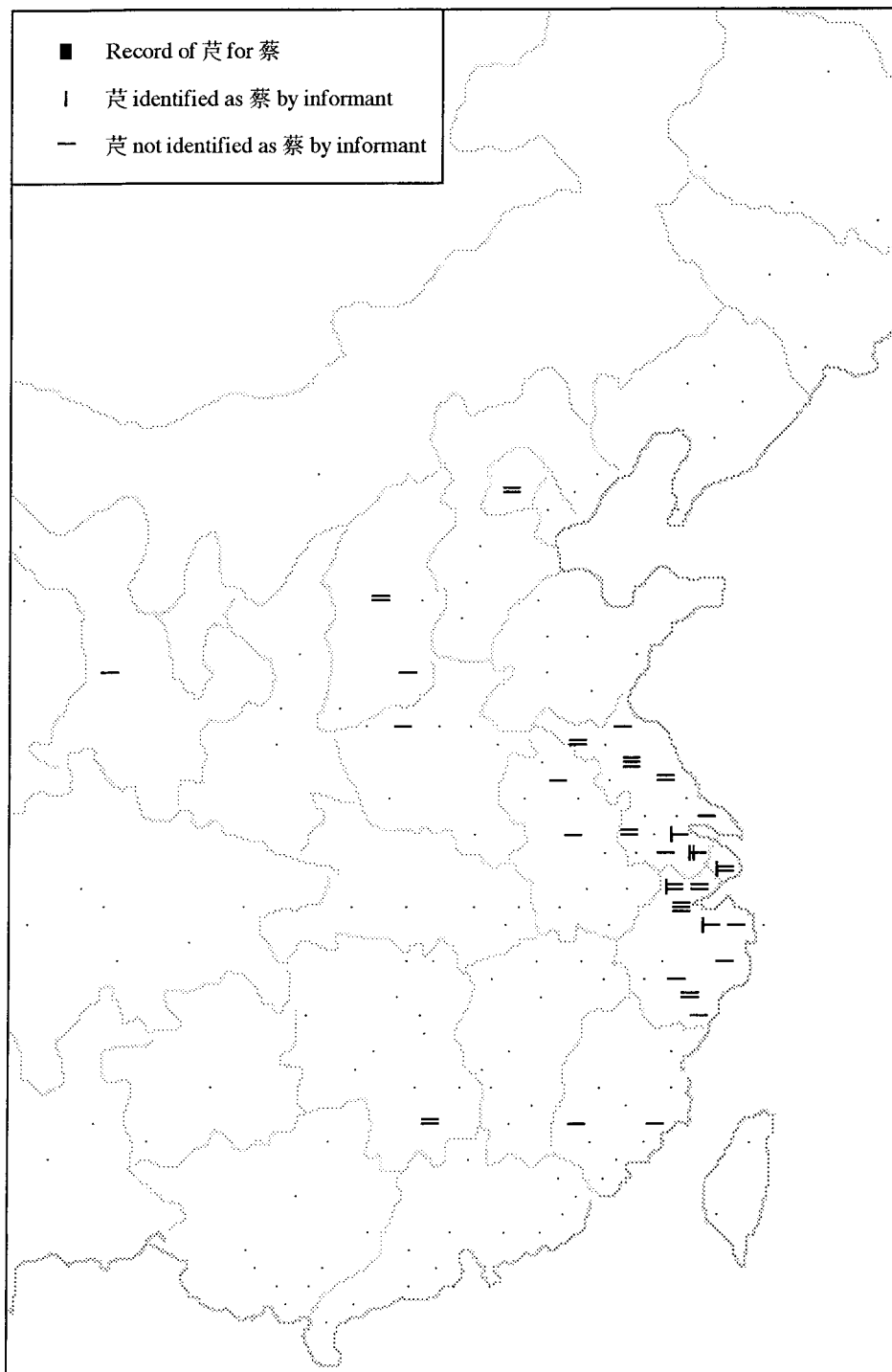
MAP 1. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 茛 FOR 薄



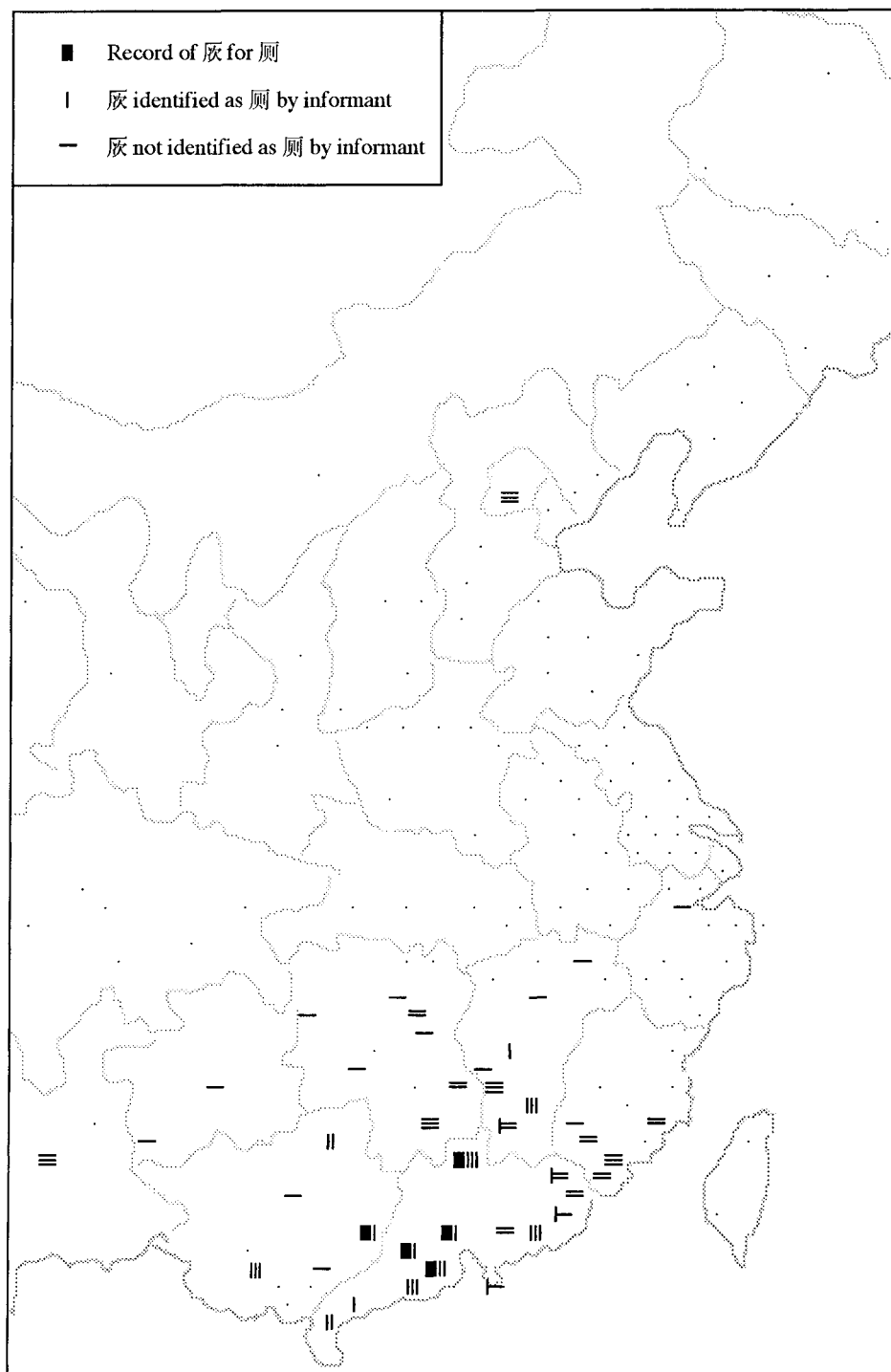
MAP 2. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 茛 FOR 薄



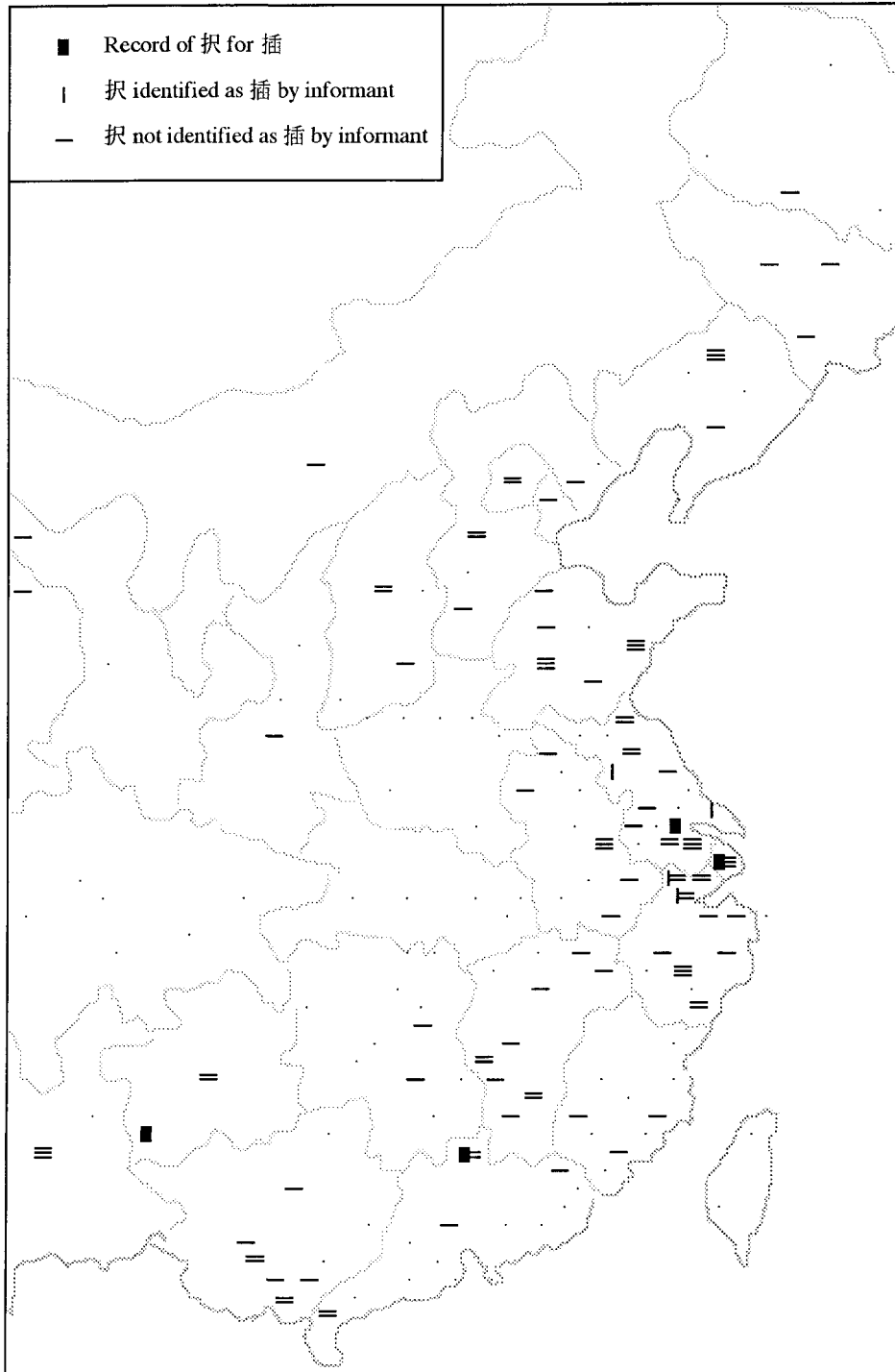
MAP 3. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 茛 FOR 蔡



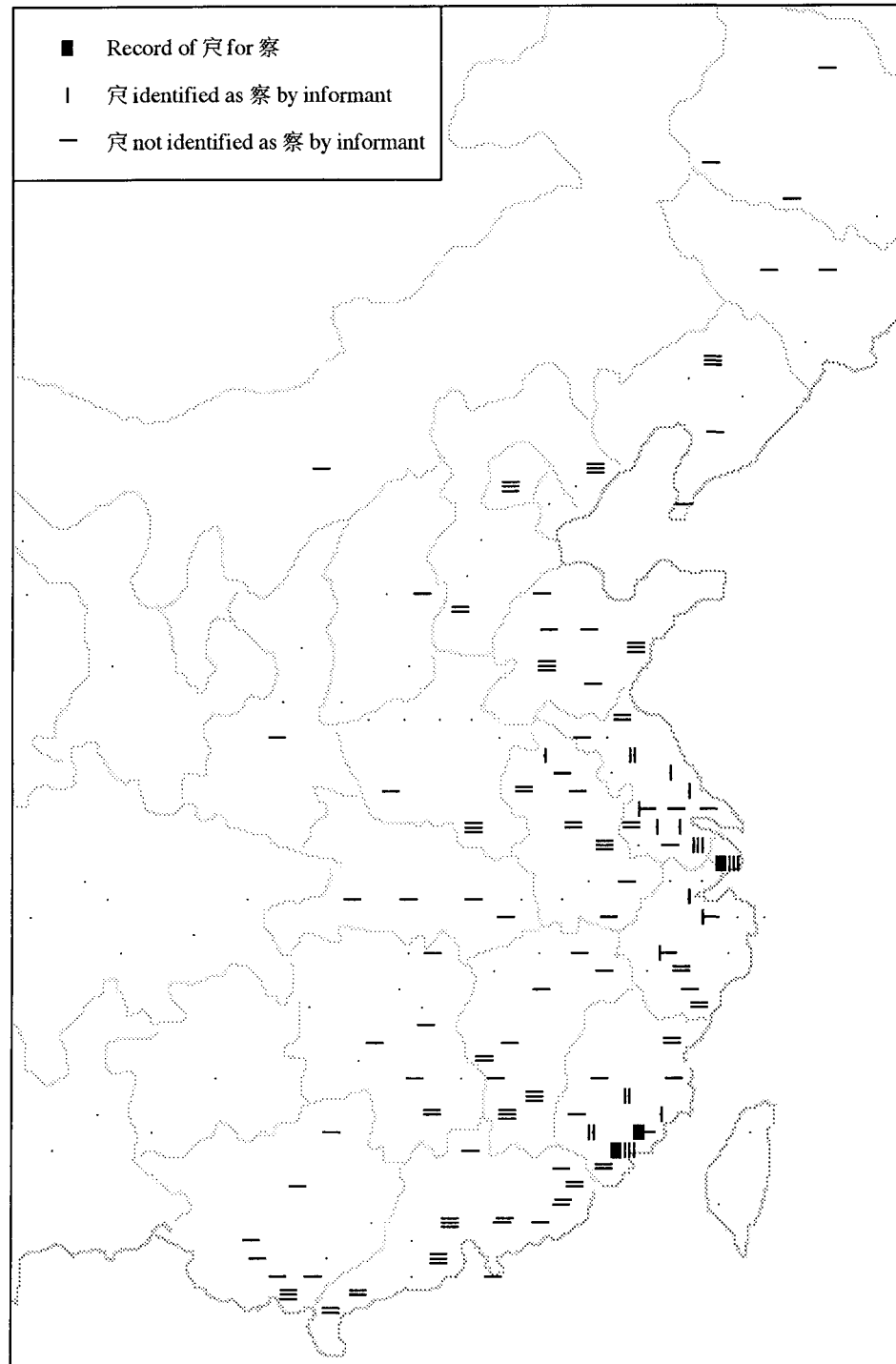
MAP 4. 1981–1988 RECORDS OF 厩 FOR 厠



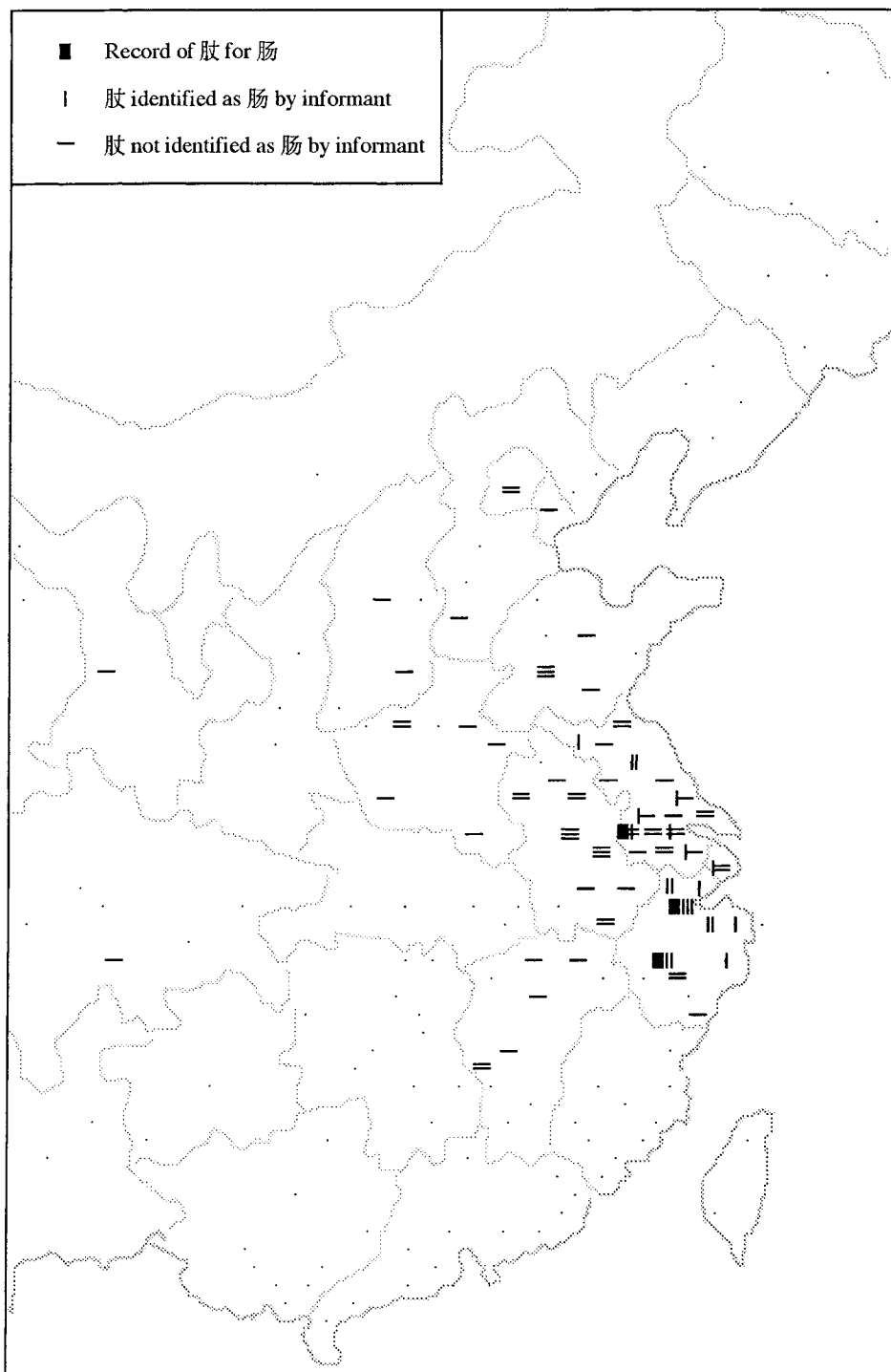
MAP 5. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 扱 FOR 插



