(二) Components and Composition: Chinese Characters

Knowing the system of Chinese writing, such as structuring and re-constructing components of characters and being able to recognize a balanced composition of any given Chinese character, is similar to gaining the knowledge of a unique person and what special talents this person has thus being advantageous to the inquirer in the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, in this chapter the authors would like to share with the learners some strategies and conventional wisdom to understanding of Chinese writing system about composition of characters.

Here are examples of the most frequently seen components and compositions of Chinese commonly used characters.

1. One lexical-part occupies the full square, as in “人 (rén) people”, “中 (zhōng) middle.”

2. Two lexical-parts balance horizontally, as in “要 (yào) to want”, “青 (qīng) blue.”

3. Two lexical-parts balance vertically, as in “他 (tā) he”, “信 (xin) letter.”

4. Two lexical-parts with the left and bottom part surrounding the upper right part, as in “这 (zhè) this”, “起 (qǐ) to rise.”

5. Two lexical-parts with the upper and right part surrounding the lower left, as in “司 (sī) to govern”, “可 (kě) may.”

6. Two lexical-parts with the left and upper part surrounding the low right, as in “病 (bing) illness”, “房 (fāng) house.”
6. □ Two lexical-parts with the outside part surrounding the inside, as in
   "回(huí) to return", 因(yīn) cause."

7. □ Three lexical-parts in a tripartite horizontal form, as in "會(huì) will/know how",
   "享(xiǎng) to enjoy.”

8. □ Three lexical-parts in a tripartite vertical form, as in “謝(xiè) thank”, “街(jiē)
   street.”

9. □ One or more lexical-parts surrounding on three sides with only the bottom open,
   as in “間(jiān) room”, “聞(wén) smell.”