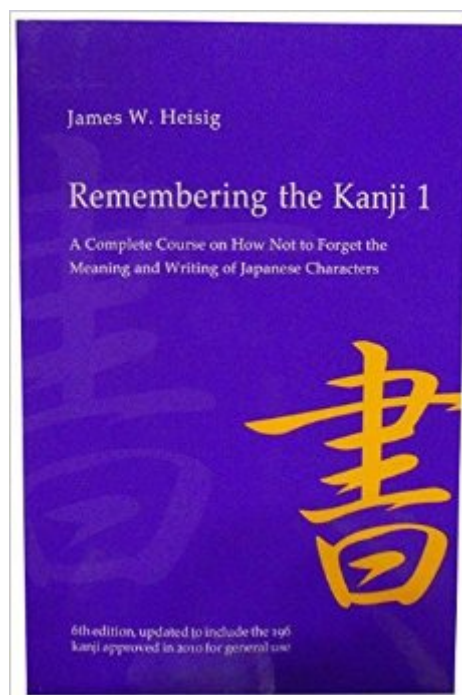




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Remembering The Kanji 1: A Complete Course On How Not To Forget The Meaning And Writing Of Japanese Characters



Synopsis

Updated to include the 196 new kanji approved by the Japanese government in 2010 as a general-use kanji, the sixth edition of this popular text aims to provide students with a simple method for correlating the writing and the meaning of Japanese characters in such a way as to make them both easy to remember. It is intended not only for the beginner, but also for the more advanced student looking for some relief from the constant frustration of forgetting how to write the kanji, or for a way to systematize what he or she already knows. The author begins with writing the kanji because contrary to first impressions it is in fact simpler than learning how to pronounce them. By ordering the kanji according to their component parts or primitive elements and then assigning each of these parts a distinct meaning with its own distinct image, the student is led to harness the powers of imaginative memory to learn the various combinations that make up the kanji. In addition, each kanji is given its own key word to represent the meaning, or one of the principal meanings, of that character. These key words provide the setting for a particular kanji's story, whose protagonists are the primitive elements. In this way, one is able to complete in a few short months a task that would otherwise take years. Armed with the same skills as Chinese or Korean students, who know the meaning and writing of the kanji but not their Japanese pronunciations, one is then in a much better position to learn the readings (which are treated in a separate volume). Remembering the Kanji has helped tens of thousands of students advance towards literacy at their own pace, and to acquire a facility that traditional methods have long since given up on as all but impossible for those not raised with the kanji from childhood.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

James W. Heisig is a permanent research fellow at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in Nagoya, Japan.

As of right now, the 7th of May, 2015 The kindle version of this book is useless. The system is supposed to work by showing you an individual kanji character, giving you a key word, and then showing you the order of the stroke used to draw/write the character. The first one (One) is correct, but starting with the next one, instead of showing the stroke order (in other words, instead of showing the correct way to write each kanji character) ther are just a bunch of random kanji character that have nothing at all to do with the one you are learning. Since you are supposed to write each one as you learn it, this makes the book useless. I will add a couple pictures as examples. I'm sure it can be fixed, but I ordered this a couple days ago, and the version I was sent was the incorrect version.IMPORTANT NOTE:Let me state that as far as the book itself goes, it looks like a fantastic book with a great system, and I am very happy to pay for it and use it. It is JUST the Kindle version that has a problem, NOT a problem with the book or the system itself.If I receive a corrected version of the Kindle edition, I will come back and fix this review. If you are wanting to learn Japanese, I will suggest you get this book, but for now order the paperback.

The Heisig approach works very well because, even though he just attaches made up meanings to the different elements that compose each Kanji, all of those imaginative stories really do engage the mind. A five star rating until Kanji #568, at which point the author decides to "allow" the reader to fill in all the blanks. The method quickly looses it's appeal when the stories are taken away and the reader is asked to fabricate his own imagery ("Rice, woman, taskmaster. It means 'number'. Figure it out!" Kanji 998). I would like to have seen these "primitives" given multiple meanings that could be more easily formed into interesting stories, and I may make up some meanings of my own that really complement the true ideal represented by the Kanji. That's where this approach really shines. The book also serves as a very useful and concise reference for Kanji-to-English, and I refer to it often while engaged in other curriculum.

This is a great book for memorizing the English meanings for Kanji. However, it doesn't include the actual Japanese pronunciations for the characters. Still, I really enjoyed reading it and highly suggest it for anyone having difficulty memorizing difficult Kanji.

Ignore negative reviewers, they likely skipped the Introduction and don't understand the real purpose of this book. It is a godsend and will absolutely improve your Kanji recall. For anyone struggling with the second half of RTK1 or RTK3, google Kanji Koohii (won't let me paste a link) > You have to create an account but it's completely free. Don't waste your time thinking up hundreds of stories - other people have thought up far funnier and memorable stories already. If you use Kanji Koohii, the second half of RTK1 is not just easy - it's downright fun. Some of the community stories are hilarious.

After a 4th (or maybe even 5th I've lost count) attempt of using this book I've come to re-review this book. I have to say I think the method sounds great. Remembering small pieces and then putting those together to remember more complex kanji. That said I just simply do not like this book. There's an annoying habit of starting the chapters off saying something to the effect "If you have trouble with X you didn't listen when I told you to do Y." which just gets tiresome in my opinion. Also one idea that seems like it'd be more important is the idea that the stories should be something that entertains your mind, allowing you to recall it easier. He says you need to disgust, enchant, tease, etc... you brain so that the stories become more permanent, but then proceeds to give stories so plain and forgettable that it goes straight out the window. Another issue I have with his book is that if there's a kanji that acts as a primitive, he'll give the primitive a meaning different from the kanji. I for one would think that using the actual kanji meaning whenever possible would be the best course of action, as that would mean you'd get exposure to the meaning every time it's used in another kanji. The last issue (or at least the last I'll make a point of mentioning) I have is that the book teaches you the meaning of kanji in English. You need to buy another book to go through and learn the meaning, but why do this? Kanji are pretty well useless for learning Japanese if you don't know how to read them. You can recognize them all day in English but if you're trying to read some Japanese then it'll break your mindset of thinking in Japanese. You need to buy his second, and from what the reviews say less effective, book to finally learn the meanings to them. All in all this left me feeling like I learned nothing to advance my understanding even having learned ~500 kanji. I just can't bring myself to finish this book, it is not the book for me, though the method seems sound. Short Version: The method is good, but I simply just don't care for this book. I'd recommend

someone considering this first find a section of it online to see if it's really for them (you can find the book for free online, or at least I did after I'd already bought it). If you're good enough at self motivation maybe you could use the method with a list of joyo kanji and make your own primitives for learning, that way you can learn the readings along with the meanings and writing.

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