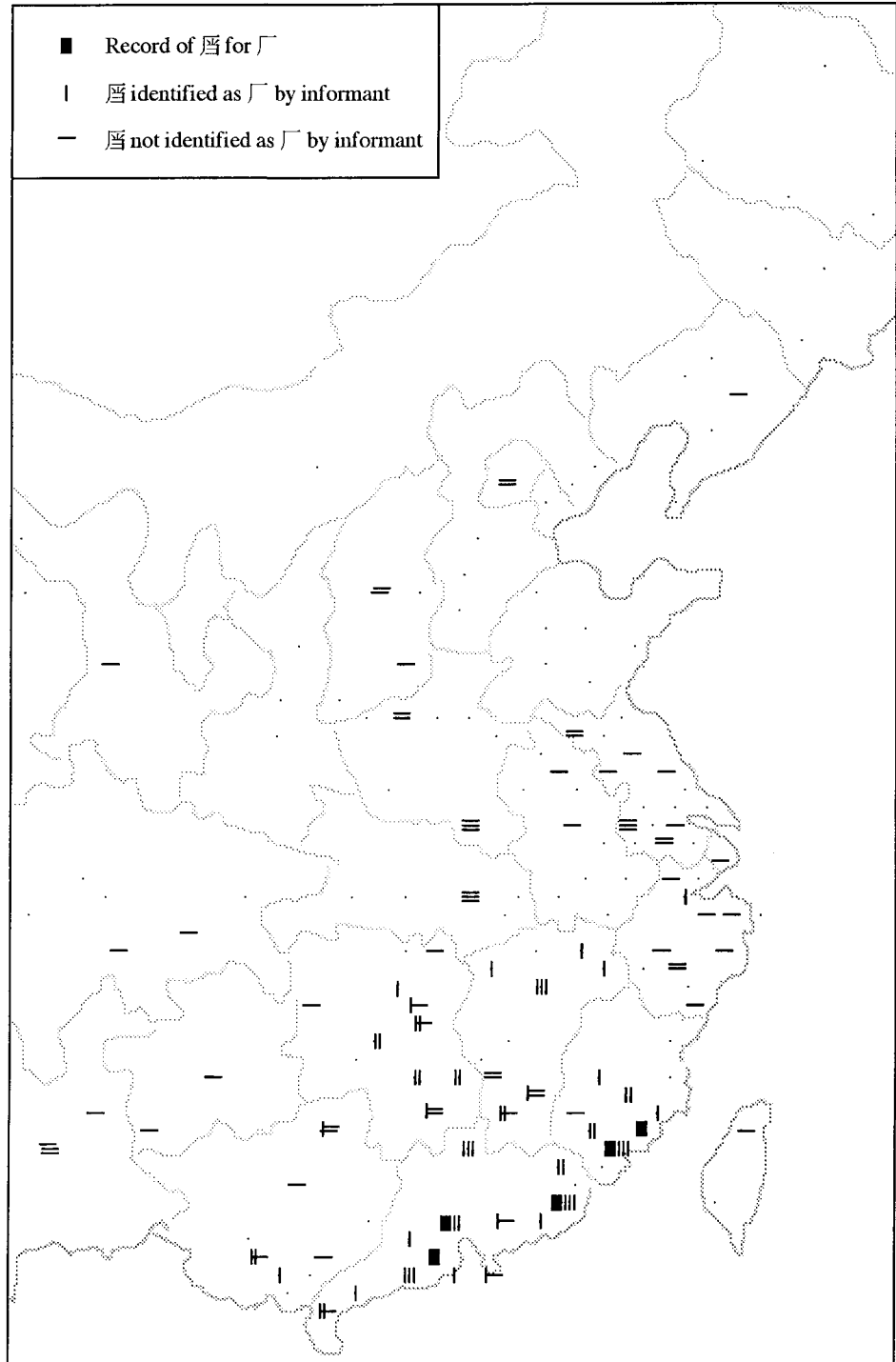
MAP 6. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 宀 FOR 察



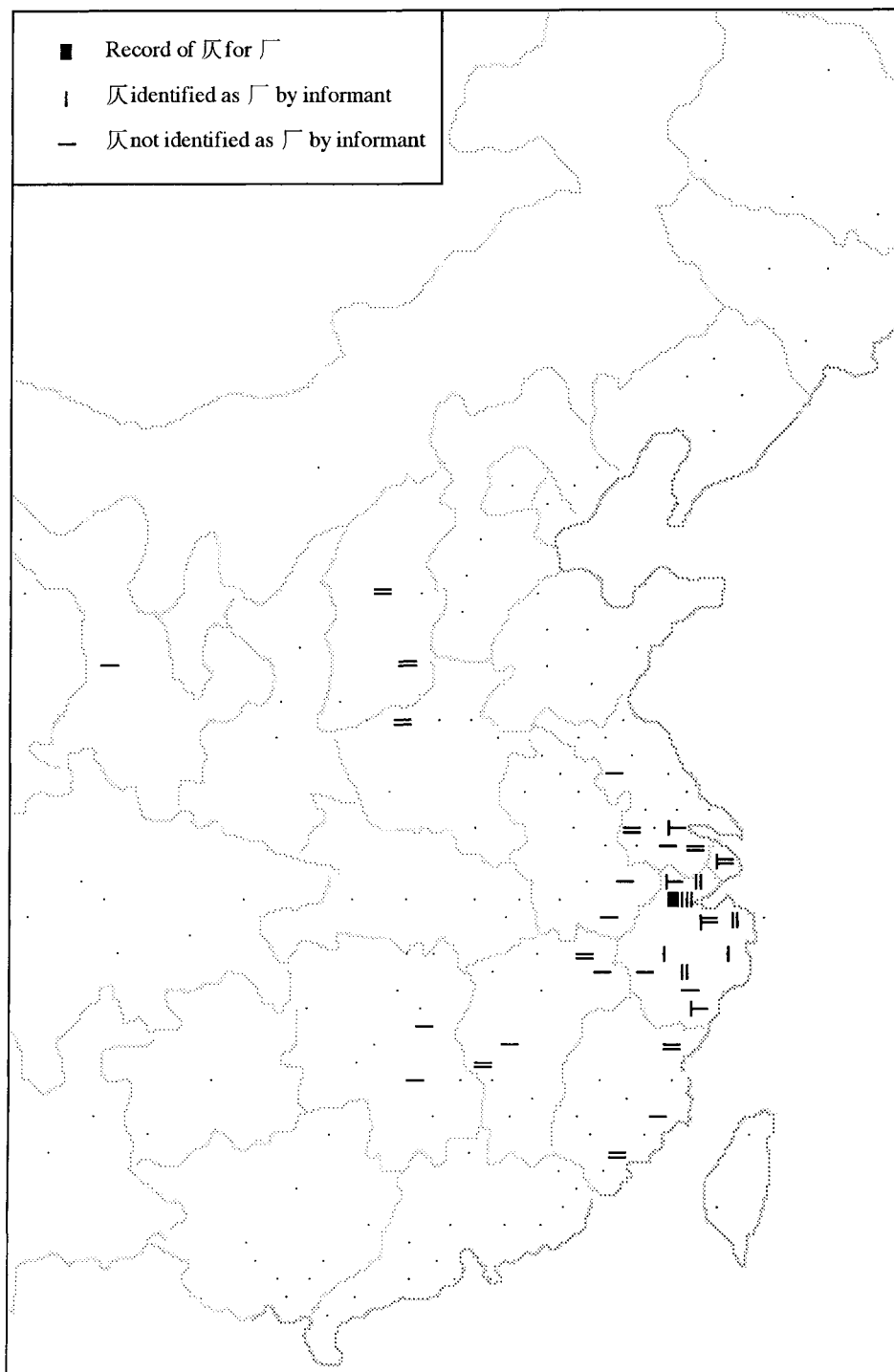
MAP 7. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 肢 FOR 肠



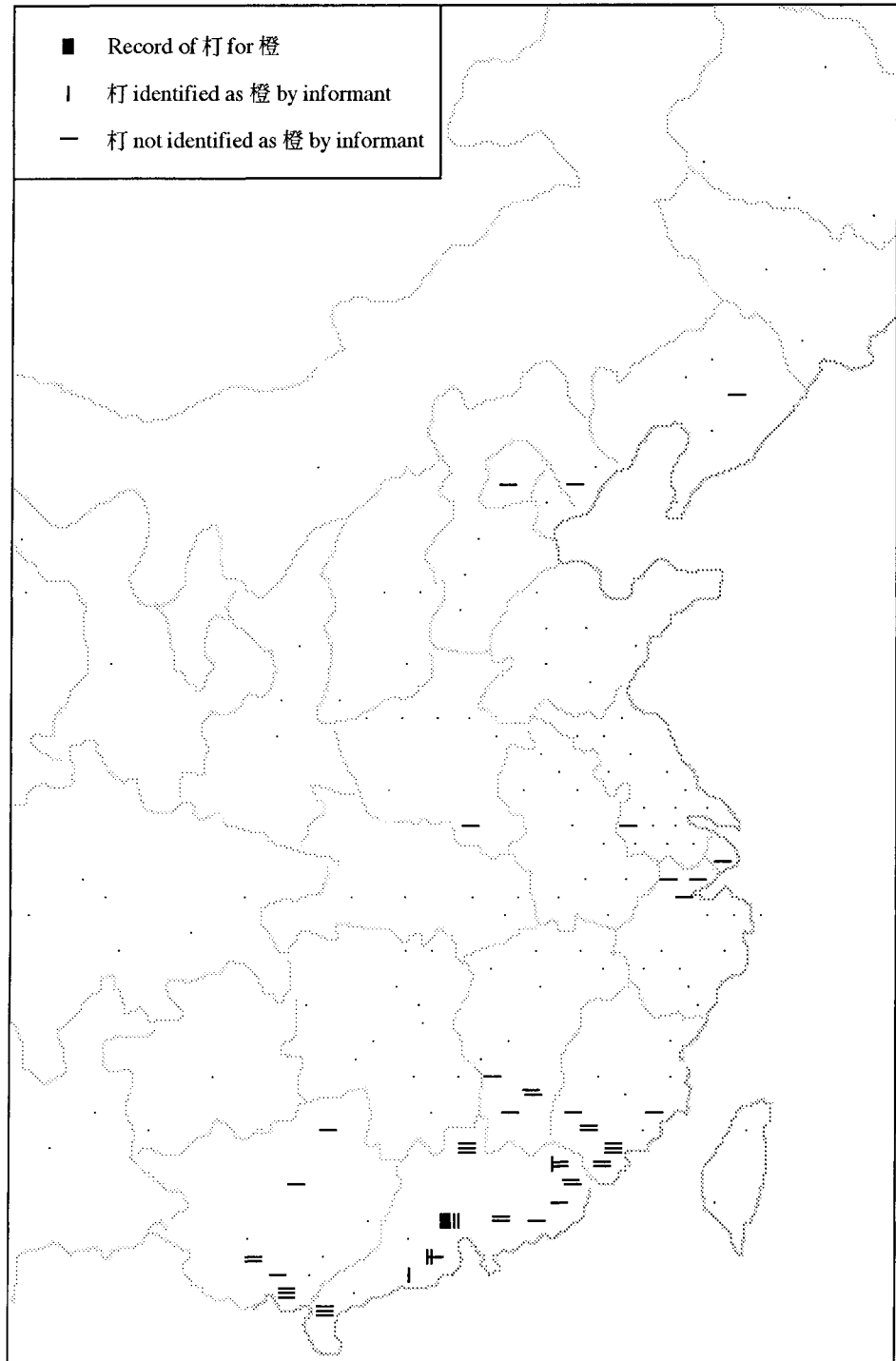
MAP 8. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 厝 FOR 厂



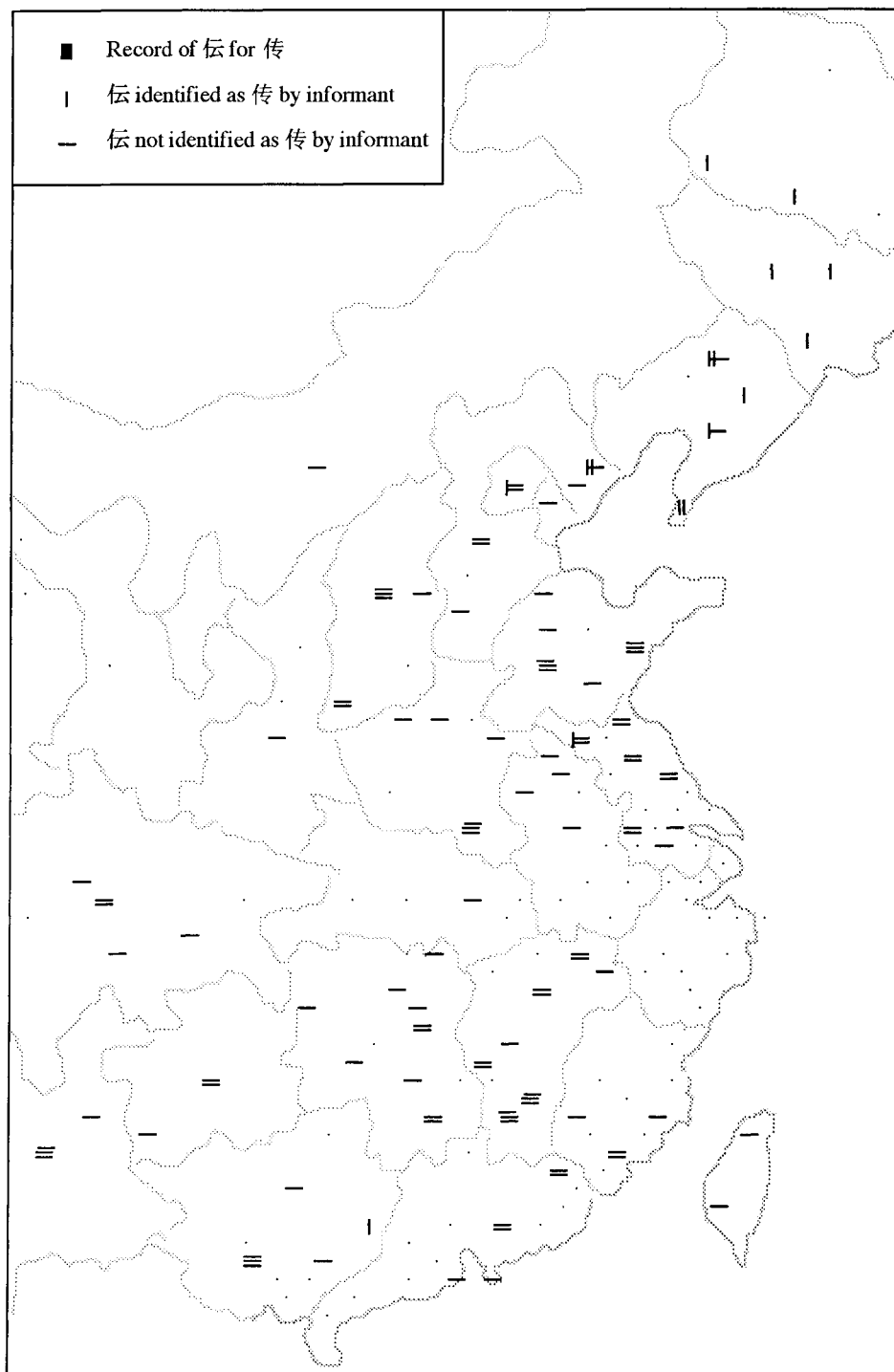
MAP 9. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 仄 FOR 厂



