

Ideograms In China: New Directions Paperbook



China, a country renowned for its rich cultural heritage, has given the world countless contributions, one of which is the fascinating system of ideograms. The Chinese writing system stands apart from any other, featuring intricate characters that carry deep layers of meaning within their strokes and symbols.

The Beauty of Ideograms

木 Tree (<i>mu</i>)	木 Tree (<i>mu</i>)	林 Woods (<i>lin</i>)
日 Sun (<i>ri</i>)	月 Moon (<i>yue</i>)	明 Bright (<i>ming</i>)
田 Field (<i>tian</i>)	力 Power (<i>li</i>)	男 Male (<i>nan</i>)
禾 Grain (<i>he</i>)	火 Fire (<i>huo</i>)	秋 Autumn (<i>qiu</i>)
女 Woman (<i>nü</i>)	子 Child (<i>zi</i>)	好 Good (<i>hao</i>)

Ideograms in China (New Directions Paperbook)

by Henri Michaux (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

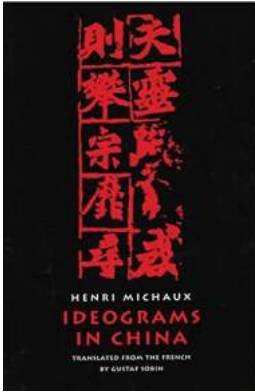
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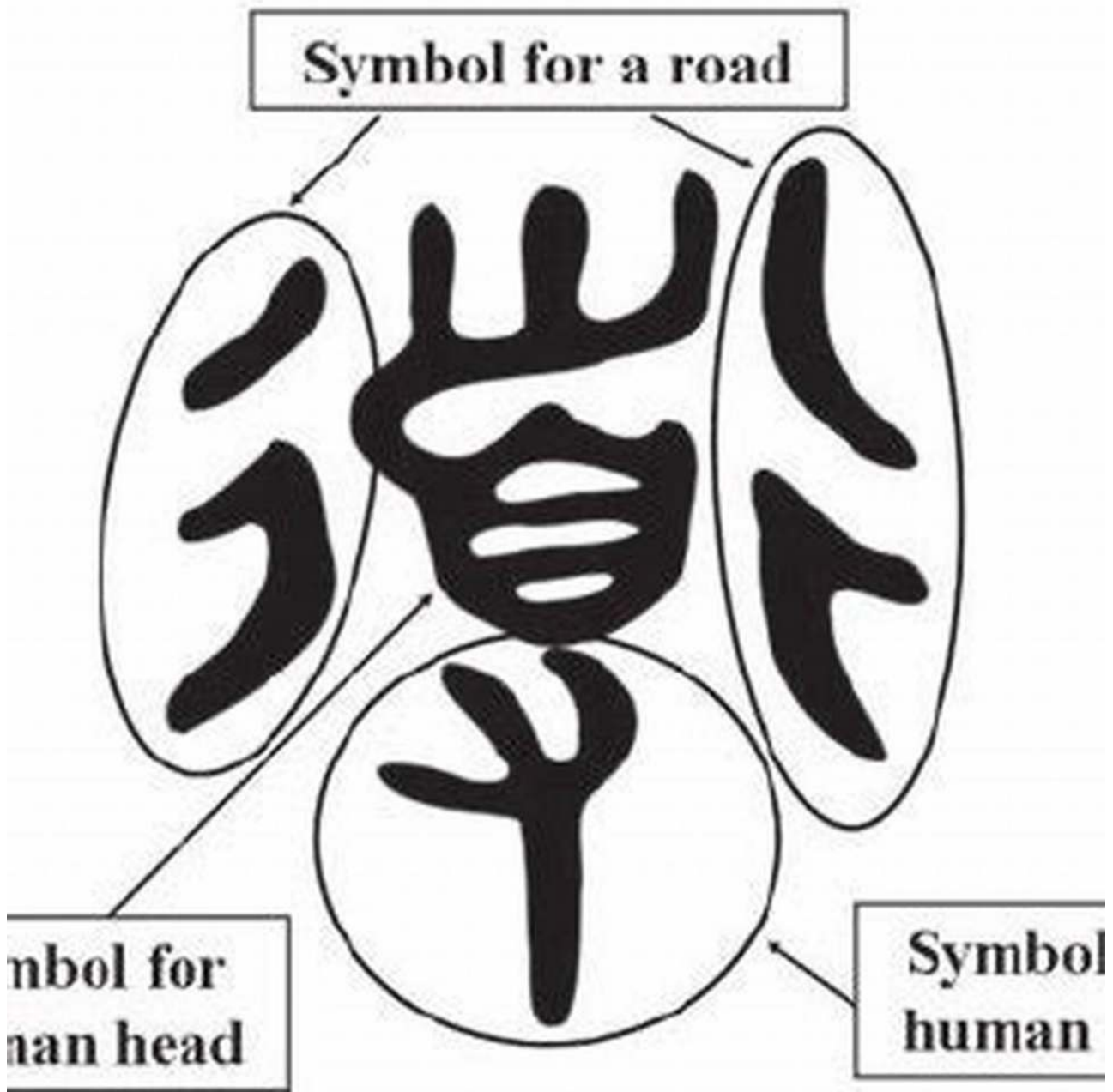
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Ideograms are visual representations of concepts or ideas. Unlike phonetic-based systems where each character primarily represents a sound, every ideogram in the Chinese writing system encapsulates both a visual and conceptual aspect, enabling the writer to convey profound messages through a single character.

