

# [A Dictionary of the 3,500 Most Frequently Used Chinese Characters](#)

Their Romanized Transcription in Hanyu Pinyin, with English Meaning Definition, and Their Stroke Order. A Reference Manual

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Erstauflage 2016. Taschenbuch. 336 S. Paperback

ISBN 978 3 95935 256 7

Format (B x L): 15,5 x 22 cm

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# Leseprobe

Textprobe:

Preface and Introduction:

This book is reference manual for the most frequently used Chinese characters and is an enlarged English version of my German Kleines Lexikon chinesischer Schriftzeichen [SMALL LEXICON OF CHINESE CHARACTERS] that only covers 1475 Chinese characters but includes both simplified and traditional character forms of the entries covered, some historical-cultural comments on a number of selected character entries. It was published by Viademica Publishers (Berlin 2012, ISBN 978-3-939290-29-2). This edition covers only the simplified forms of Chinese characters as it is intended for Western learners of Chinese studying Chinese with a view to eventually sitting for any of the six levels of the Chinese Language Proficiency Exam (HSK) in the People's Republic of China. Traditional character equivalents can be looked up in widely available Chinese character dictionaries like the Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn [CHARACTER DICTIONARY OF THE NEW CHINA], and as they are not required for this Chinese language proficiency exam, they will not be included here so that the user can concentrate on character forms that really matter without bothering about their traditional character variant forms if they exist. Note that not all Chinese characters have simplified and corresponding traditional forms; in many cases, the forms are actually the same. The Chinese script structurally is not based on phonetical principles like the Roman script. It has an ideographical principle instead, which means a Chinese character conveys an idea, a concept, and roughly spoken, the meaning of a word like sun, bird, etc. It's like drawing a sun to convey its meaning in written form. There are various structural principles by which the meaning of Chinese characters is conveyed, not only the picture-drawing principle. We cannot go into further detail regarding such structural principles here. Let it suffice to state that because Chinese characters are based on ideographical principle, they are huge in number, covering several thousands of character in more or less frequent use. There are several ways to order Chinese character entries in their order of appearance in a dictionary - the most common way is to arrange them by the radicals and the number of additional strokes to such a radical. Another way to arrange them in their order of appearance in a dictionary is to sort them by the number of strokes they consist of, with the those consisting of a single stroke coming first, followed by those with two, three, four and more strokes. The character entries covered in this dictionary are sorted the number of strokes, which seems to be easier for less experienced users because it is not so easy to identify the radical of a character and takes more time for less experienced learners to identify the radical under which to look the character up in dictionary. Users of this character dictionary need to become familiar with the basic strokes of Chinese characters when counting the strokes of a character for looking them up. For example, a certain stroke may look like two separate strokes and thus may falsely counted as two strokes; it may prevent the learner from calculating the correct number of character strokes for looking it up in a character or another dictionary. Therefore, the user is urgently advised to study the Tables of the basic strokes of Chinese character and their graphical variants (Tables 1 and 2) as well as the stroke order rules (Tables 3 and 4). This entries of this dictionary are based on two official Chinese government lists; the first

one listing the 2,500 most frequently used Chinese characters. The second list covers another 1,000 less frequently used characters; in this dictionary, they are covered in Parts I and II respectively. The appendix includes a Table of Radicals with additional notes on their use in Sino-Japanese, Sino-Korean, etc. It was taken from the English Wikipedia article on Chinese radicals.