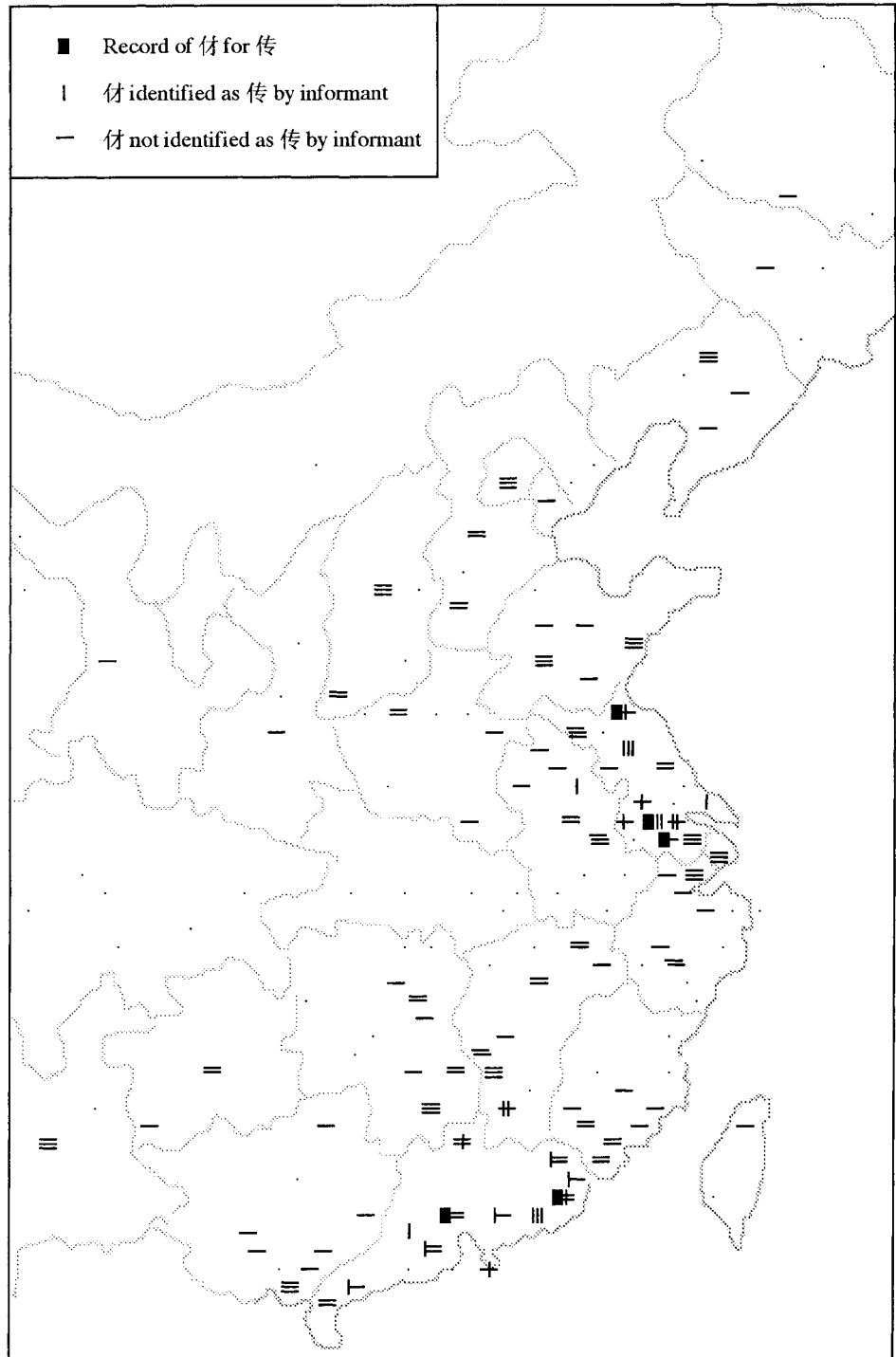
MAP 10. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 村 FOR 橙



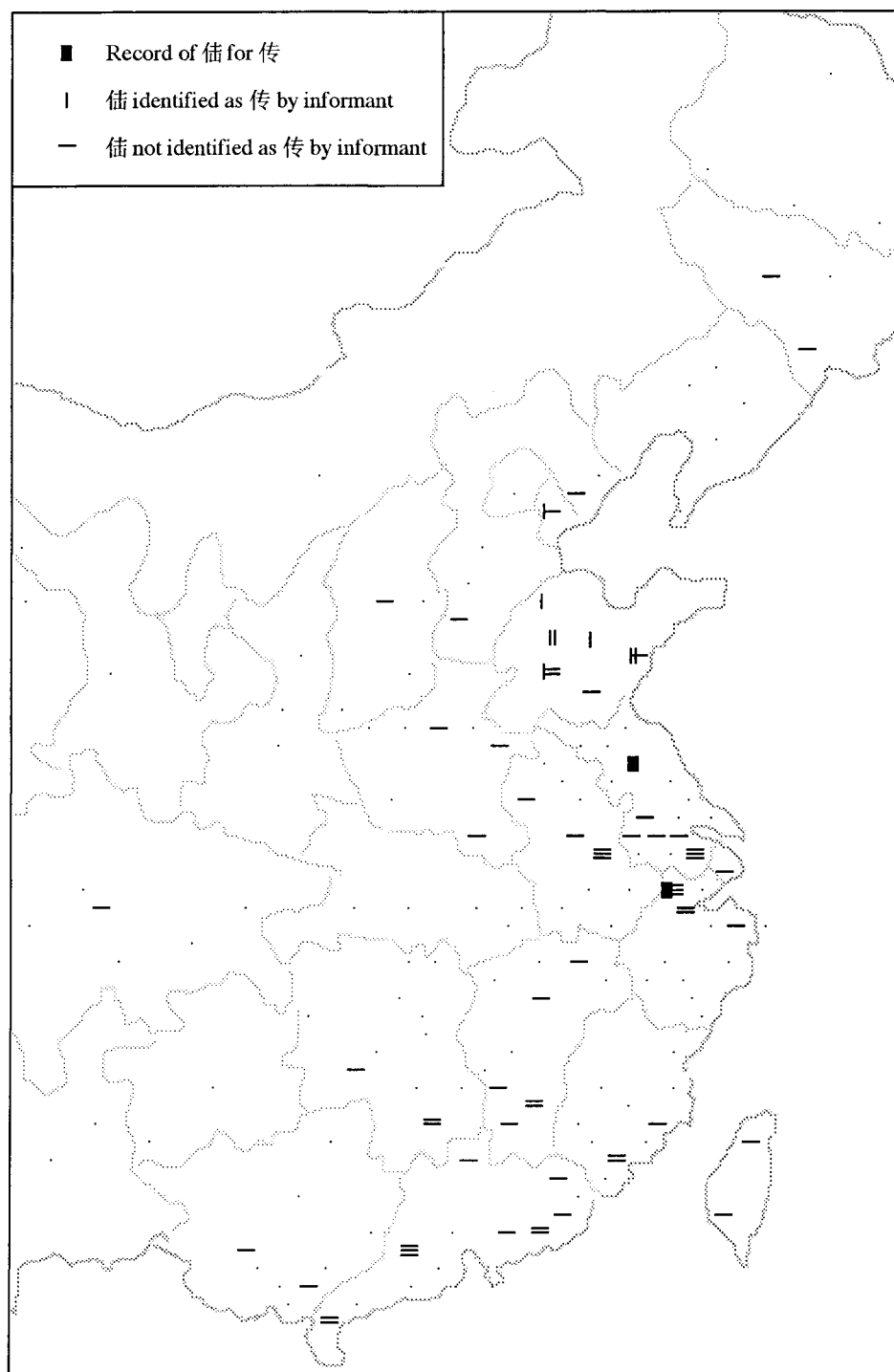
MAP 11. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 伝 FOR 传



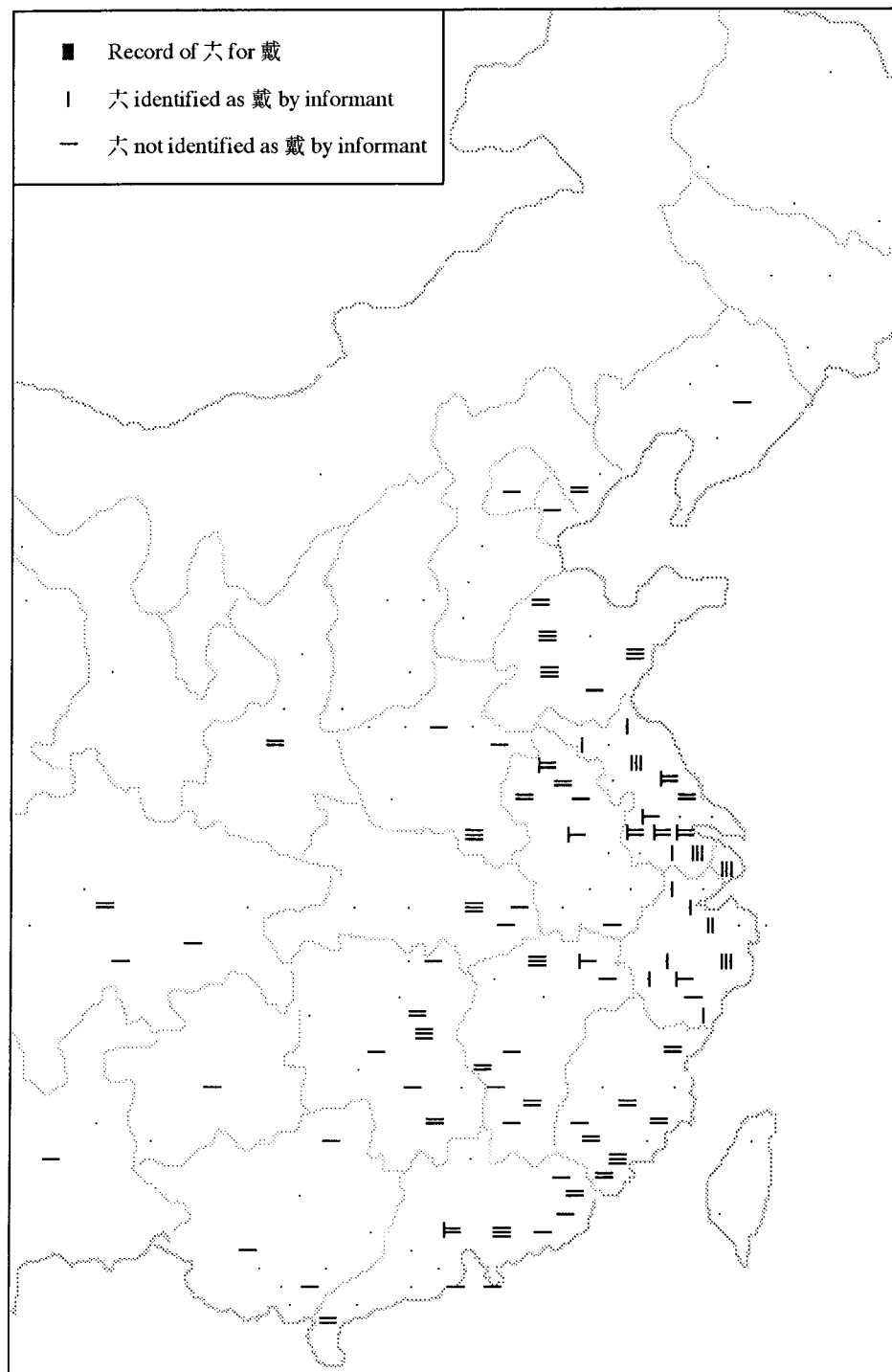
MAP 12. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 佻 FOR 传



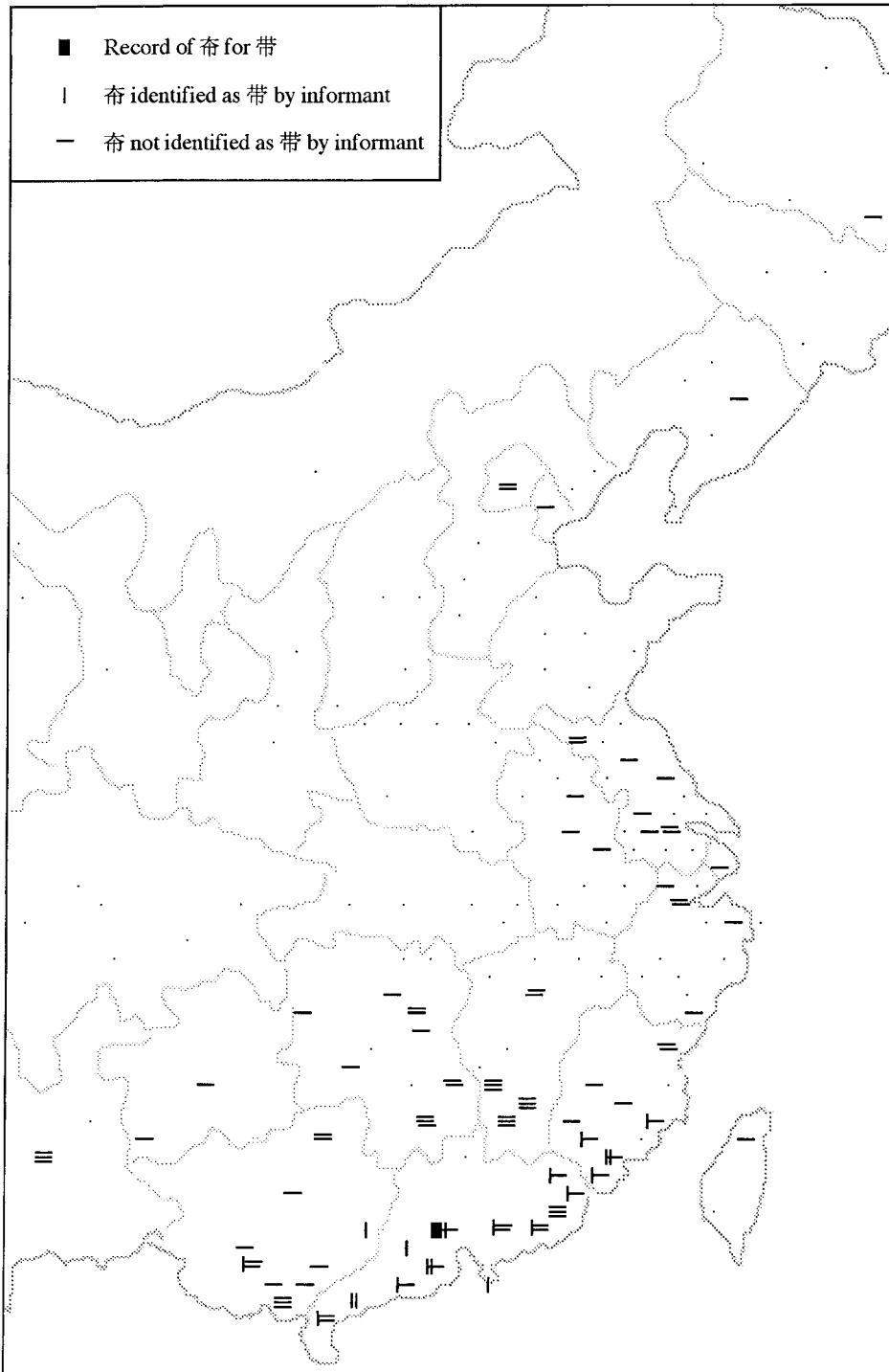
MAP 13. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 佺 FOR 传



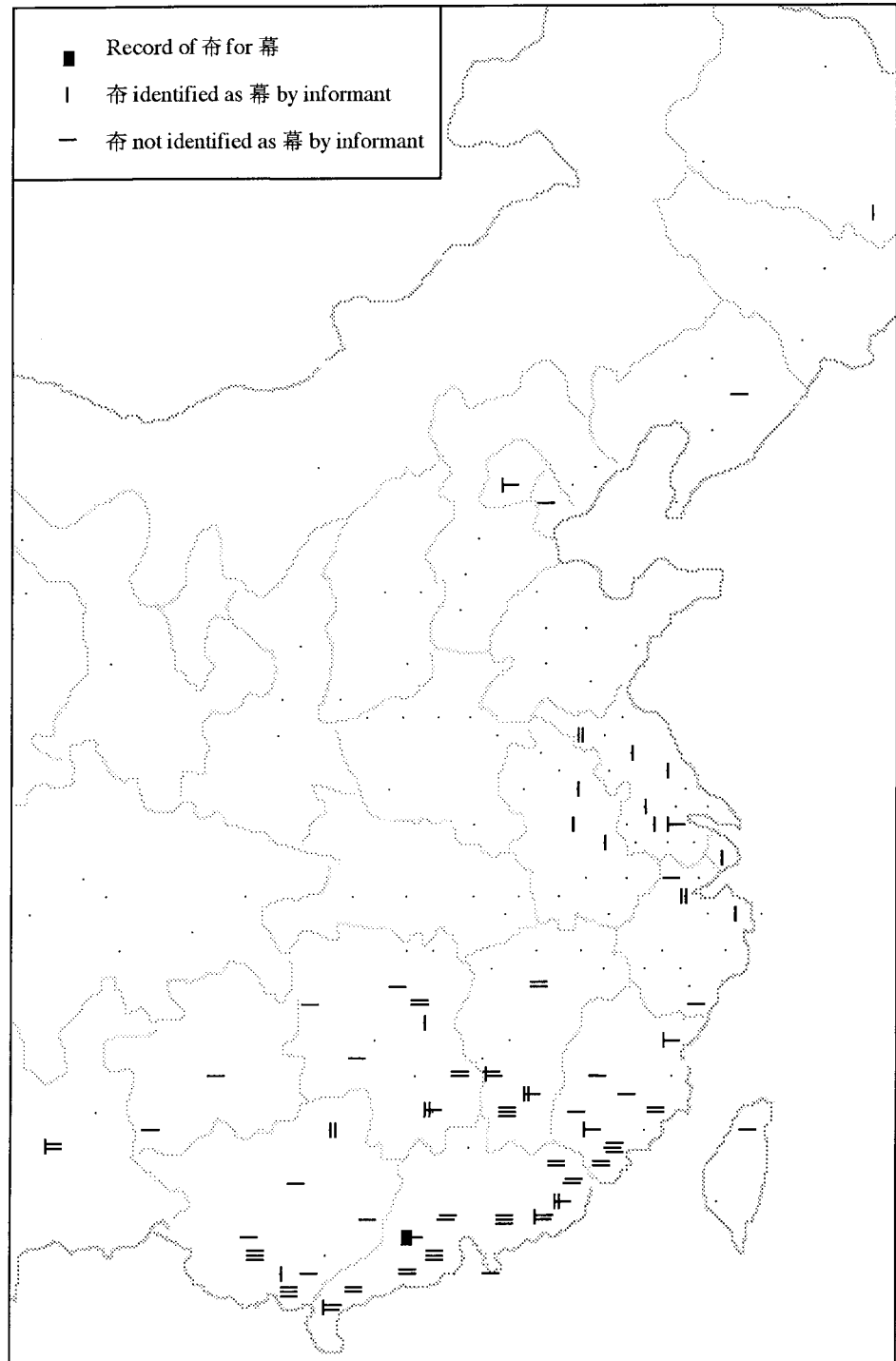
MAP 14. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 六 FOR 戴



