

「JAPANESE SCRIPT」



「Broader Perspective: Cuneiform」

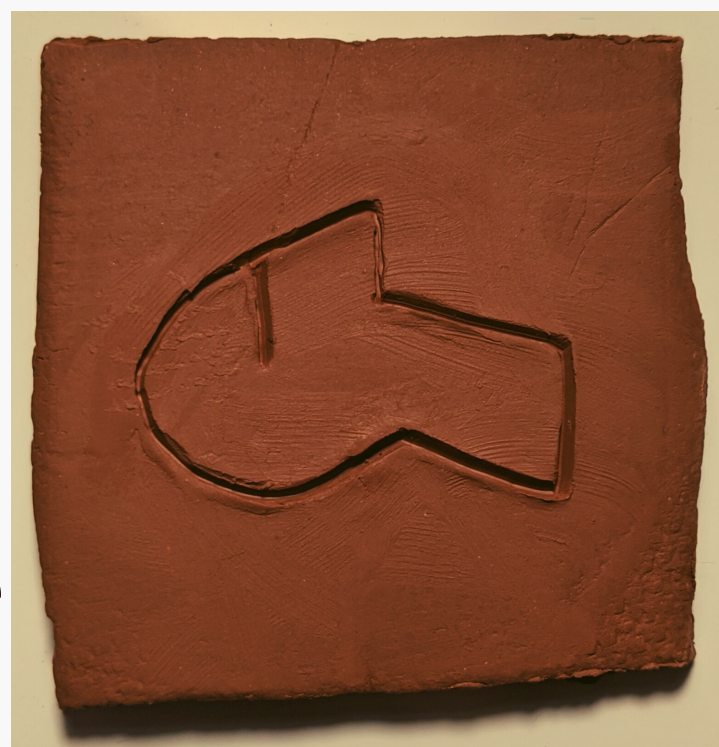
3200 BCE

- This symbol, representing the word 'sag' (head) looks very similar to its meaning



3000 BCE

- The symbol shifts 90 degrees
- This symbol can be combined and modified to have different meanings, just like the radicals of kanji



2400 BCE

- The form simplifies
- Instead of carving, lines are made by pressing a reed stylus into the clay



1000 BCE

- The form simplifies again
- Combinations of lines and groups of lines work as Kanji radicals do
- Also serves to make writing less time consuming and to better fit the syntax of the writing, like kana

