

# Chinese Calligraphy

from ancient to modern



	華	清	沐
大篆			
小篆			

The origins of seal script (篆書, tensho) reach deep into the history of China; all the way to the end of Xia dynasty (夏朝, 2070 B.C. - 1600 B.C.) the first historically verified Chinese dynasty. Seal script is a term that is used for both great seal script (大篆, daiten) and small seal script (小篆, shouten).



As its name implies, this script was used by government bureaucrats. While it probably appeared at approximately 500 BCE, Lishu became widely used in the Qin (221 to 207 BCE) and Han (206 BCE to 220 CE) dynasties when the bureaucrats needed a fast and efficient script to handle state matters. The marked difference between this script and the Xiaozhuan is that Li Shu characters have less strokes and a more flowing style, therefore easily adaptable to brushes and pens. Lishu is still occasionally used in the modern age.



Running Script can be considered a cursive version of Kaishu. Often several strokes are merged into one, especially sequential dots or two strokes perpendicular to each other. It also appeared shortly after the Han dynasty.



Grass Script is the most cursive Chinese script. It appeared during the Qin dynasty. The shape of its characters often do not resemble the corresponding Lishu or Kaishu character, in that some strokes are merged into one and others are simply left out.

Traditional vs Simplified Chinese		
Traditional		Simplified
龍	Dragon <i>Lóng</i>	龙
體	Body <i>Ti</i>	体
蘭	Orchid <i>Lán</i>	兰

As the only indigenous and the oldest writing system in East Asia, the Chinese writing system became the inspiration and the basis for many other East Asian writing systems, some prominent and still in use, while other having faded into obscurity and disuse. Together they are loosely called the Sinitic family of scripts, which includes the following scripts.

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