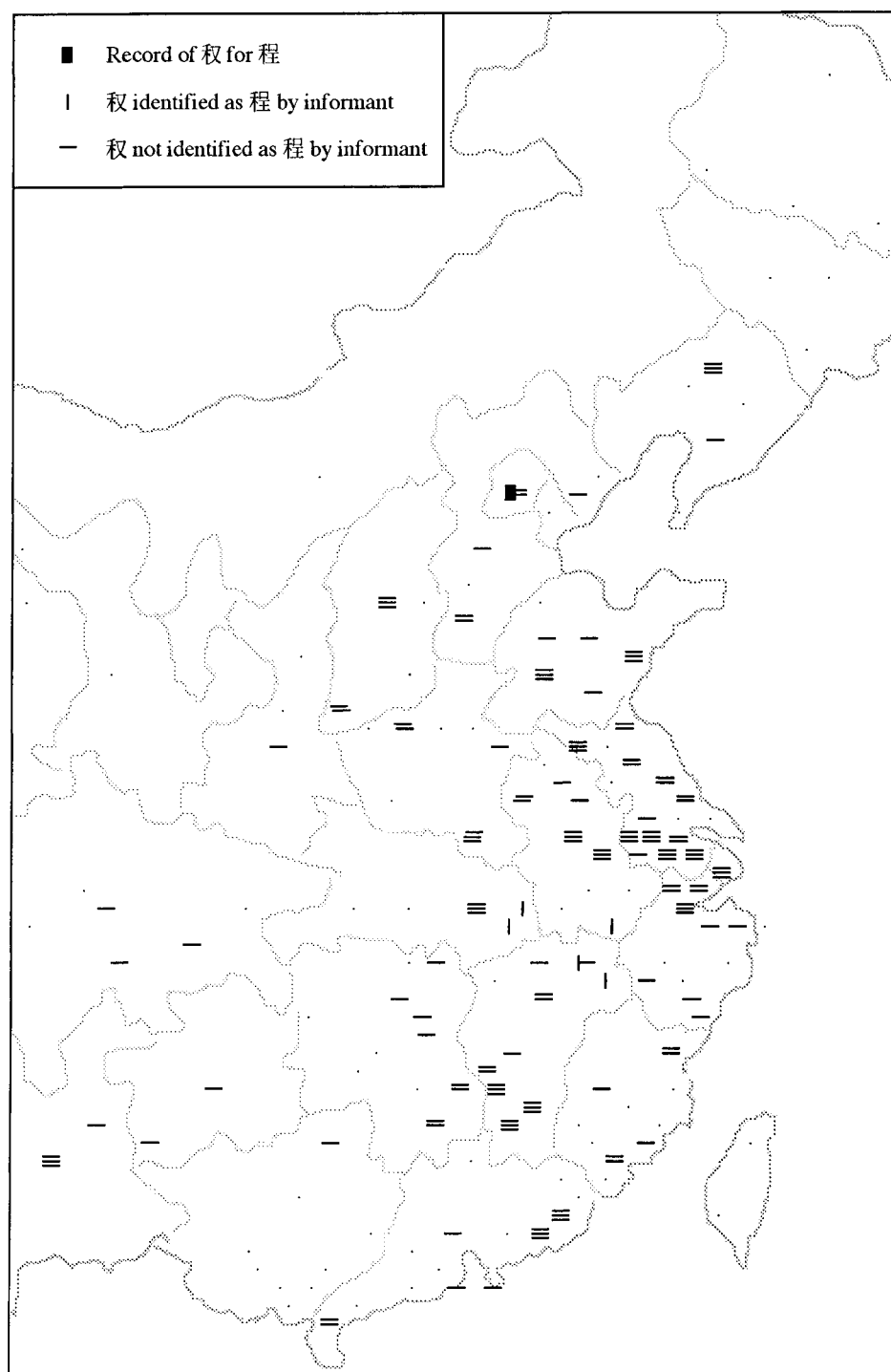
MAP 15. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 帛 FOR 带



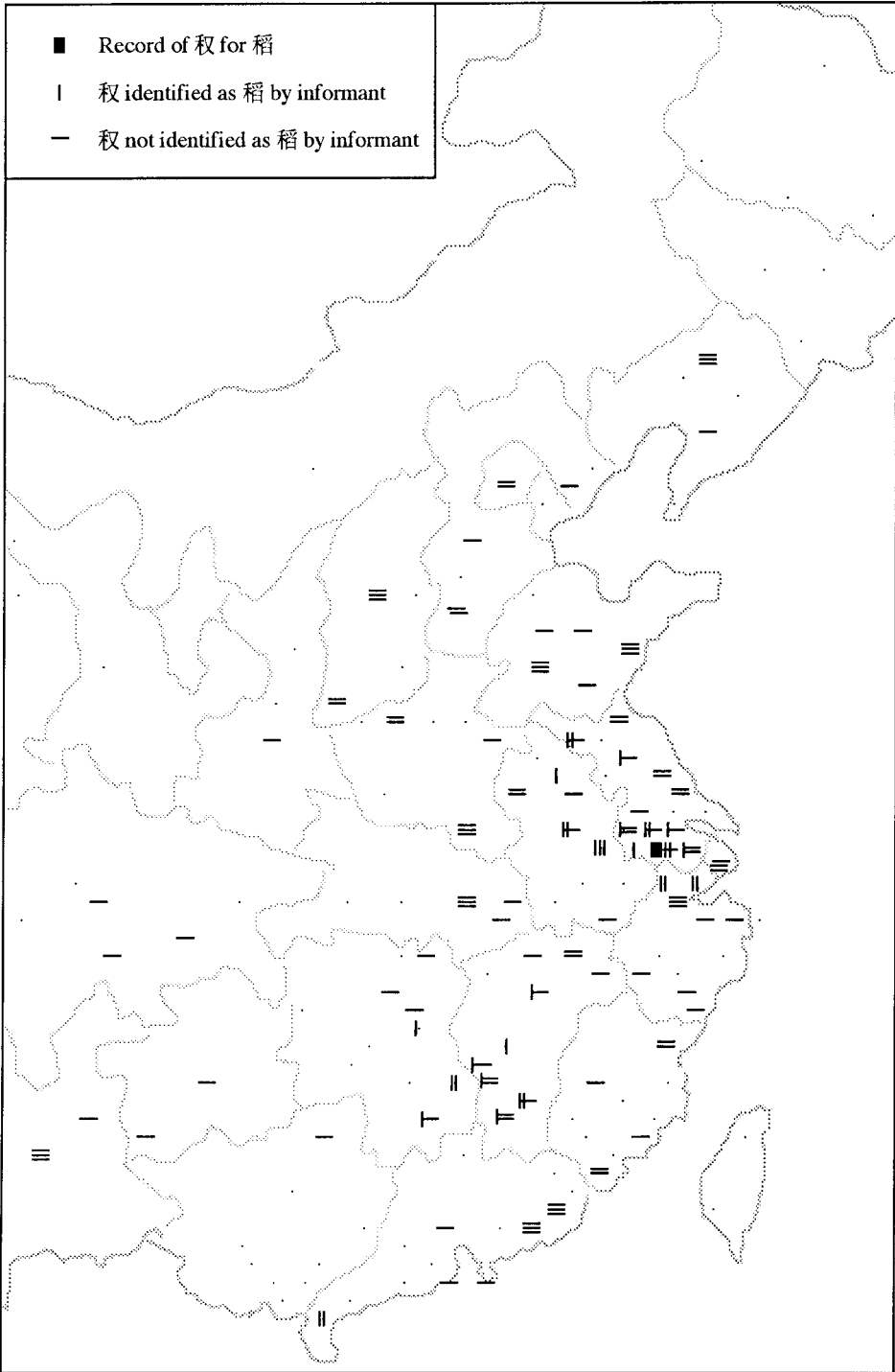
MAP 16. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 布 FOR 幕



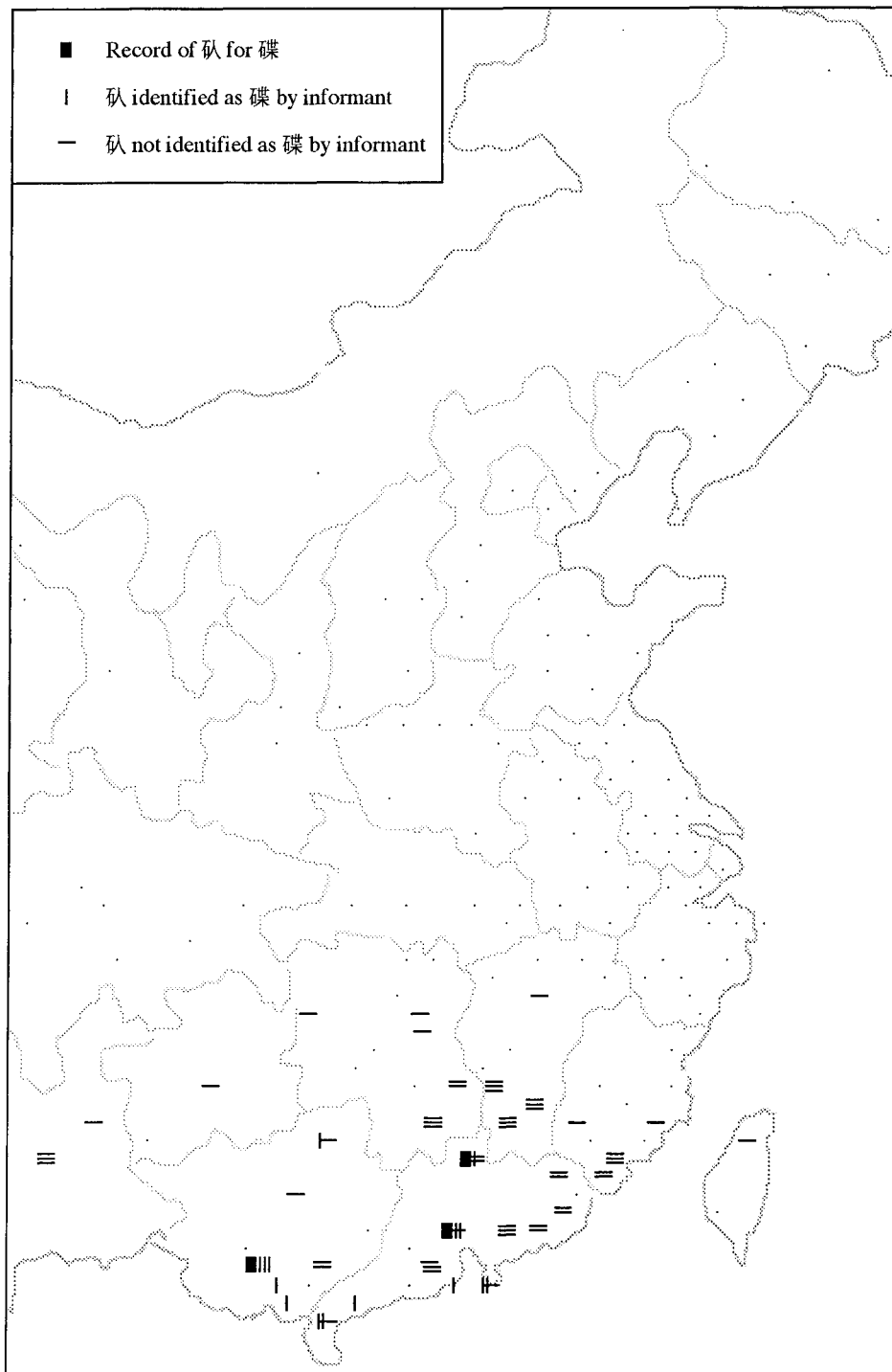
MAP 17. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 叔 FOR 程



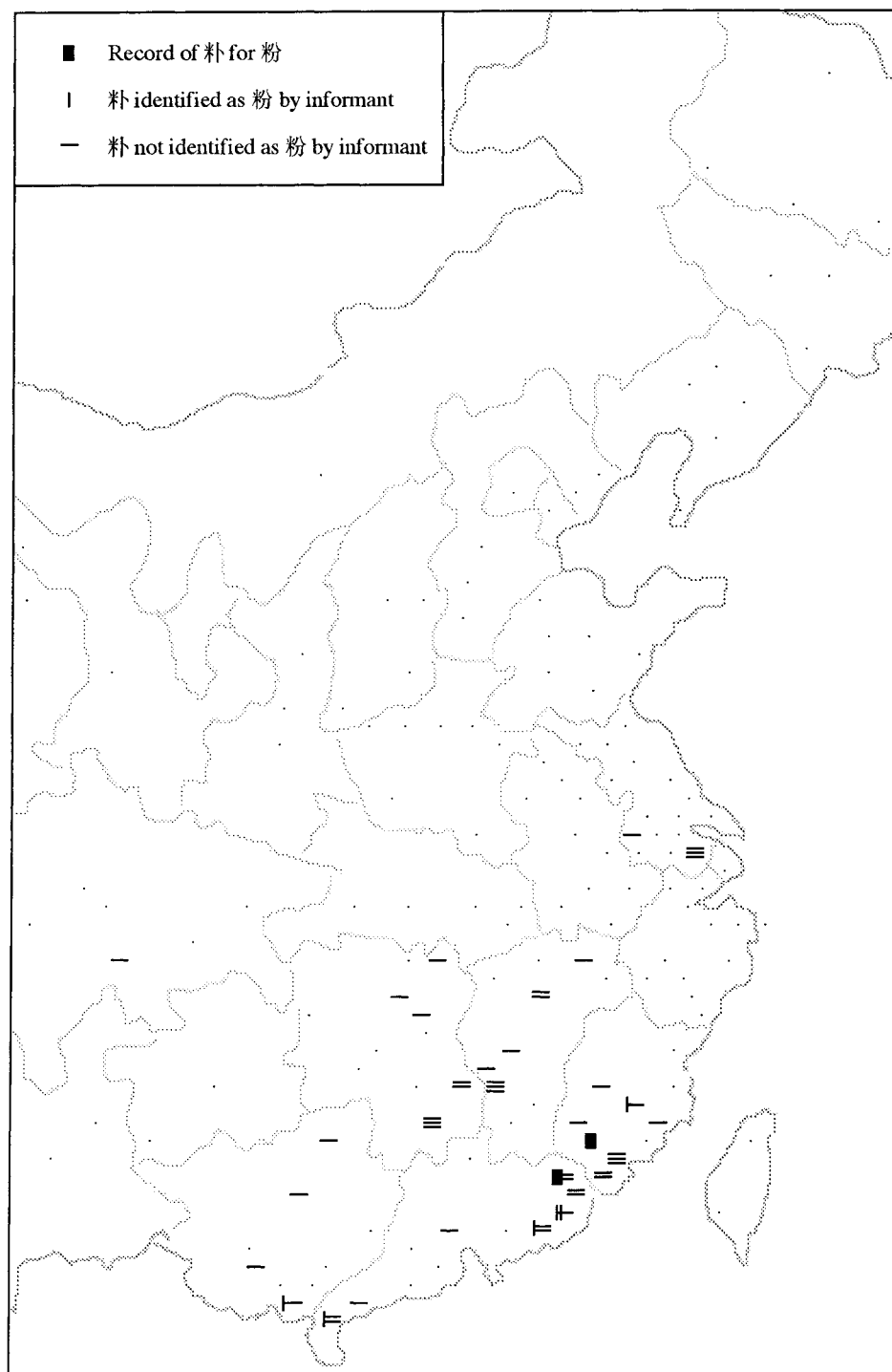
MAP 18. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 叔 FOR 稻