These characters, known as "hanzi," embody a combination of pictographs, which directly represent physical objects, and semantic compounds, where elements are combined to form new meanings. The creative blend of these components is what makes Chinese writing so enchanting and unique.

Evolution and Cultural Significance

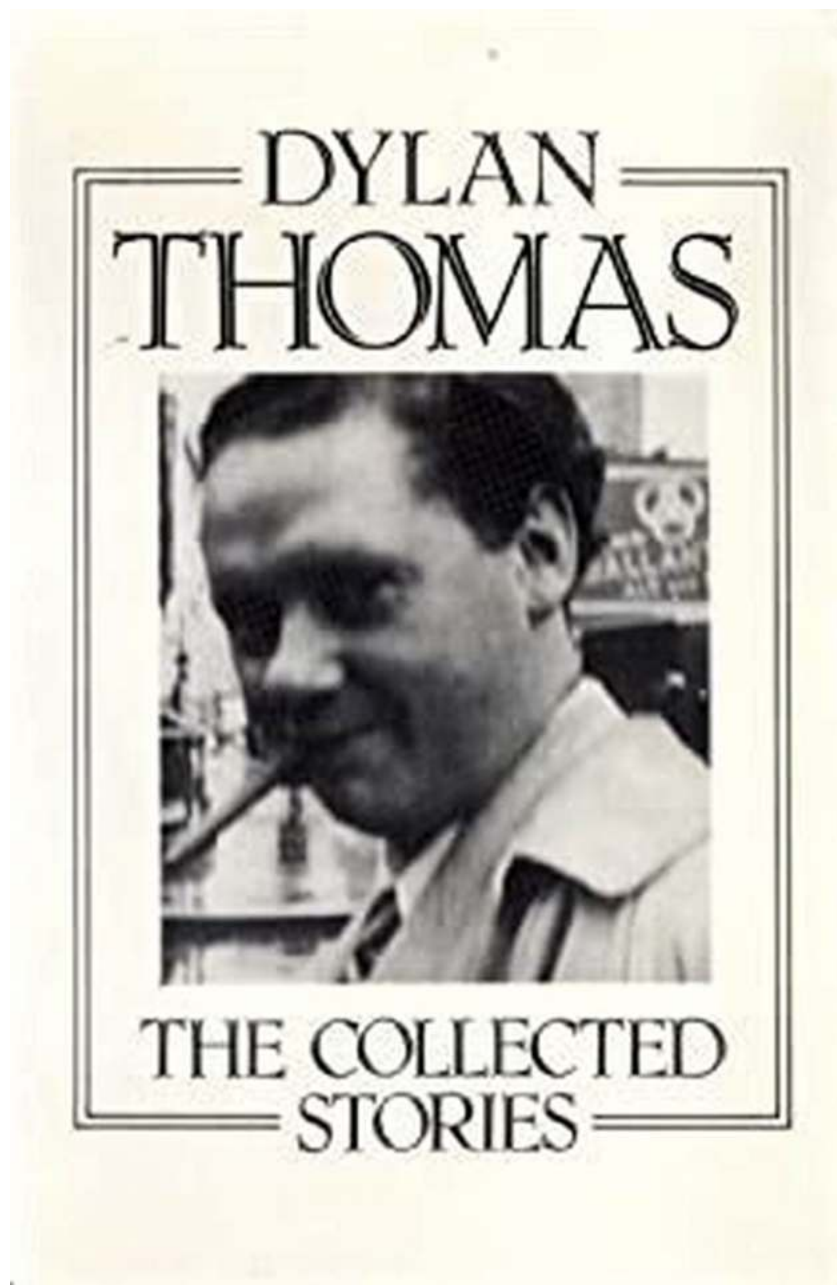


The roots of Chinese ideograms can be traced back thousands of years to the ancient pictographic inscriptions found on oracle bones and bronze vessels. Over time, these rudimentary drawings developed into more complex characters, reflecting the evolution of Chinese society, culture, and language.

Ideograms play a crucial role in preserving and conveying Chinese history and wisdom. They are an integral part of traditional literature, calligraphy, and even

contemporary media. Understanding ideograms not only helps decipher ancient texts but also aids in appreciating China's rich cultural tapestry.

New Directions Paperbook



If you are intrigued by Chinese ideograms and want to delve deeper into their mysteries, the New Directions Paperbook series is here to guide you. This groundbreaking literary collection presents an array of fascinating essays,

discussions, and explorations that shed light on the history, significance, and beauty of ideograms.

Each New Directions Paperbook takes you on a captivating journey through the language and culture of China. Offering comprehensive insights into the origins and usage of ideograms, these books provide a holistic understanding of the characters' symbolism and cultural context.

Unlocking the Secrets

The Secret Language of The Ideogram

Chapter 1

World and Movement

Dilip Rajeev

Ancient Traditions hold that in the beginning there were the primordial waters into which the creative intent entered. The world's first manifestation is the movement in the waters. In ancient Indian mythology, for instance, the Godhead is attributed the name Narayana. Etymologically, the sound may be interpreted as movement (yana) in the waters (naara). Iconographic depiction of the Hindu God is that of the deity resting on the waters on a seven headed serpent. The first incarnation of the Indian Godhead, is in their mythology, a fish – again, symbolic of movement generated in the waters, and that of the primordial stages of creation.

