

7. IDEOGRAPHIC AND LOGOGRAPHIC SCRIPTS

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Sumerian scripts 3500 BC
 Egyptian hieroglyphs 3000BC
 Chinese script: 1500 BC

At first pictograms represented physical objects only, later also ideas, and finally the pictograms lost the meaning of the objects depicted but came to represent the sound of its spoken form, and so turned into phonograms.

Chinese:

chin-jap. char. :

大 big 小 small 中 middle
 女 woman 男 man

caractères chinois

国 pays
 新 nouveau
 星 étoile
 雪 neige

quelques caractères chinois :

木 bois 金 métal 水 eau
 火 feu 土 terre



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Japanese:

- Kanji script: 3000 Chinese characters found their way into Japan, but found a different pronunciation there.
- Kadmon:

Chinese characters but differing in pronunciation. As an example, the character for mountain, 山, which originally was stylized from the pictogram 山, is 'shan' in Mandarin Chinese and pronounced either 'san' or 'yama' in Japanese, depending on the context. 富士山 is Fuji San, Mt. Fuji – or Fuji Yama, as it is usually called in the West, but not by the Japanese. 中, middle, is zhong in Chinese but naka in Japanese. 中山 Nakayama (written as one word in romanization, but as two logograms in Japanese Kanji) is the name of both a town and a river in Shikoku Island, Japan. The same characters, but pronounced Zhongshan, represent the name of a town in southern China (and a park in Shanghai). The early pictogram for the sun, 日, was stylized into 日, as was mentioned above in connection with Chinese. Japan, country of the rising sun, is written 日本 in Kanji logographic characters and pronounced Nippon (or Nihon, depending on context; the second character is pronounced hon e.g. in the name of the island of Honshu). 京, kyō, is a capital in Japanese; to, 都 designates a city or an urban area. Kyōto, 京都, was the former capital. 東 tō, is east, as was shown above. Tōkyō is therefore written 東京 and means eastern capital – the name given to the former town of Edo ("estuary") after Emperor Meiji transferred the Japanese capital eastwards in 1868. The same 京 character, pronounced in Chinese jing, has the same meaning, e.g. in 北京, Beijing, northern capital – as against 南京 Nanjing, southern capital, and 東京, Dongjing, eastern capital – which is Tōkyō!

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