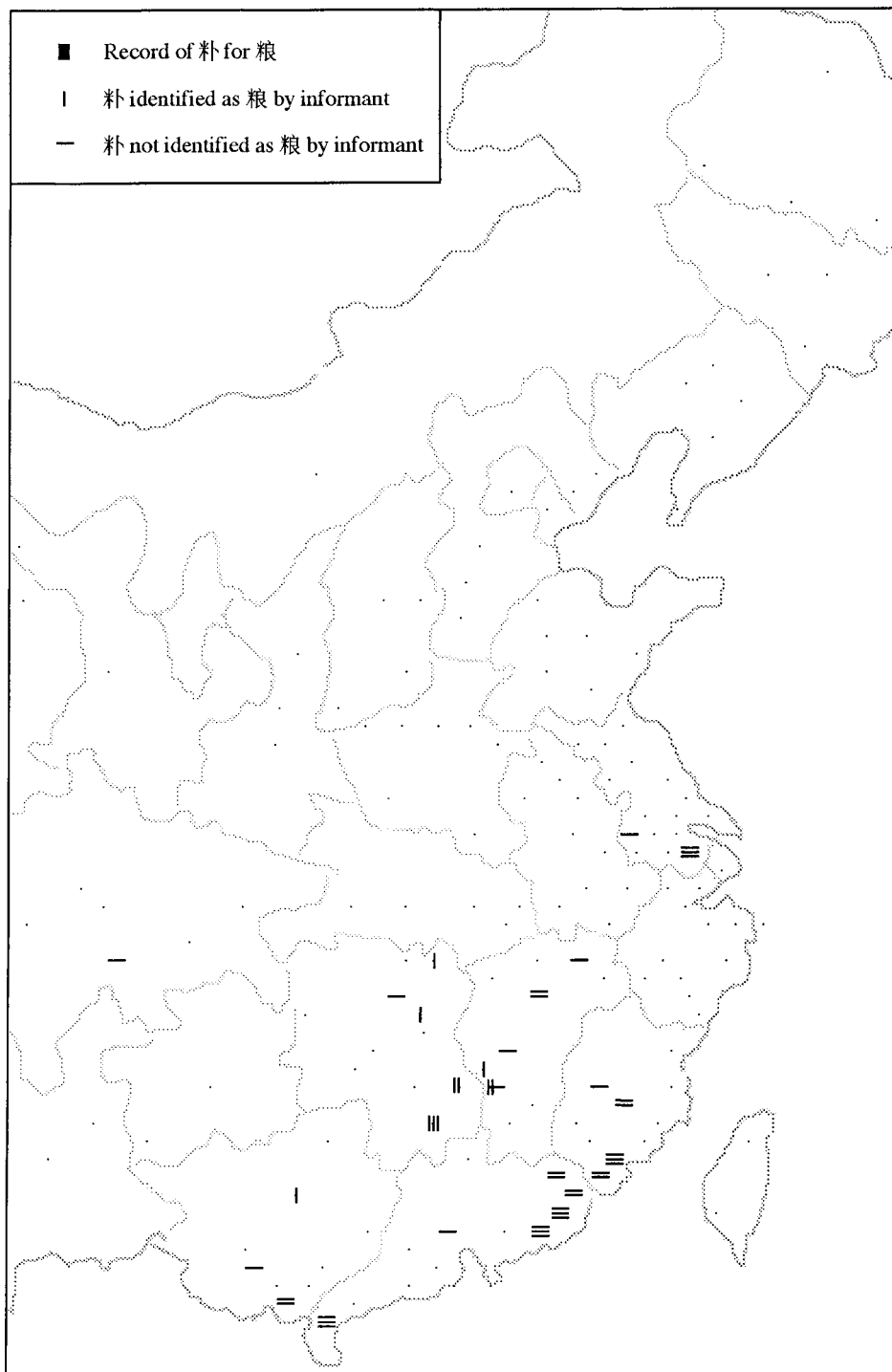
MAP 19. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 砵 FOR 磔



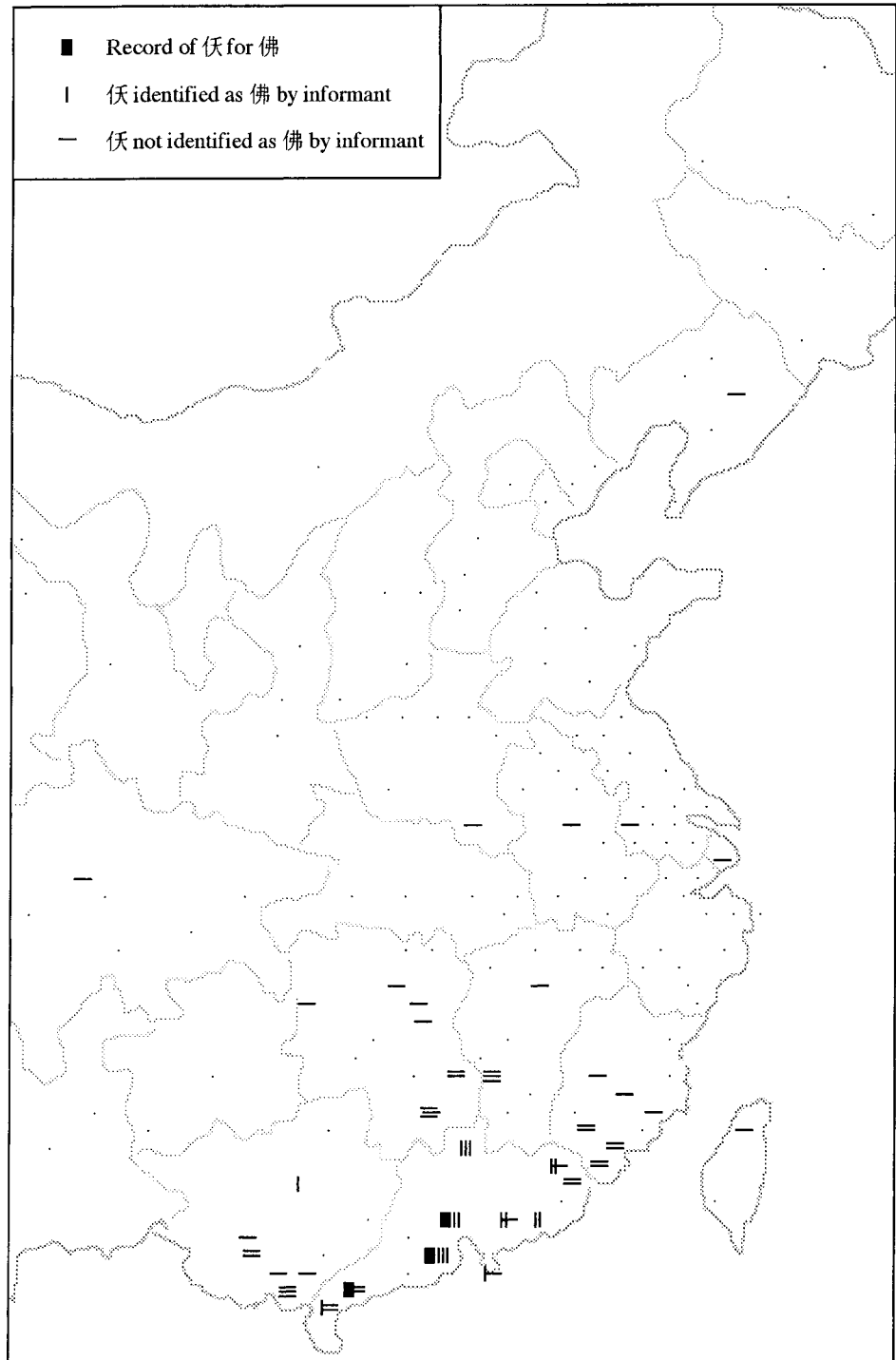
MAP 20. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 朴 FOR 粉



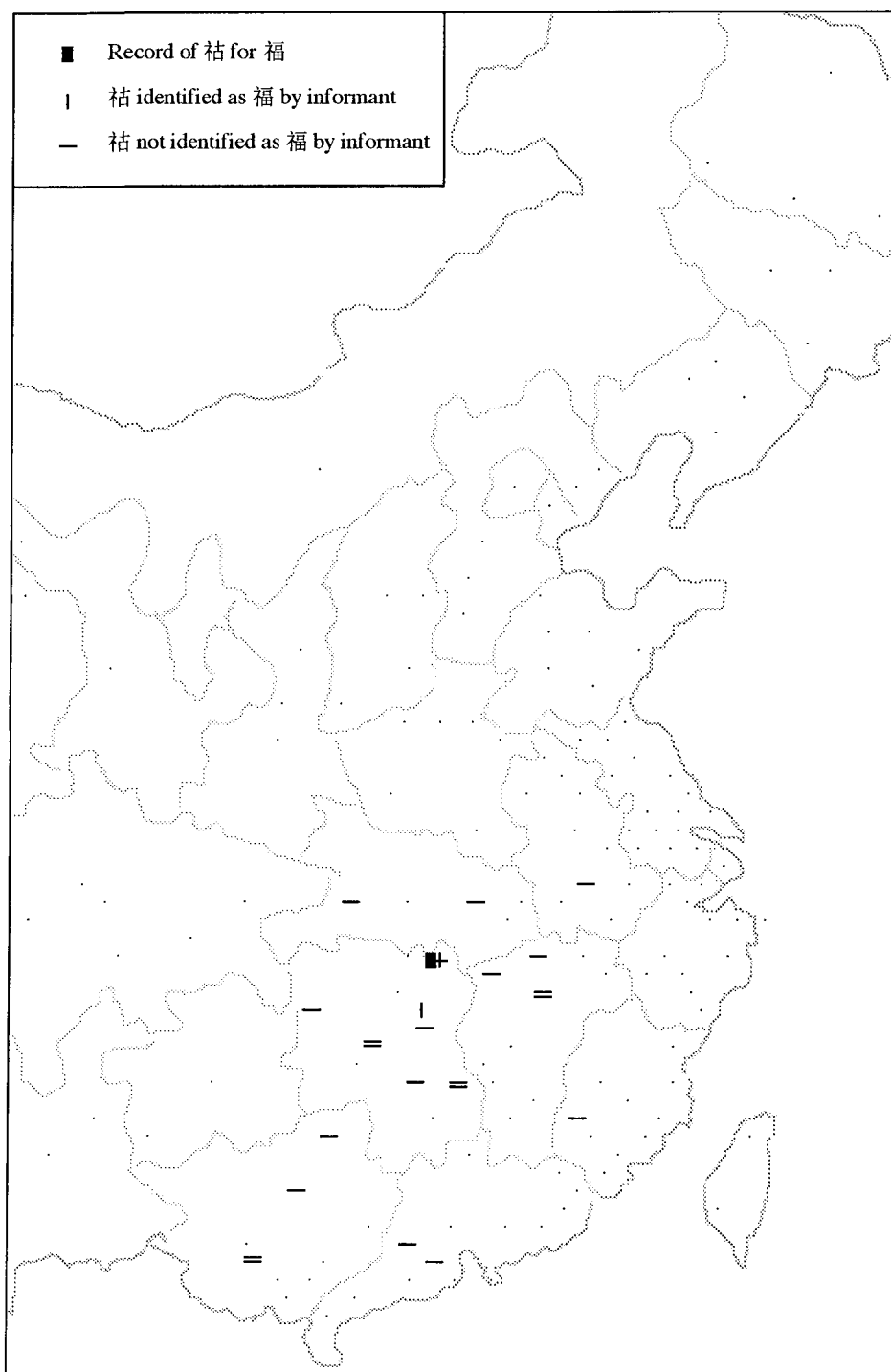
MAP 21. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 朴 FOR 粮



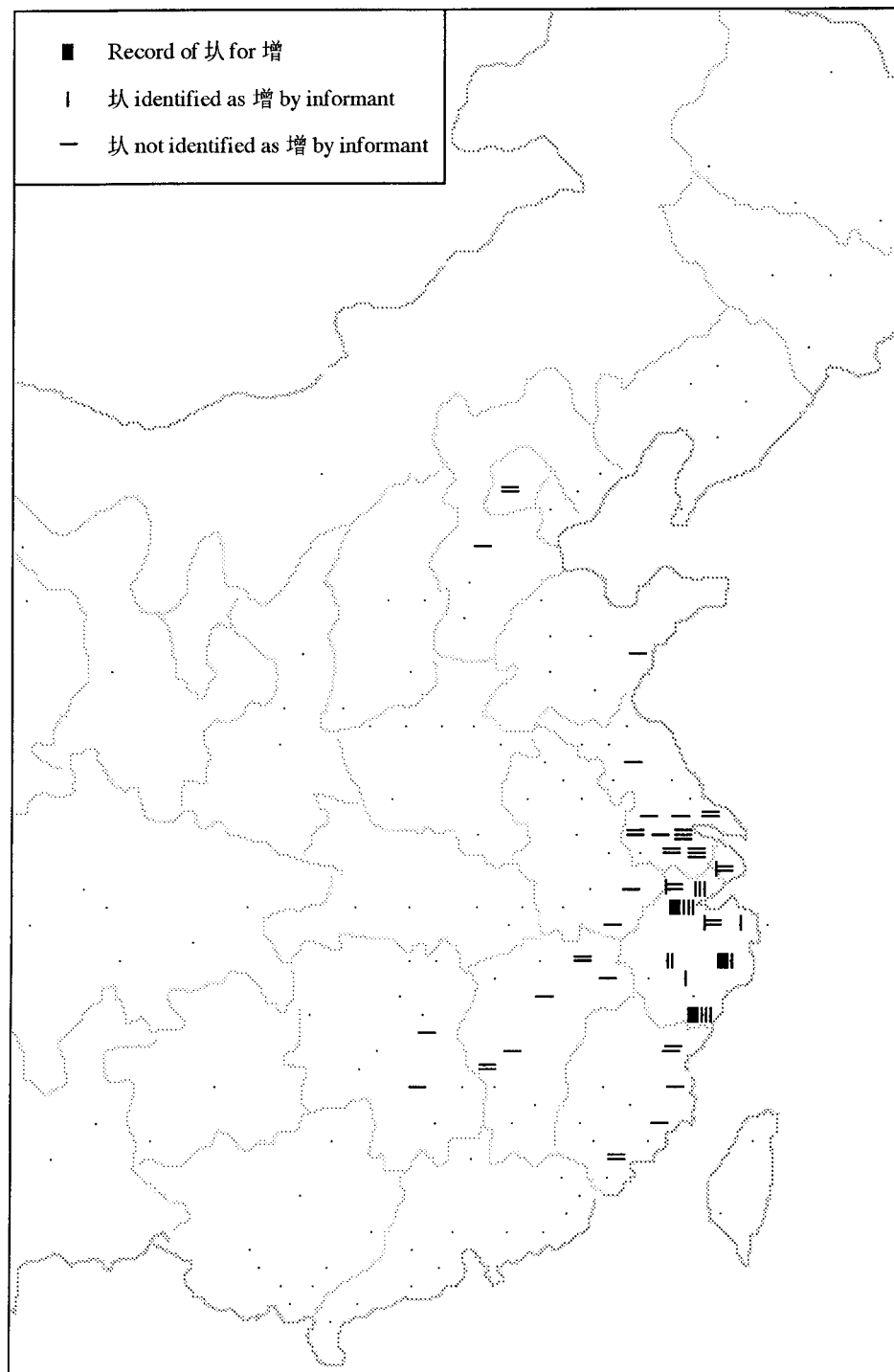
MAP 22. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 伏 FOR 佛



MAP 23. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 枯 FOR 福



MAP 24. 1981-1988 RECORDS OF 垸 FOR 增



Chapter III

Conclusions

1. Shifting simplification techniques

In Chapter II we have seen how writers can simplify a character by

1. —substituting a shorter homonymous character and write 付 for 副, 旦 for 蛋 etc.
2. —omitting part of it and write 独 for 獨, 妇 for 婦 etc.
3. —contracting part of it and write 仏 for 佛, 对 for 對 etc.
4. —substituting a short phonetic component for a long one and write 灯 for 燈, 础 for 礎 etc.
5. —substituting a short signific component for a long one and write 队 for 隊, 毳 for 飛 etc.
6. —transforming its cursive form to regular style and write 蔘 for 蔘 / 薄 etc.
7. —substituting a sign from another script, like the Latin 丁 for 黨 and the National Phonetic Alphabet's 儿 for 兒.

We will now try to find out when each of these techniques was in vogue, as we set out to do in the introduction. To this end we summarize our records from Chapter II in Table 10 below.

We here define a short form as a form with fewer strokes than the parent form. Analogies with older short forms are excluded from the list. For example, 彈 for 彈 is not listed, since it is analogous with the older 单 for 單. Local forms are listed only in cases when we have a chance to establish their age, i.e. if they occur in areas from which we have pre-1955 records, namely Beijing, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Jiangxi and Fujian.