In the Chinese language, the sound Yu symbolizes (宇) [yǔ] the Cosmos, (語) [yǔ] Language, (魚) [yú] the Fish, etc. Here, again, we see the idea that the Cosmos is the creative intent, which manifests structurally as the word, as language, and it is that which is ultimately as an entity moving in the waters.

All forms may thus be thought of as deriving from certain fundamental patterns of movement. And an ideogram must in its form and movement capture the nature of the object it seeks to represent. In the psyche similar generative movements create associations between perceived concepts. These associations may be used to arrive at a fundamental set of radicals within the ideographic language. If these radicals are symbols of generative principles, an association of the generator-generated may be used to arrive at symbols for all manifested forms.



Figure 1. The Chinese Character 永 (yǒng), meaning "forever" or "permanence" is often used to illustrate the 8 basic strokes of Chinese characters. The ancient Chinese dictionary Shuo Wen interprets the form as the ordered patterns of expansion of a water stream.

Within the pages of the New Directions Paperbook series, readers can discover various essay topics, such as the philosophical aspects of Chinese characters, their influence on traditional and contemporary literature, and the connection between ideograms and calligraphy.

The insightful discussions and engaging narratives take readers on a mesmerizing exploration of the intricate world of ideograms. The books also

serve as an excellent resource for language enthusiasts, linguists, and anyone intrigued by the power and beauty of the written word.

Embrace the Ideograms

ideograms



Chinese character for earth



Roman numeral three



wheelchair access sign



biohazard sign

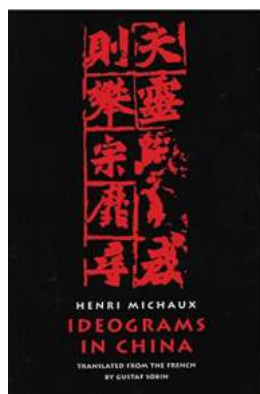
To truly understand a culture, one must immerse themselves in its language and scripts. Embracing the world of ideograms opens up a whole new dimension of appreciation for Chinese culture, art, history, and philosophy.