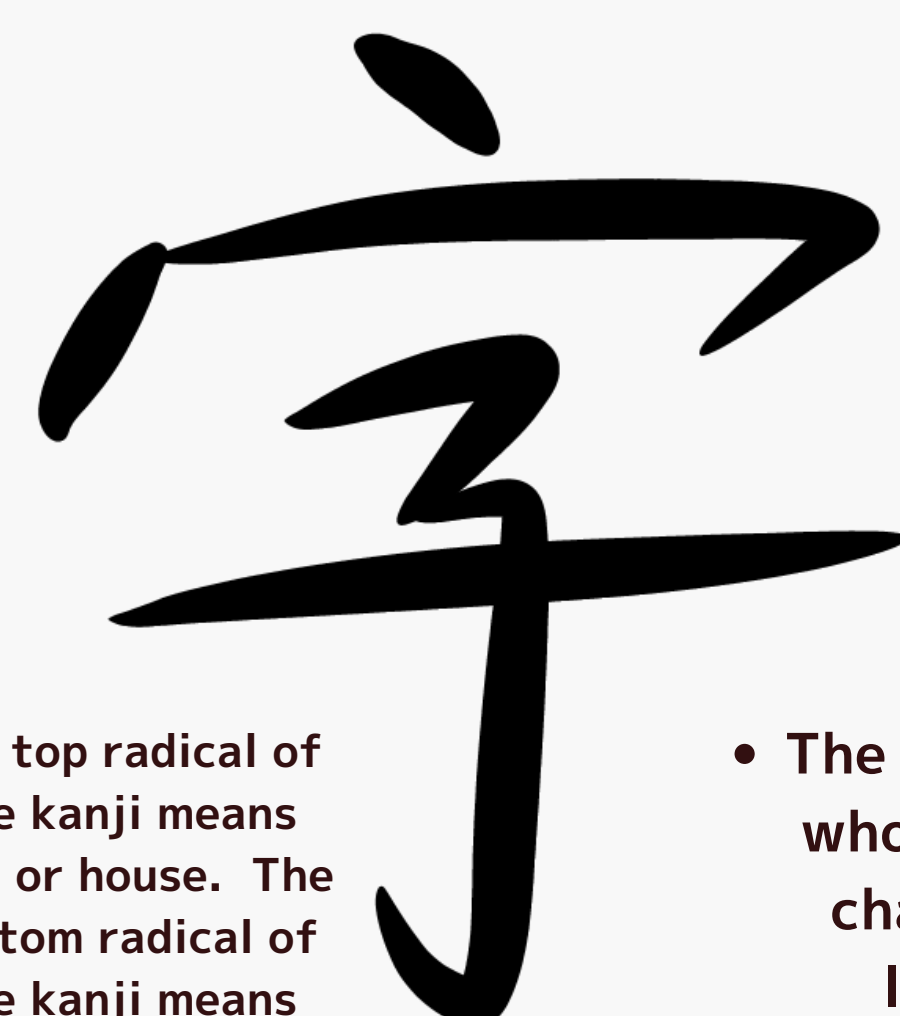


「Transformation of Japanese Script」

Kanji

感じ

- Logographic
- Still used today to shorten and quicken reading and writing



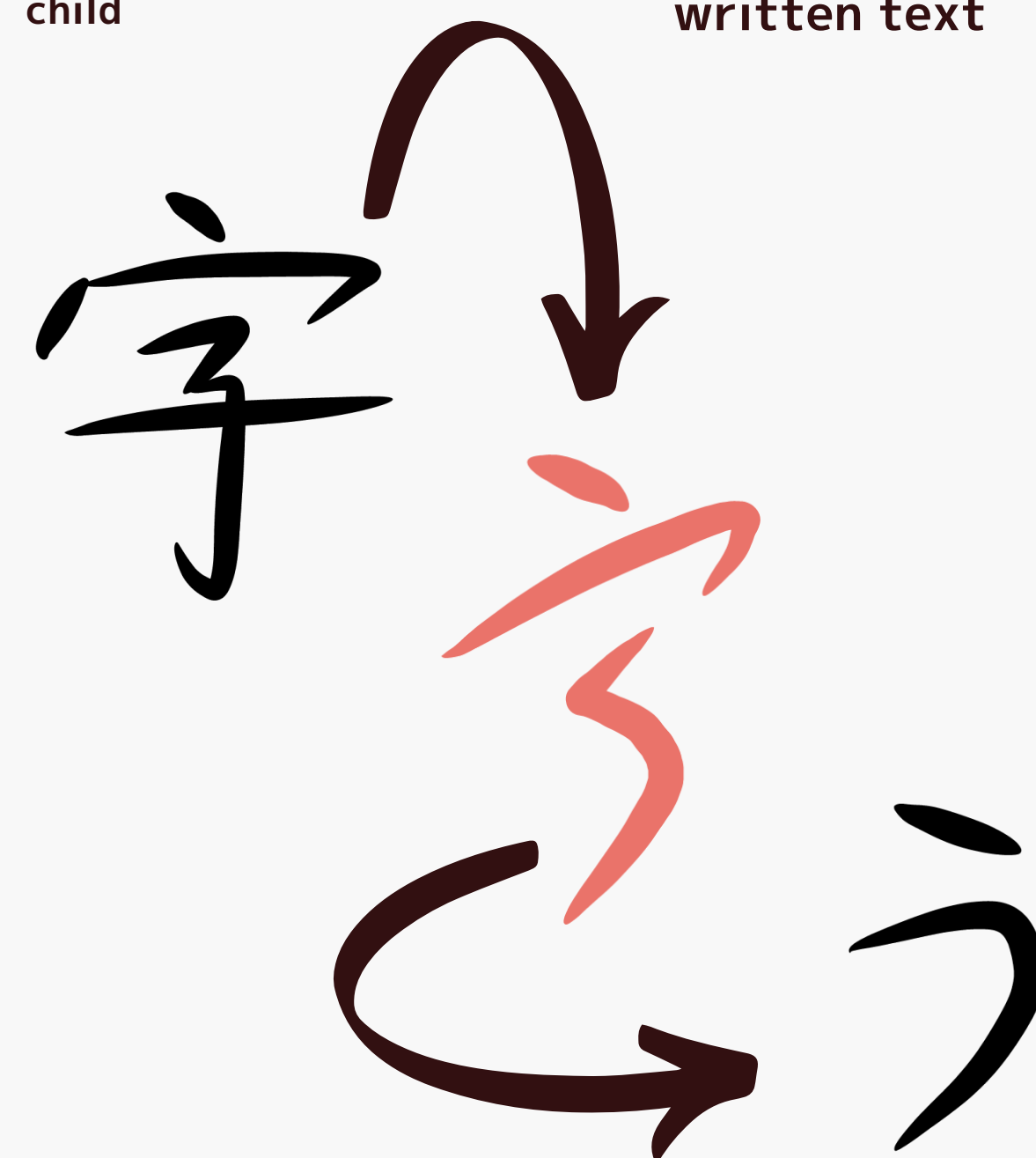
• The top radical of the kanji means roof or house. The bottom radical of the kanji means child

• The kanji as a whole means character, letter, written text

Hiragana

ひらがな

- Syllabographic
- Derived from the overall shape of kanji
- This hiragana represents the [u] sound



Katakana

カタカナ

- Syllabographic
- Derived from radicals of kanji
- This katakana represents the [u] sound



「Timeline of Japanese Writing System」

Importation of Chinese Characters

Chinese characters were first introduced in Japan. These were used to read and write in Chinese, not Japanese

Development of Man'yōgana

Chinese symbols were appropriated for Japanese writing and were read, phonetically, in Japanese

Development of Hiragana

Japanese characters used to represent nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, particles, and other, non-

Development of Katakana

Japanese characters used to represent newer words, foreign words, onomatopoeia, and emphasis

1st
2nd
3rd
4th
5th
6th
7th
8th
9th
10th
Century CE