TABLE 9. EARLIEST INDICATION OF USE

Year	1. Loan of homonym	2. Omitted part	3. Contracted part	4. New phonetic	5. New signific	6. Modified cursive form	7. Loan from other script
770-476 BC		惇(德)					
c. 310		> 惇(德)					
239		森(爾)					
c. 200	霸 > 伯 薄 > 泊	> 尔(爾)					
153		貝 > 贝	從 > 從				
c. 130		纏 > 纏					
90		遲 > 遲			第 > 弟		
84		長 > 長					
79		齒 > 齒					
78		當 > 當					
90-77			單 > 單				
80-48			發 > 發				
45		長 > 長					
69-29			遲 > 遲				
20	範 > 范						
14		當 > 當					
32-6			從 > 從				
6			邊 > 邊				
82-4		發 > 發	霸 > 霸				
85-2			報 > 報				
			兵 > 兵				
			處 > 處				
11 BC-AD 13		長 > 長	腸 > 腸				
			單 > 單				
			東 > 東				
90 BC-AD 27		齒 > 齒					
		霸 > 霸					
AD 27			齒 > 齒				
158	纜 > 財						
159		霸 > 霸					

	1. Loan of homo- nym	2. Omitted part	3. Con- tracted part	4. New phonetic	5. New signific	6. Modi- fied cursive form	7. Loan from other script
163		短> 𠂔					
165		風> 𠂔					
167			謀> 諫				
174	辭> 詞						
179	纜> 裁						
186			蠶> 螢				
188		辭> 辭					
256		風> 𠂔	斷> 𠂔 兒> 兒				
272			辭> 辭				
300		辭> 辭	顧> 顧 朝> 朝 等> 等				
before 374							
506-507		螢> 螢					
511		邊> 邊					
519		愛> 愛					
522		嶼> 嶼					
550			佛> 仏				
560					筆> 筆		
597			意> 窓				
609					稱> 秤		
617					鐙> 燈		
626		餐> 餐					
630		鴉> 鴉					
644-646	纜> 才						
c. 700		餐> 餐 餐> 飡 愈> 窓 窓> 窓					
711							
723							
618-907		飛> 𠂔					
997		疊> 量		膚> 肤			
1008		蚕> 蚕		癡> 痴			
1089			歸> 歸				
1130-1200		忽> 匆					
c. 1270		幫> 幫					

	1. Loan of homonym	2. Omitted part	3. Contracted part	4. New phonetic	5. New signific	6. Modified cursive form	7. Loan from other script
1127-1279	辨 > 弁	寶 > 宝 讒 > 谗 齒 > 齿 處 > 处 糴 > 余 獨 > 独	變 > 变 殘 > 残			稱 > 称	
1321-1328 c. 1330 1279-1368	黨 > 党	邊 > 边 變 > 变 罷 > 罢 叅 > 参 殘 > 残 朝 > 朝 遲 > 迟 遲 > 迟 帶 > 带 點 > 点 殿 > 展 發 > 发 闖 > 闯 寺 > 寺	誰 > 谁 疊 > 叠 辦 > 办 帝 > 带 對 > 对 叢 > 茂 鳳 > 风	燈 > 灯 鬢 > 鬓 擔 > 担		嘗 > 尝 當 > 当	
1426-1435 1368-1664	帶 > 代	奪 > 夺 憲 > 宪 戴 > 戴		墳 > 坟			
Before 1664 c. 1671				覆 > 覆 襖 > 袄 壩 > 坝 賓 > 宾			
Early Qing	帶 > 代 傅 > 付	罷 > 罢 厰 > 厩 婦 > 妇					
1716	澱 > 淀						
1796-1820				薄 > 箔 幫 > 帮			
1851-1864	副 > 付 風 > 风	趕 > 赶					
1874 1881		第 > 芴			飛 > 裴		

	1. Loan of homo- nym	2. Omitted part	3. Con- tracted part	4. New phonetic	5. New signific	6. Modi- fied cursive form	7. Loan from other script
1906			擔 > 扌				
1912							弟 > 才
1922		戴 > 大					
1925	豐 > 丰						
1927		房 > 广 復 > 复					
1928	蛋 > 旦 腐 > 付						
1931				竄 > 窜			
1932	鬪 > 斗						
1934		標 > 标 達 > 达 鄧 > 邓 敵 > 敌 豐 > 丰	風 > 风	補 > 补 遲 > 迟 達 > 达			
1935	叢 > 从	部 > 卩 戴 > 裁 電 > 电		霸 > 霸			兒 > 儿
1936		疊 > 叠 龜 > 龟		鄧 > 邛 償 > 偿			
1938		國 > 口					
1943	幫 > 邦			導 > 导			
c. 1944		幣 > 币 鞏 > 巩			隊 > 队		
1948				遞 > 递		彡 > 导	
1950		備 > 备 帶 > 带 廠 > 厂 齒 > 齿 飛 > 飞	短 > 外				
1951	襯 > 寸			爆 > 炸 層 > 层 襯 > 衬			黨 > 丁
1952	髻 > 别	廠 > 广					
1954	戴 > 代			礮 > 礮 懺 > 忏			
In use by 1955		彡 > 彡					

	1. Loan of homonym	2. Omitted part	3. Contracted part	4. New phonetic	5. New signific	6. Modified cursive form	7. Loan from other script
Introduced by 1955 scheme		骯 > 肮 糞 > 粪		澈 > 沏 畢 > 毕 斃 > 毙 礎 > 础	塵 > 尘 从 > 丛		
“Used for a long time” in 1956	闊 > 板						
“Established by custom” by 1956	藹 > 卜			燦 > 灿 噸 > 吨			
1957		餐 > 步 費 > 弗		霸 > 雹 道 > 辺 富 > 符			
1958		革 > 廿		播 > 拈 富 > 突 菜 > 芽 壁 > 垝			
1959							
“Used for a long time” in 1960							
1960		鼻 > 鼻 病 > 疔 抹 > 扞 插 > 扞 帶 > 批 德 > 忒	稻 > 秬	澳 > 沃 霸 > 贾 蓖 > 蓖 察 > 文 察 > 宀 儲 > 侏 稻 > 初 帶 > 希 董 > 苕 懂 > 恫 碟 > 砵			
1962		罐 > 缶 萁 > 苕					
1963	菜 > 才						
1964					窵 > 窵 董 > 苓		
1965	餅 > 并			插 > 扞			
1975	筓 > 巴						
1977	贛 > 干					落 > 落	
1981	辨 > 卞	飡 > 飡		腸 > 肢			
1982	插 > 扞						

Column 1 is active throughout the period described. Thus complex characters have been substituted with short homonyms as long as the clerk and square styles have been in use. Substituting homonyms is one of the oldest ways of creating script symbols. In Chinese, we have seen how characters like 𧈧 (單 cicada) were loaned for homonymous words like ‘single’, 𧈧 (其 basket) for ‘this’ etc.

Even column 2 registers little change over time. Omissions of the 独 for 獨 and 𧈧 for 餐 type have been applied by writers ever since pre-Qin times. This does not surprise us, who saw such omissions both in our Yuan text and in our modern examples.

Column 3 does register a change. Contractions of the 单 for 單 and 兕 for 兒 type were invented up to the Yuan dynasty, but not later. Even this agrees with our introductory Yuan examples, where such contractions occurred, and the corresponding modern examples, where they did not.

A reverse development comes out in column 4. Adoption of short phonetics to make up signific-phonetic compounds like 担 and 灯 for 擔 and 燈 developed in the Yuan dynasty and peaked in the nineteen fifties with characters like 芽 and 迈 for 菜 and 道. Even this agrees with our initial observations, which registered compounds like 芽 in our new but not in our older examples. These compounds turned out to be somewhat older than we expected, however, having come into use already in the Yuan and Ming dynasties.

In some cases it is therefore possible to guess the age of an abbreviation by looking at its form. A contracted form was probably made up some time up to the Yuan dynasty, a form with a shortened phonetic after that dynasty.

We can only speculate why this is so. The old contractions appear to be made up in a moment’s hurry, as different from the shortened signific-phonetic compounds. Changing a phonetic is a conscious act which requires more deliberation than simply contracting strokes. It is therefore easy to conceive that forms with shortened phonetics boomed in the nineteen thirties and fifties, when reforming activists were so busy. It is harder, however, to explain why Yuan and Qing writers were more inclined to adopt new phonetics than Han or Tang writers. Perhaps the phenomenon has something to do with printing and increased literacy.

2. Local forms

The interviews presented on Maps 1–24 show that there are indeed some short forms which are used in limited areas. 苜 (薄), 𧈧 (橙) 𧈧 (带), 𧈧 (蝶), 𧈧 (粉) and 𧈧 (佛) are used in Guangdong and Guangxi, 𧈧 (薄) in the Northeast, 𧈧 (察), 𧈧 (肠), 𧈧 (戴) and 𧈧 (稻) in various parts of East China, 𧈧 (程) in the Jiangsu-Anhui-Hubei border area, 𧈧 (厂) in southern China, 𧈧 (厂) and 𧈧 (增) in Zhejiang, 𧈧 (传) in Shandong, 𧈧 (传) in East China and Guangdong, and 𧈧 (福) in northern Hunan. We also believe that 𧈧 (襯) was used only in East China before it was promoted by the Script Reform Committee from 1955 onwards.

Some of these cases are comprehensible.

畝, 窠, 肢 and 枯 are used only locally because their phonetics 入, 尺, 丈 and 古 fit only the local readings of 碟, 察, 肠 and 福 and not those of the standard language. The same was the case with 衬 with the phonetic 寸.

仄's standard reading *zè* is reminiscent of the local reading of 仄.

箔, 伏 and probably 佺 are old forms once used in wider areas. They are now extinct except in Guangdong and Guangxi (箔 and 伏) and Shandong (佺).

𠄎 was loaned from Japanese during the Japanese occupation of the Northeast.

The local use of 厝, 𠄎 and 𠄎 in Guangdong and of 𠄎 and 𠄎 in East China is on the other hand hard to explain.

3. Characters created by the Script Reform Committee

We saw in Chapter II.1 that when Qián Xuántóng propagated character simplification in 1920, he proposed to adopt “newly created characters” like 𠄎 for 旗 and 𠄎 for 鬼. 𠄎 and 𠄎 were truly “newly created characters”, forms of which we have no former record.

Nor do they appear in later records. When the Education Ministry set out in 1935 to realize Qián's character simplification, it rejected this kind of character, declaring: “When the experts engaged by this ministry selected short forms for publication, they selected according to the ‘imitate but not create’ principle, i.e. among already existing short forms. For characters of which no short forms exist, new forms were not created.”¹

As we know, the 1935 scheme failed. In 1952, the simplification task was picked up by the Committee for Research on Script Reform. This committee demonstrated a more creative attitude: “Characters of which there are already short forms in use, will be dealt with according to the ‘imitate but not create’ principle. For these we will not make up new forms. However, if a complicated common character has no current short form, nothing prevents us from looking for a new short form.”² A year later, however, the committee member Yè Gōngchuò revealed that the issue was still being debated: “Judging by today's discussions, it seems we can break with the formerly observed ‘imitate but not create’ principle. In order to attain simplicity and regularity, I think we will have to create characters when there is no other way to manage.”³

His fellow reformer Chén Guāngyáo pointed out the need of restricting such creativity: “The number of new short forms should not be too great. Compared

1. Introduction to *Jiaoyu bu* 1935.
2. Decided at the second meeting of the Character Regulation Group on 16 May 1952. *Zhongguo wenzi gaige yanjiu weiyuanhui mishuchu* 1952. The same point was made in “*Zhongguo wenzi gaige yanjiu weiyuanhui juxing di san ci quanti huiyi*” 1953.
3. At meeting on 25 March 1953. *Zhongguo wenzi gaige yanjiu weiyuanhui di san ci quanti huiyi de taolun jilu zhaiyao* 1953.

with the number of original characters it should not exceed one per cent.”¹

When the Character Simplification Scheme was published in 1955, the committee asserted, as we saw in the introduction, that “the overwhelming number of these simplified characters is already in common use”. This “overwhelming number” was 99.8% according to the committee member Zhèng Línxī and 83% according to the non-member Zhào Tàijùn. In other words, the committee member said 0.2% of the characters were invented and the non-member 17%.

This does not make us much wiser. We therefore calculate our own estimate on the basis of Chapter II. Our *a-f* sample comprises 123 of the 515 simplified characters in the 1956 Scheme. Ten of these 123 characters, namely 航, 毕, 毙, 灿, 缠, 彻, 尘, 础, 丛 and 粪 are not on record before the 1955 scheme. It thus looks as if the committee made up about 8 % of its simplified characters. Both the reformer and the non-reformer exaggerated.

4. Diverging Japanese and Chinese forms

Until 1946, official character forms were identical in China and Japan. This changed with the script reforms, which converted 邊 to 辺 in Japan but to 边 in China, 處 to 处 in Japan but to 处 in China, etc. etc. This development has been lamented by many. Could not authorities have cooperated to preserve unity? We will now try and see whether cooperation could have made a difference.

We will look at three categories of disparities.

1. Characters simplified in Japan but not in China, like Japanese 霸 (for Chinese unsimplified 霸), 弁 (辨, 辩), 挿 (插), 乘 (乘), 窓 (窗), 稲 (稻), 德 (德), 畳 (叠) and 仏 (佛).

The Japanese 霸, 乘, 窓, 稲 and 德 are traditional clerk and square style forms as advocated by the Xiping Stone Classics (175), Wáng Xīzhī (c. 350), *Qiān zì wén* (c. 600), *Yùpiān* (c. 700) and *Lóngkān shǒujīng* (997). The corresponding Chinese 霸, 乘, 窗, 稻 and 德 are *Shuōwén*-based forms which were introduced into square style and promoted by dictionaries like *Zìhuì* and *Kāngxī zìdiǎn*. The Japanese Language Council prescribed the former and the Script Reform Committee of China the latter. Perhaps their choices were not entirely accidental. We saw in Chapter I.2 that Japanese dictionaries may were slower to embrace the *Shuōwén*-based forms than their Chinese counterparts. Such preferences may have lingered on in pre-war Japan.

Nevertheless, 霸, 乘, 窓, 稲 and 德 as well as 弁 and 挿 were in use also in China. The Script Reform Committee could have adopted these forms if it had chosen to. As opposed to 仏, which was not.

2. Characters simplified in China but not in Japan. These are more numerous than

1. Chen Guangyao 1955 (b), p. 12.

those above. The Script Reform Committee of China prescribed 爱 (for the former standard form 愛), 罢 (罷), 报 (報), 备 (備), 贝 (貝), 笔 (筆), 币 (幣), 宾 (賓), 补 (補), 长 (長), 偿 (償), 肠/场 (腸/場), 车 (車), 彻 (徹), 惩 (懲), 冲 (衝), 丑 (醜), 础 (礎), 导 (導), 敌 (敵), 电 (電), 东 (東), 动 (動), 夺 (奪), 发 (發), 范 (範), 飞 (飛), 坟 (墳), 风 (風), 肤 (膚) and 妇 (婦). In these cases the Japanese Language Council retained the former dictionary form.¹

We have no record of 爱, 罢, 报, 备, 笔, 币, 宾, 补, 偿, 彻, 惩, 冲, 丑, 础, 导, 敌, 电, 动, 夺, 飞, 坟, 风, 肤 and 妇 in Japanese, at least not before the reform. The Japanese Language Council would have seen no reason to adopt these forms even in a more cooperative atmosphere.

贝, 东, 长, 肠 and 车 were based on the cursive forms 贝, 东, 长, 肠 and 车, which are found in Japanese writing handbooks as well as Chinese ones. Still, it was only the Script Reform Committee which introduced 贝, 东 etc.

Was this only because Chairman Mao had ordered the adoption of cursive forms? Perhaps not. Already in 1920, Qián Xuántóng proposed to make cursive-based forms like 东, 为 and 行 official for 東, 為 and 行, and in 1935 the Education Department attempted to carry that proposal through. Even later Chinese reformers made similar suggestions.²

Their Japanese colleagues did not. Perhaps this was because cursive forms were less known and used in their country than in China. It is therefore hard to imagine that the Japanese Language Council might have prescribed forms like the Chinese 贝 and 东.

3. Characters simplified differently in Japan and in China, like 辺/边, 変/变, 浜/滨, 残/残, 層/层, 称/称, 懲/惩, 遅/迟, 齒/齿, 聡/聪, 従/从, 帯/带, 単/单, 遞/递, 闘/斗, 読/读, 対/对, 児/儿, 発/发 and 豊/丰.

In Chapter II.2 we saw the reasons for the differing choices made by the Language Council and the Script Reform Committee.

<u>Japanese choice</u>	<u>rejected in China because it was</u>
辺, one of two short forms in use,	not in use in China
変, the more common form,	not as short as 变
弁, the shorter and more common form	perhaps less common than 辯
浜, the only short form in use,	identical with the Chinese 滨 bāng
残, the only short form in use,	not as short as 残
層, the only short form in use,	not as short as 层
称, one of two close short forms in use,	(no obvious reason)
懲, the only short form in use,	not as short as 懲
遅, the only short form in use,	not as short as 迟

1. We here count only characters in the 1946 List of Characters for Current Use.

2. Rong 1936. Ye 1950. Chen 1952 (1950), p. 127.

齒, the only short form in use,	not as short as 齿,
処, the only short form in use,	less simple and less common than 处
伝, the only short form in use,	not in use in China
聰, the more common form,	less common than 聪
従, the more common form,	not as short as 从
帯, the perhaps most common form,	not as short as 带
单, the shorter form in use,	not as short as 单
遞, the only short form in use,	less pedagogical than 递
疊, the perhaps most common form,	not as short as the first proposal 迭
闘, the shortest form in use,	not as short as 斗
対, the more common form,	not as short and not as common as 对
児, the only form in use,	not as short as 儿
発, the perhaps most common form,	not as short as 发
豊, the only form in use,	not as short as 丰

The Japanese forms were thus unacceptable to the Script Reform Committee, except for 称 and perhaps 疊.

Most of the forms picked by the Script Reform Committee were on the other hand of no interest to the Japanese reformers, 滨, 残, 层, 惩, 迟, 齿, 处, 传, 聪, 从, 递, 儿, 发 and 丰 because they were not used in Japan, 变 and 对 because they were less common than 变 and 对, 辩 and 叠 because they were less simple 弁 and 疊.

This leaves the Chinese forms 边, 称, 带, 单 and 斗 for the Language Council to ponder over.

We must conclude that cooperation between Japanese and Chinese authorities would not have made the two orthographies much more similar.

5. A respected norm at last?

We saw in Questions above that the committee, by adopting short forms, aimed to “select one simple and easy form among many different ones and do away with all the others. This way we can, both in print and in handwriting, reduce the confusion and diversity regarding the form of many characters, and reach our aim of gradual standardization” and “create a norm for the short forms, and if everybody writes according to this norm, we can prevent people from creating short forms at will and creating confusion.” In short, the reform should do away with the existing surplus of short forms and prevent the creation of new ones.

We will first look at what happened to the existing surplus forms. In Chapter II, we have found twenty-three short variants which were rejected by the committee, namely 邦, 脩, 变, 卞, 仑, 戾, 坊, 厲, 庠, 厝, 処, 代, 单, 扱, 丁, 邗, 茂, 發, 戩, 風, 凡, 凡 and 覆, in favour of 帮, 备, 变, 卜, 仓, 层, 场, 厂, 处, 带, 单, 担, 党, 邓, 发, 飞, 风 and 覆, analogies and local forms discounted. In handwriting, these rejected

forms have survived to a varying degree. 扌 and 厶 have not been reported after 1955. Records of 丌 continue to 1962, of 卩 and 夂 to 1965, of 戾 to 1976, of 单 to 1979, of 禩 to 1981, of 卩, 夂, 夂, 夂 and 夂 to 1982, of 備 to 1985, of 厶 to 1986, of 夂, 夂 and 夂 to 1994 (the author's latest visit to China), and of 邦, 仑, 带, 坊 and 癸 to 2005. Sixteen of the twenty-two rejected forms, or 70 %, have been seen twenty-five years after the reform or later. In other words, 30 % had been eliminated.