Whether you are a student of Chinese language and culture, an avid reader, or simply someone eager to explore new realms of knowledge, the New Directions Paperbook series on ideograms is an invaluable resource that will deepen your understanding and captivate your imagination.

Chinese ideograms are not only linguistic tools but also artistic masterpieces and cultural icons. Their intricate strokes and hidden meanings make them a truly captivating aspect of Chinese civilization.

Thanks to the New Directions Paperbook series, readers can now embark on an enlightening journey into the world of ideograms. So, grab a copy of these captivating books, immerse yourself in the beauty of Chinese writing, and unlock the secrets hidden within its characters.

Embrace the ideograms, embrace the essence of Chinese culture.



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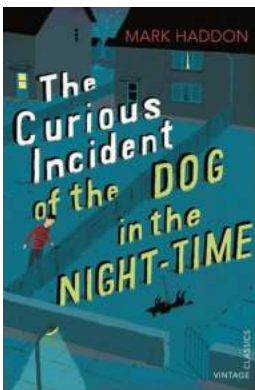
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Previously available only as a limited edition, Henri Michaux's *Ideograms in China* is now available as a New Directions paperback. Peerlessly translated by the American poet Gustaf Sobin, this long, beautifully illustrated and annotated prose poem was originally written as an introduction to Leon Chang's *La calligraphie chinoise* (1971), a work that now stands as an important complement to Pound

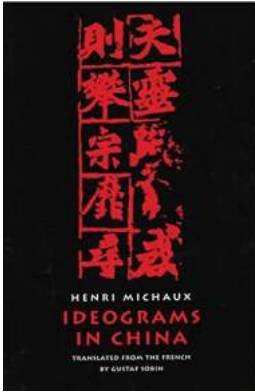
and Ernest Fenollosa's classic study, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*.

Allen Ginsberg called Michaux a genius, and Jorge Luis Borges said that his work is without equal in the literature of our time. Henri Michaux (1899-1984) wrote *Ideograms in China* as an answer to Leon Chang's *La calligraphie chinoise* (1971), a work that now stands as an important complement to Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa's classic study, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*. Previously available only as a limited edition, *Ideograms in China* is a long, gorgeously illustrated and annotated prose poem containing a very deep consideration of the world's oldest living language. Poet Gustaf Sobin's luminous English version beautifully captures the astounding and strange French original. For Michaux, the Chinese culture ranked as the world's richest, a culture grounded in its written language, which bound China together through three millennia and across its enormous territories. *Ideograms in China* presents an oblique history of that culture through the changing variety and beauty of the ideograms: Michaux looks into a dozen scripts—from ancient bronze vessels bearing *ku-wen* script to running script to standard *k'ai-shu* characters—and the poem carries the rhythms of someone discovering the soul of a civilization in its impression of ink on paper.



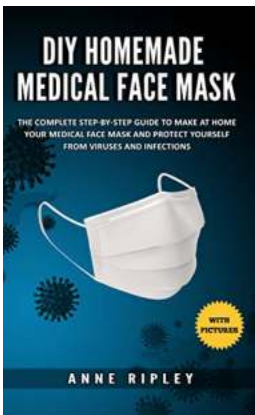
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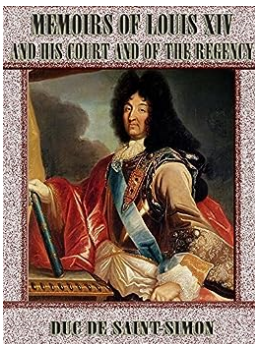
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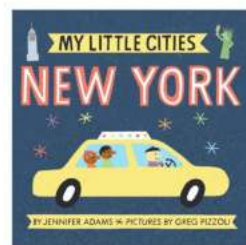
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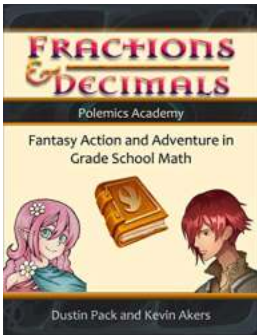
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