This can be compared with the Japanese reform. In 1946 and 1948, the Japanese Language Council rejected 边, 叠, 疊, 斗, 堯, and 广 for 辺, 疊, 闘, 癸 and 廐. The first three have disappeared from our records, 斗 which was proposed to become official in 1962, 堯 was seen carved on a stone of unknown age in 2003, and 廐 is still seen. In other words, 80 or 100 % were gone twenty-five years after the reform. This implies that the Japanese reform was more effective than the Chinese one, although we must bear in mind that our Japanese post-1950 records are much more sparse than our Chinese ones.

Our next question was whether a norm for the short forms prevented people from creating new ones. This answer is more clear-cut. It did not. Table 10 traces twenty-seven short forms to 1957–1960, the five years following the reform, more than any other five year period. The Cultural Revolution and 1977, the year of the second simplification scheme, show no such peak. It was the “character creation craze” related in 1957 and not the later ones that was a reality.

The twenty-seven newly created short forms dwarf the six exterminated ones by far. The pessimists referred to by Wú Yùzhāng, those who held that “the adoption of short forms can create confusion”, proved right.

As to the reasons, we can only speculate. One should be that the reform raised the status of short forms, so that, in the words of S. Robert Ramsey, “coining and using new characters became a popular way to show that one's writing was done in the right spirit.” This does not explain why coining decreased during the Cultural Revolution, when showing the right spirit was more important than ever. Perhaps there were simply no more obvious candidates for simplification when all the simple phonetics were already taken. If so, we should not expect any new wave of short forms in the foreseeable future.

Appendix A

Informants

The information presented in Maps 1–19 was collected from the following localities (numbers refer Map 25 below):

Numbers refer to the following localities:

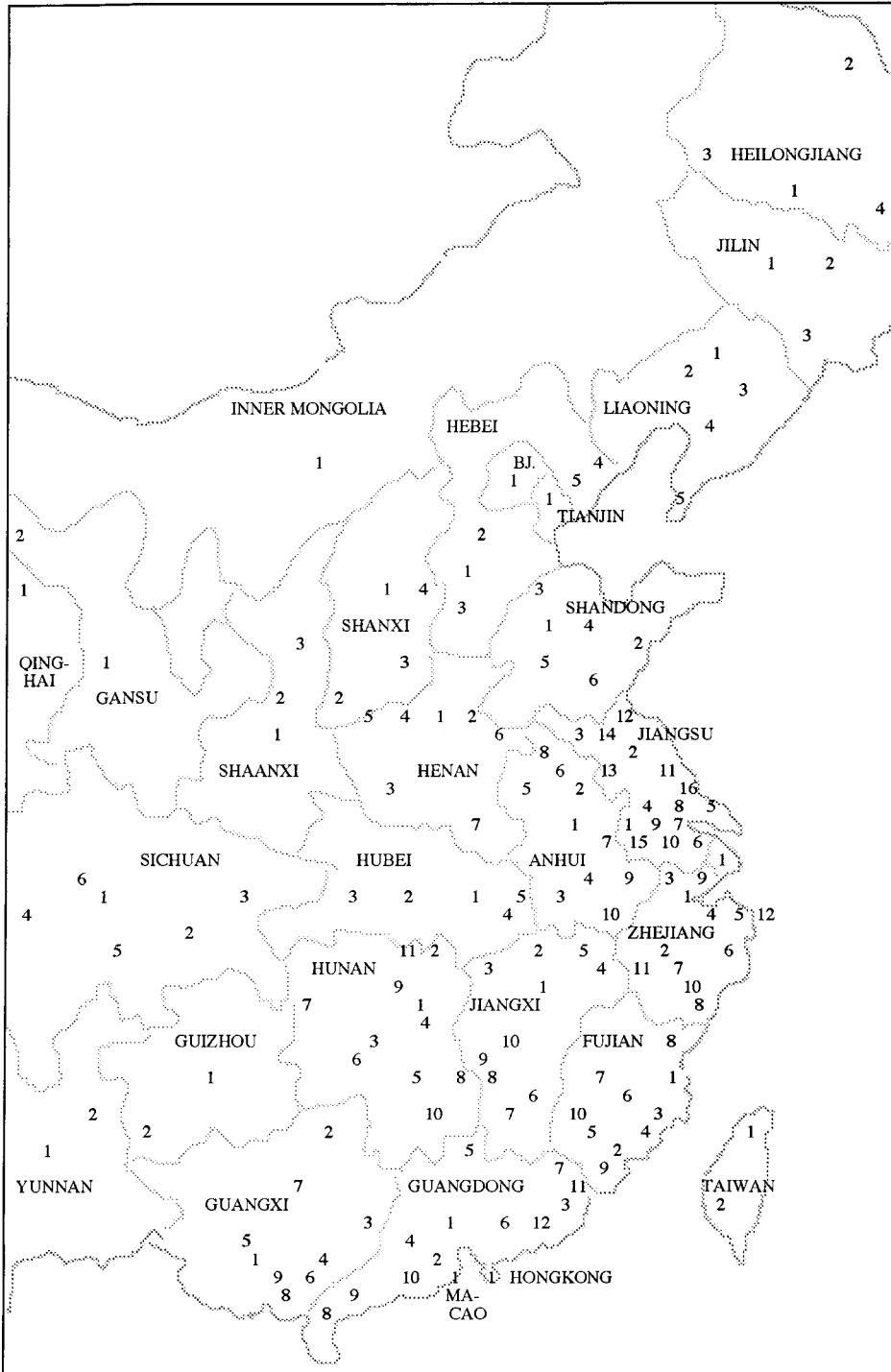
- Anhui 1 Hefei (cbaot). 2 Bengbu (ca). 3 Anqing (a). 4 Tongling (a). 5 Fuyang/Lixin (cd/c). 6 Suxian/Lingbi (aa/d). 7 Maanshan (aaa). 8 Huaibei (c). 9 Jingxian (h). 10 Tunxi/Xiuning (d/c).
- Beijing 1 Beijing (aaaaaadda).
- Fujian 1 Fuzhou (b). 2 Zhangzhou/Xiamen (a/aea). 3 Putian (ca). 4 Quanzhou (n). 5 Longyan (bb). 6 Dehua (ba). 7 Yong'an (a). 8 Fuan (aa). 9 Zhao'an (ba). 10 Liancheng (d).
- Gansu 1 Lanzhou (c). 2 Yumen (i).
- Guangdong 1 Guangzhou (aaaaaac). 2 Jiangmen/Zhuhai/Shunde (caaa/a/c). 3 Shantou (bbbb). 4 Zhaoqing (a). 5 Shaoguan (aaba). 6 Huizhou (aaa). 7 Meixian (abbg). 8 Zhanjiang (bbb). 9 Maoming (aa). 10 Enping (ab). 11 Raoping (aa). 12 Haifeng (aaa).
- Guangxi 1 Nanning (bab). 2 Guilin (jq). 3 Wuzhou (a). 4 Yulin (b). 5 Wuming (g). 6 Bobai (g). 7 Liuzhou (a). 8 Beihai (bba). 9 Lingshan (c).
- Guizhou 1 Guiyang (bb). 2 Xingyi (a).
- Hebei 1 Shijiazhuang. 2 Dingxian (cc). 3 Xingtai (cc). 4 Shanhaiguan (aaa). 5 Tangshan (cc).
- Heilongjiang 1 Harbin (s). 2 Yichun (c). 3 Qiqihar (c). 4 Daolu (w).
- Henan 1 Zhengzhou (c). 2 Kaifeng (b). 3 Nanyang (c). 4 Luoyang (aaa). 5 Sanmenxia (a). 6 Shangqiu (c). 7 Xinyang (aaab).
- Hongkong 1 Hongkong (ale).
- Hubei 1 Wuhan (baaa). 2 Shashi (a). 3 Yichang (c). 4 Huangshi (ad). 5 Xishui (d).
- Hunan 1 Changsha (jpc). 2 Yueyang (aa). 3 Lianyuan/Xinhua (c/c). 4 Zhuzhou/Xiangtan (ab/c). 5 Hengyang (bc). 6 Shaoyang (c). 7 Jishou (x). 8 Chaling (ab). 9 Ningxiang (c). 10 Chenzhou (bbb). 11 Huarong (c).
- Inner Mongolia 1 Baotou (c).
- Jiangxi 1 Nanchang (accec). 2 Jiujiang (ad). 3 Xinchui (c). 4 Shangrao (a). 5 Jingdezhen (ec). 6 Ruijin (baa). 7 Ganzhou (aaa). 8 Jinggangshan/Xiaping (aa/a). 9 Yongxin (aa). 10 Ji'an (c).

Long Story of Short Forms

- Jiangsu 1 Nanjing (abbeaa). 2 Huaiyin/Siyang (caa/dd). 3 Xuzhou/Pixian (dccc/d). 4 Yangzhou (cca). 5 Nantong (k). 6 Suzhou (hcgddd). 7 Changzhou/ Wuxi/Jiangyin (cbca/cdcb/d). 8 Taixian (c). 9 Zhenjiang/Danyang (bc/d). 10 Yixing/ Dingshan (bda/c). 11 Yancheng (ccd). 12 Lianyungang (aa). 13 Sihong (d). 14 Suining/Peixian (d/d). 15 Gaochun (d). 16 Rudong/Rugao/Dongtai (c/d/d).
- Jilin 1 Changchun (c). 2 Jilin (c). 3 Tonghua (c).
- Liaoning 1 Shenyang (aabaa). 2 Liaozhong (c). 3 Benxi (c). 4 Anshan (cc). 5 Dalian (ba)
- Macao 1 Macao (b).
- Qinghai 1 Lenghu (i).
- Shandong 1 Jinan (ar). 2 Qingdao (clllaabbac). 3 Dezhou (c). 4 Zibo (c). 5 Yanzhou/Qufu (aab/a). 6 Linyi (c).
- Shanghai 1 Shanghai (caaaacaaalmde).
- Shanxi 1 Taiyuan (ccaa). 2 Yuncheng (b). 3 Changzhi (ac). 4 Yangquan (c).
- Shaanxi 1 Xi'an/Jinyang (aic/f). 2 Tongchuan (a). 3 Yan'an (a).
- Sichuan 1 Chengdu (bcmd). 2 Chongqing (bce). 3 Wanxian (b). 4 Yajiang (l). 5 Ziyang (c). 6 Guanxian (v).
- Taiwan 1 Taibei (e). 2 Gaoxiong (c).
- Tianjin: 1 Tianjin (ccaa).
- Yunnan 1 Kunming (aaac). 2 Qujing (a).
- Zhejiang 1 Hangzhou (cccbbaaaa). 2 Jinhua (cb). 3 Huzhou/Changxing (aaba/a). 4 Shaoxing/Zhuji (cu/c). 5 Ningbo (be). 6 Linhai (b). 7 Lishui (aa). 8 Wenzhou (baaa). 9 Jiaxing (abb). 10 Qingtian (a). 11 Quzhou (c). 12 Dinghai (a).

(a) interview with informant on location, (b) interview with group of informants on location, (c) interview with traveller from location, (d) interview with recent emigrant from location, (e) character questionnaire sent to contact on location, (f) interview on location by Per Leimar, (g) interview on location by Giusi Tamburello, (h) interview on location by Helena Håkansson, (i) interview on location by Inge Hoem, (j) interview on location by Anne Gunn, (k) interview on location by Bào Míngwěi, (l) interview on location by Laura Newby, (m) interview on location by Magnus Fiskesjö, (n) interview on location by a man from Zhenjiang, (o) interview on location by Bhavatośa, (p) interview on location by Philip Wickeri, (q) interview on location by Bertil Lundahl, (r) interview on location by Rune Svarverud, (s) interview on location by Vikram Seth, (t) interview on location by Torbjörn Lodén, (u) character questionnaire sent to informants by Per Leimar, (v) character questionnaire sent to informants by Göran Malmqvist, (w) character questionnaire sent to informants by Tomas Nilsson, (x) character questionnaire sent to informant by Joakim Enwall.

MAP 25. SURVEYED LOCALITIES



Long Story of Short Forms

Potential informants were asked about present and former residence. Those who had worked or studied outside, or who had travelled widely, were rejected as described in the introduction.

Questions about name, age or education were inconvenient to ask in front of the ever present bystanders, so such records are fragmentary.

The answer of a group of informants (interviews marked b above), counts as positive if at least one of the respondents identified the character.

If the number of answers from one locality exceeds three, the last three are plotted on the map.

Appendix B

Dialect readings

Local readings are referred to in Tables 8–.

Dialect readings differ in literary (lit.) and colloquial (coll.) style. When necessary, style is indicated.

Tones are indicated by the traditional symbols used in Chinese dialectology, as follows:

$\overset{c}{x}$	High even tone	(first tone in Beijing speech)
$\overset{c}{x}$	High rising tone	(third tone in Beijing speech)
x^3	High falling tone	(fourth tone in Beijing speech)
x_5	High entering tone	(absent in Beijing speech)
$\overset{c}{x}$	Low even tone	(second tone in Beijing speech)
$\overset{c}{x}$	Low rising tone	(third tone in Beijing speech)
x^2	Low falling tone	(fourth tone in Beijing speech)
x_2	Low entering tone	(absent in Beijing speech)

Beijing, Changsha, Chaozhou, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Hankou, Hefei, Jian'ou, Jinan, Meixian, Nanchang, Suzhou, Wenzhou, Xiamen, Yangjiang and Yangzhou readings are taken from *Hànyǔ fāngyīn zìhuì*, Changzhou, Huaiyin, Nanjing, Shanghai and Yixing readings from *Jiāngsū shěng hé Shànghǎi shì fāngyán gàikuàng*, Hengyang readings from Li 1986, Jinhua readings from Yue 1958, Hangzhou, Huzhou and Jiaxing readings from Bào Shìjié of Hangzhou Normal Institute, and Chenzhou, Ganzhou, Guilin, Huizhou readings from my own notes.

Appendix C

Periods

Chinese periods¹

Yin	c. 1240–1050 BC	Yin I	c. 1240–1180
		Yin II	c. 1180–1150
		Yin III	c. 1150–1120
		Yin IV	c. 1120–1100
		Yin V	c. 1100–1050
Zhou	c. 1045–256	Early Western Zhou	c. 1045–970
		Middle Western Zhou	c. 970–860
		Late Western Zhou	c. 860–771
		Spring and Autumn	770–476
		Early Warring States	475–370
		Late Warring States	369–221
Qin	221–206		
Han	206 BC–AD 220	Western Han	206 BC–AD 9
		Xin	AD 9–23
		Eastern Han	25–220
Three Kingdoms	220–280		
Jin	265–420		
Northern and Southern Dynasties	420–581	Northern Wei	386–534
		Eastern Wei	534–550
		Western Wei	535–557
		Southern Qi	479–502
		Northern Qi	550–577
Sui	581–618		
Tang	618–907		
Five Dynasties	907–920		
Liao	907–1125		
Jin	1115–1234		
Song	960–1279	Northern Song	960–1127
		Southern Song	1127–1279
Yuan	1279–1368		
Ming	1368–1644		
Qing	1644–1911	Taiping Rebellion	1851–1864

Japanese periods

Heian	794–1185
Kamakura	1185–1392
Muromachi	1336–1568
Edo or Tokugawa	1600–1867

1. From Keightley 1978, Zhou 1983, and *Xinhua zidian*.

Appendix D

Dating of wood slips

In the Han dynasty, contracts, receipts etc. were written on wood slips or plates. About thirty thousand such slips have been excavated at Juyan in Gansu. In Xie et al. 1987, inscriptions on about ten thousand of these are written out in print. About one thousand of these slips contain dates, which are distributed as follows:

<u>Site</u>	<u>Earliest and latest date</u>		
A 1	56 BC	A 8	69 BC – AD 29
A10	90 BC – 77 BC	A14	73 BC
A18	37 BC	A21	11 BC – AD 13
A22	50 BC – AD 12	A32	82 – 4 BC
A33	79 BC – AD 24	A35	85 – 2 BC
P 9	63 BC – AD 2		

In this survey, we have presumed that undated slips date from the same intervals as the dated ones.

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Letters to the Script Reform Committee

Throughout its existence, the Script Reform Committee received an almost daily flow of correspondence from inventors of alphabets and characters and, more interestingly for us, from collectors of short forms. Correspondence from the 1960 campaign was collected and glued into books, one volume for each province. The letters in each volume were separated into three parts: lists of short forms proposed at meetings of the education bureaus of each province, letters from individuals “collecting popular characters”, and letters from individuals “creating characters themselves”.

In May 1982 I took notes from the second category. My time was very limited, however. At this time the committee had been ordered to improve efficiency through reorganisation. The keepers of these volumes were unwilling to be absent from the recurrent meetings which distributed and, more importantly, cancelled duties. During the hours I managed to be allotted, I gave priority to uncommon forms at the expense of common ones, to senders’ addresses and units at the expense of their names. When I visited the Script Reform Committee again in 1986, I was told these letters had been thrown away. On that occasion I instead got access to three cupboards containing correspondence from 1975 to 1977. On my visit in 1990 even these cupboards were untraceable.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Sender</u>	<u>Sender’s address</u>	<u>Contents as described by sender</u>
1955.2.13	湖南省 中等学 校语文 教学坐 谈会	Changsha	Report from discussion of the Draft of the Character Simpli- fication Scheme
1960.4.18	冯儒允	Pingnan Normal School, Guangxi	“Characters in use among the masses”
1960.4.19	蒋艾桂	Wugang Advanced Primary School, Hunan	
1960.5.16	李九皋	Pengshan Junior Middle School, Sichuan	“Characters common here”
1960.5.22	黄荣洲	Proofreading section, <i>Xīnmín wǎnbào</i> , Shanghai	“collected and arranged characters”
1960.5.28	Pupil	Yugou Middle School, Huaiyin City, Jiangsu	“Characters used by most people”
1960.5.30	惠文愷	Proofreading section, <i>Xīnmín wǎnbào</i> , Shanghai	

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- | | | | |
|--------------|-----|---|---|
| 1960.6.3 | 季秉聪 | Official Cadres' Literacy School,
Pucheng, Fujian | "Characters from
students'
compositions" |
| 1960.6.8 | 龚景康 | Chaoan, Guangdong | |
| 1960.6.11 | 郭健华 | Sixin Central Primary School,
Taishun, Zhejiang | "Characters with
a history of
five to ten years,
or of three years." |
| 1960.6.16 | | Dean's Office,
Bengbu Normal School,
Anhui | "Characters seen in
the work of first
year students" |
| 1960.6.22 | 姜广口 | Liuan Normal School and Sanhe
Middle School, Feixi, Anhui | "Characters common
in Liuan District" |
| 1960.6.25 | 孙福和 | <i>Bāotóu Ribào</i> printing works | "Examples of the
new creativeness
in character use" |
| 1960.6.28 | 贺学礼 | Hanzhong Normal Institute,
Shānxi | "New characters
used by everybody
in our city" |
| 1960.7.7 | 林晋幹 | Changtai xian Experimental Primary
School, Changtai xian, Fujian | "Collected new sim-
plified characters" |
| 1960.7.9 | 郭臣善 | Xinjiang Railway Institute, Ürümqi | "Characters I have
seen" |
| 1960.7.12(a) | 陈路周 | Yangchun Mining Office,
Guangdong | "Characters used
here" |
| 1960.7.12(b) | 段玉堂 | Changzi Middle School,
Shanxi | "Characters used by
the masses" |
| 1960.7.14 | 丁人金 | Yichang Agricultural Training
College, Hubei | "Characters collected
in Yichang" |
| 1960.7.20 | 罗志 | Military Service Office, Wuhua xian,
Guangdong | |
| 1960.7.23 | 湖治农 | Linguistics Department,
Hefei Normal Institute | "Characters found in
examination papers" |
| 1960.7.26 | 白召大 | Zhongshan Memorial School,
Zhongshan, Guangdong | |
| 1960.7.27 | 段辉聪 | Second year class, Chinese
Department, Nanchong Professional
Training School, Sichuan | "Characters in use" |
| 1960.7.28 | | Naida Materials Factory, Jinan | "Characters in use" |
| 1960.8 | 李粹和 | Shibei South China Normal Institute,
Guangzhou | "Characters I think
can be adopted" |
| 1960.8.4(a) | 周炼采 | Hanzhuang Primary School, Changsha | |
| 1960.8.4(b) | 戴博官 | Central Primary School, Zhonggang | "Characters used" |

Long Story of Short Forms

		Commune, Jiangyin	here”
1960.8.6		Guangdong Education Bureau	“New simplified characters used in parts of Guangdong”
1960.9.18	李永成	Rongjiang Middle School, Guizhou	“Characters common in our area”
1960.9.24	陈情呈	Fujun Primary School, Zongyang, Anhui	“Characters common here”
1960.9.22	廖飞	Party Office, Huaifen People’s Commune, Gaozhou, Guangdong	
1960.9.30(a)	陈子良	Song[xi and] Zheng[he] Middle School No. 1, Fujian	“Characters used in our xians”
1960.9.30(b)		Language Tuition and Research Group, Luoyang Forestry School, Henan	
1960.10.21	邓乐贤	Office of Chinese Department, South China University, Guangzhou	
1960.11.24	李长记	Ankang University, Shaanxi	“Characters often written by some people in my area”
1960.11.25	峰峰	Heyuan Middle School, Guangdong	
1960.11.26	宋緬口	Yancheng Medical School, Jiangsu	“Characters common in Yancheng Distr.”
1960.11.29		Ningbo, Zhejiang	“Characters common here”
1960.12.22	仓玉	Guangdong Mining Institute, Shaoguan	
1960.12.23	廖廷畅	Language and Literature Department, Xichang Professional Training School, Sichuan	
1960 (a)	何华	Publications Department, Jilin Normal University	“Characters seen by me”
1960 (b)	李粹和	Shibei South China Normal Institute, Guangzhou	“Characters used in Guangdong, ch. used by the people, ch. seen everywhere,” etc.
1960 (c)	刘金城	Experimental school no. 4, Jiutai xian, Changchun	“Characters used by the masses”
1960 (d)		Sandun District Grain and Oil Purchase and Sales Point, Hangzhou	“Characters invented by the peasants”

Bibliography: Letters

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 1960 (e) | 林开基 | Workers and peasants preparatory tuition department, Xiamen Univ., Fujian | “Short forms used in this area” |
| 1960 (f) | 林宝椿 | Wenzhou City, Zhejiang | |
| 1960 (g) | | Middle School No. 1, Yiyang County, Hebei | |
| 1960 (h) | 吕楚崎 | Wugang Normal School, Hunan | |
| 1960 (i) | 陈庆南 | Zhongfangyuan Primary School, Linxiang xian, Hunan | “About characters used by the people” |
| 1960 (j) | | Zhengzhou Coal Mine School | |
| 1960 (k) | | Yangzangzhuang village, Yunhe Commune, Nangong xian, Hebei | “Some characters collected in our area” |
| 1960 (l) | | Shijiazhuang Industrial School | “Characters seen by me” |
| 1960 (m) | 林兰桂,
language
teacher | Yezhai Middle School, Qianshan | “Characters popular in Anqing District” |
| 1960 (n) | | Xiwei nan dao No. 15, Yingchun qiao, Rugao, Jiangsu | “Characters we have seen here in slogans, advertisements etc. written by the masses” |
| 1960 (o) | 粟秋文 | Middle School No. 2, Jiugong qiao, Shaoyang, Hunan | |
| 1960 (p) | 阎小平 | Qutang Middle School, Haiian xian, Jiangsu | “Characters seen in pupils’ work” |
| 1960 (q) | 艾白薇 | Harbin Electric Institute, Heilongjiang | “Characters common in Harbin” |
| 1961.2.3 | 菜振华 | Quanzhou Senior Middle School, Guilin District, Guangxi | |
| 1961.2.17 | | Jiuqiao Renmin yinhang, Dongzhimenwai, Beijing | “Characters seen” |
| 1961.5.14 | 姜学昌 | Dai Opera Troupe, Dehong, Yunnan | “Char. found here” |
| 1961.6.12 | 李床璋 | Gaozhou Middle School, Guangdong | |
| 1961.6.22 | | Sihong Middle School, Jiangsu | |
| 1961.11.15 | 方忠友 | Jinxi Primary School, Dayuan Commune, Guidong, Hunan | |
| 1961.11.16 | 雷克 | Wangdun Middle School, Duchang, Jiangxi | “Characters used by the local masses” |
| 1975.4.17 | 季保民 | Hanjiang County Agricultural Production Materials Company, Jiangsu | “Copied characters” |

Long Story of Short Forms

1975.5.6	胡景全	Brigade 1, Shizi Commune, Qichun County, Hubei	“Characters seen in manuscripts for typewriting, letters, wall newspapers”
1975.6.20	胡景全	Brigade 1, Shizi Commune, Qichun County, Hubei	“More collected characters”
1976.1.20	金以侠	Jigui Middle School, Gejiu City, Yunnan	Sender: “What have you been doing for the last ten years?”
1976.5.6	金明	Wenling County Theatre, Zhejiang	“Characters I have collected”
1976.9.2	沈时锋	Huzhou Chemical Fertilizer Factory, Zhejiang	“Short forms which I know”
1976.12.10	巩思良	Wejiguan, Taihe County, Anhui	“Characters used by the masses”
1977.2.10	张德彦	Dazhouzai School, Mengzhai, Wuyang County, Henan	“New simplified characters popular in our area”
1977.3.4	柯伟民	Huian Middle School No. 2, Fujian	“Collected characters
1977.4.25	孟宪达	Xinzheng Brigade, Honghetun Commune, Anyang xian, Henan	“Collected characters”
1977.5.17	杨民生	Mengcheng Normal School, Anhui	“Char. simplified by the masses”
1977.6.27	柯伟民	Huian Middle School No. 2, Fujian	“Characters collected in discussions with educated youth etc.”
1977.8.25	郑洲书	Shanqian Middle School, Qingjiang County, Jiangxi	“New simplified char. which have appeared in our area”
1977.9.12	侯武群	Dashiqiao, Changcun Commune, Changyuan County, Henan	“Characters which can be simplified”
1977.10.7	乔桂五	Xiaohemo Middle School, Xinchengzi District, Shenyang City, Liaoning	“Characters found in pupils’ work”
1977.10.24	韩奇山	Advanced Brigade of Chengtou Forestry Centre, Sihong, Jiangsu	“common simplified characters”
1977.11.28	刘云厦	Hongshi Middle School Spare Time Cultural Revolutionary Study Group, Yunyang, Sichuan	

Glossary

Transcribed and translated Chinese and Japanese names, terms and titles.

- 550 súzì biǎo 550 俗字表
abbreviated characters 略字
Academia Sinica 中国科学院
accustomed to 習慣
Administrative Office of Southern
Jiangsu, The 蘇南行署
Ān Wéndé 安文德
ancient character 古字
ancient original character 古本字
Arai Hakuseki 新井白石
Bā Jīn 巴金
Bào Shìjié 鮑士杰
Bēibíezì 碑別字
Bēibíezì xùshí 碑別字續拾
Beijing Language Commission 北京
市语言文字工作委员会
big seal 大篆
bronze script 金文
bone script 甲骨文
Cài Yōng 蔡邕
Cài Yuánpéi 蔡元培
Chairman Máo 毛主席
Chángyòng Jiǎnzì biǎo 常用簡字表
Character Simplification Scheme 簡
化漢字方案
Characters for Common Use 常用漢
字
Characters for Current Use 当用漢
字
characters used in society 世字, 社
会用字
Chén Dìngmín 陈定民
Chén Yuán 陈原
Chéngdì 成帝
Chéngwáng 成王
Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石
chief chronicler 太史
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
中国科学院
Chinese Association for the Promo-
tion of Democracy, The 中國民主
促進會
Chinese Committee for Research on
Script Reform 中國文字改革研
究委員會
Chinese Script Reform Society 文字
改革協會
Chronicler Zhòu 史籀
Chǔ Suiliáng 褚遂良
Committee for Research on Script
Reform, Chinese 中國文字改革
研究委員會
common 通, 通行
complex form 繁体字
compound ideograph 会议字
Control Yuan 考試院
correct (form) 正
customary 俗
customarily 俗
customary character 俗字
current 通行
cursive script 草書
Dài Jitáo 戴季陶
Deliberative Report on the List of
Characters for Current Use 当用
漢字表審議報告
Dàgōng bào 大公報
Dèng Xiǎopíng 邓小平
diverging forms 別體
Dǒng Chúncai 董纯才
Draft List of 400 retained and

Long Story of Short Forms

- abolished Variants 擬廢除的 400
個異體字表草案
Draft of the Character Simplification
Scheme 漢字簡化方案草案
Draft of the Second Character Simpli-
fication Scheme 第二次漢字簡化
方案(草案)
Dù jūn qī Cūī Suǒ epitaph 杜君妻崔
素墓誌
Duàn Yùcái 段玉裁
duke 公
educated youth 知識青年
Education Bureau 教育局
Education Bureau of the Revolutionary
Committee of Jiangsu Province, the
江蘇省革命委員會教育局
Education Ministry 教育部
Emperor Líng 靈帝
Emperor Wǔ of Liang 梁武
epitaph 墓誌
erroneous 訛
established by custom 約定俗成
established-by-custom principle 約
定俗成原則
Fán Jiāng 樊江
First vol. 上
First Batch of Short Forms, The 簡體
字表 第一批
Fujian, Guangdong and Jiangsu
Border Area Working Committee
閩粵贛邊區工委
for the time being サシアタリ
General List of Simplified Chinese
Characters 簡化漢字總表
Gōngwáng 宣王
Guō Mòruò 郭沫若
Hànzì wénhuà 漢字文化
Hara Takashi 原敬
Harm of using Characters, The 漢字
使用の害
Heijō Palace 藤原宮
History of the Han 漢書
How to reduce Characters 漢字減少
の方法
Hú Qiáomù 胡乔木
Hú Sānxǐng 胡三省
Huà Guófēng 華國鋒
Huabei, Jiangsu and Anhui Border
Area People's Anti-Japanese Self-
Defence Force 淮北蘇皖區人民
抗日自衛隊
imitate but not create 述而不作
Imperial College 太學
in popular use 流俗的
in common use 通用
Inariyama 稻荷山
Institute of Applied Linguistics 語言
文字應用研究所
Interim Committee on the Japanese
Language 臨時國語調查會
Japanese Language Council, the 國
語審議會
Jǐngdé chuándēng lù 井景德傳燈錄
Jīnpíng méi 金瓶梅
Jiǔ jīng zìyàng 九經字樣
kǎishū 楷書
Kāngwáng 康王
Kanpō 官報
Kantō 關東
Kokugo shingikai 國語審議會
Koryo 高麗
Language Council, the Japanese 國
語審議會
Last vol. 下
Lǎo Shě 老舍
Latinxua sin wenz 拉丁化新文字
Lí Jīnxī 黎錦熙
Lǐ Shìmín 李世民
Lǐ Sī 李思
lǐ style 隸書
Liberated Areas 解放區
liberation characters 解放字
Lín Yǔtáng 林語堂
Lǐngnán yì shǐ 嶺南逸使

- List of Abbreviated Characters 略字表
- List of Characters for Common Use 常用漢字表
- List of Characters for Current Use 当用漢字表
- List of Forms of Characters for Current Use 当用漢字字体表
- List of Standard Characters 標準漢字表
- List of the First Batch of Selected Character Variants 第一批异体字整理表
- Liwang 厲王
- lower part 下
- Lǚ Xùn 魯汛
- Lúnyǔ* 論語
- Luó Fúbǎo 羅福葆
- Luó Pèinán 羅佩南
- Luó Zhènyù 羅振玉
- Máchéng bào* 麻城報
- Mǎ Xùlún 馬敘倫
- Máo 毛
- Máo Dùn 茅盾
- Master Shèng 晟師
- model script 楷書
- model style 楷書
- model text 字帖
- Mùliánjì* 目蓮記
- Muwang 穆王
- nà 捺
- National Language Unification Commission 國語統一籌備委員會
- National Phonetic Alphabet 國音字母
- newly coined 新擬
- newly created 新造
- Newly-selected Character Dictionary* 新選字書
- Nihon shoki* 日本書記
- Ningbo Cadres' Literacy School 宁波干部文化学校
- Oath of the Pioneers of the Red Guards 赤衛軍(少先隊)誓詞
- Ōmura 大村
- Opinion on the Revision of the Character Simplification Scheme (First Draft) 汉字简化方案的修改意见初稿
- Ōuyáng Tōng 歐陽通
- Ōuyáng Xún 歐陽詢
- permitted forms 許容体
- phonetic 聲
- phonetic component 聲旁
- phonetic element 音符
- phonetic loan character 同音假借字
- Piyù jīng 譬喻經
- popular 流行
- Preparatory Committee for Research on Script Reform in China 中國文字改革研究委員會籌備會
- Principles of Administration of Southern Jiangsu 蘇南施政綱領
- Proposal for the Regulation of Character Forms 字体整理案 (1926)
- 漢字字體整理案 (1937)
- Qí Jǐ 齊己
- Qián Xuántóng 錢玄同
- regular script 真書
- regular style 真書
- Report on the Work on Revision of the Character Simplification Scheme 关于汉字简化方案修订工作的报告
- Revised Character Simplification Scheme (Draft) 简化汉字修订方案(草稿)
- Rúlín wàishǐ* 儒林外使
- running style 行書
- Sānguó zhì píng huà* 三國治平話
- Sān tǐ shí jīng* 三體石經
- Script Reform Committee of China 中國文字改革委員會
- Script Reform Office 文字改革办公室

- Script Reform Publishing House 文字改革出版社
Script Reform Society 中國文字改革協會
section 部
Shinsen jisho 新選字書
short forms 簡體字, 簡字
shǒutóu zì 手头字
Sichuan Language and Script Network, The 四川语言文字网
signific 形
signific component 形符
signific element 形旁
signific-phonetic compound 形声字
Sòng Wénxiàn 宋文獻
square frame pattern 方快形式
square style 正書
Standard Character-using Model Streets 用字规范化样板街
State Language Commission 国家语言文字工作委员会
stele 碑
strange character 奇字
sú 俗
supplement vol. 別卷
Suǒ Jìng 索靖
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Three Scourges and Five Poisons 三害五毒
tōng 通
Tōyō kanji 当用漢字
Tōyō kanji hyō 当用漢字表
Tōyō kanji hyō shingi hōkoku 当用漢字表審議報告
Tōyō kanji jitai hyō 当用漢字字体表
unfamiliar 生疏
vulgar character 俗字
Vocabulary of Common Short Forms 常用簡體字彙
vulgar 俗
- Wáng Xīzhī 王羲之
Wèi Jiàngōng 魏建功
Wénhuì bào 文汇报
wrong 訛, 非
Wú Yùzhāng 吴玉章
Wǔ of Liang 梁武
Wǔjīng wénzì 五經文字
Xǔ Shèn 許慎
Xuān, Kīng 宣王
Xuānwáng 宣王
Xīnhuá zìdiǎn 新华字典
Xīpíng shíjīng 熹平石經
Yán Yuánsūn 顏元孫
Yán Zhēnqīng 顏真卿
Yàoshān 藥山
Yè Gōngchuò 葉恭綽
Yè Làishì 叶籟士
Yè Shèngtáo 叶圣陶
Yíwáng 夷王
Yìwáng 懿王
Yǐ yīng stele 乙瑛碑
Yīn Tiěshí 殷鐵石
Yú Shìán 虞世南
Yǔwén jiànshè 语文建设
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Zhāng Lǎng epitaph 張朗
Zhāng Xù 張旭
Zhào Zǐāng 趙子昂
Zhēn-cǎo qiānzìwén 真草千字文
zhēnshū 真書
zhèng 正
Zhèngshǐ shíjīng 正始石經
zhèngshū 正書
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