



The Relationship Between the Orientation of the Hand Symbols in Inscription on Bones and the Meaning

Yuqing Jia

Ningxia University, Yinchuan 750000, Ningxia, China

DOI: 10.32629/asc.v3i4.1003

Abstract: The characters with hand characters in inscription on bones have certain characteristics in conveying meaning. We reveal the relationship between the orientation of the hand symbols in inscription on bones and the meaning by giving concrete examples. Through the theory of cognitive linguistics, the necessity of the indeterminate orientation of different hand symbols is recognized, and be more deeply acquainted with the original thinking logic of the ancestors.

Keywords: inscription on bones, hand symbol, construction component, cognitive linguistic

1. Introduction

Inscription on bones is China's oldest character. Its high degree of pictographic, reflecting the creation of the main 'what you see is what you write' of the original thinking. Furthermore, in the process of character-making, it adopts certain abstract thinking to condense the objects of three-dimensional real world into two-dimensional Chinese character components representing their meanings. s meanings requires not only the means of figurativeness, but also the number of components, the direction of components, the viewpoint of components, and the orientation relationship between components. This coincides with some means in painting art.

We call "Hand symbol" components such as '𠂇', '𠂉', '𠂊', '𠂋', '𠂌', etc. We find that these hand symbols are depicted from the side perspective. On the one hand, they may be adapted to vertical writing, on the other hand, they are helpful to show the direction of these 'hands'. This paper intends to explore the relationship between the orientation of the hand and the types of force, and the specific meaning of the word 'hand symbol'. In this article, we will reveal the relationship between the orientation of the hand symbols in inscription on bones and the meaning.

2. Inscriptions on bones with single hand symbol

The oracle bone inscriptions with one hand symbol occupy the majority in all the oracle bone inscriptions with hand symbols. In this chapter, we give some examples to discuss what kind of action and meaning the inscriptions on bones with single hand symbol shows.

In some cases, hand symbol appears directly with the things it controls (Call it recipient in linguistics). The meaning writing of 'catch-up' in oracle bone inscriptions is '𠂇', like one grabs another with one hand. Similarly, '𠂉' means the actions of the captive. '𠂊' means using the hand to suppress the kneeling people, it is often used in the context of the captive. '𠂋' is the meaning of 'take'. *The Ritual of Zhou* recorded that in ancient Chinese war, the winning side cut the enemy's left ear to record their achievements. This writing method is still used in regular-script. '𠂌' is the meaning of 'wife'. The left construction component is like a woman with long hair, while the whole situation depicts a person dragging her by hand. Xu Zhongshu believes this character reflects the ancient practice of plundering women as spouses.

When such characters are related to the human body, they inevitably have some violent colors of primitive society. There are also some characters that cannot be classified as the former, such as '𠂍', which depicts opening the door by hand, indicating the meaning of 'open' or 'start'. And '𠂎' remove the utensils after eating. It means finished.

In other cases, hand symbol needs some auxiliary tools to appear with the recipient, and cooperate to complete the whole picture meaning. Some tool shapes are only written in one vertical, but the specific items represented in different words are different. For example, '𠂏' is an official representing the name of a minister. With a walking stick, it symbolizes the person with rights. In contrast, '𠂐' shows that a person is painting with a vertical one, this stroke of Chinese character stands for a writing brush.

Many times, all aspects of the working people in Shang society are inseparable from labor tools. Therefore, hand-held tools are also seen everywhere in daily life. '𠂑' looks like holding a farm implements hit the wheat, letting the wheat thresh. It symbolizes a joy of harvest. Later it can be extended to the meaning of well-being. '𠂒' like holding the torch in the house

looking for things. This is the source of 'search'. In this type of characters, the 'hand symbol' mainly plays an auxiliary role, and the font mainly shows that the hand-held tools are engaged in certain activities, reflecting the labor form of the ancients.

3. Inscriptions on bones with double hands symbol

This chapter starts with the most common left and right symmetrical double hands symbols. This kind of double hands symbol writing '𠂇' in oracle bone inscriptions is like what the two hands offer. '𠂇' holds a piece of meat in hands, indicating a sacrifice for meat. '𠂇', the hand is written by the sheep, so it is also a meat sacrifice. 'enshrine' is the first source of meaning for double hands. Later, the specific meaning of 'enshrine' was generalized and some common actions could be represented.

Some of them evolved into holding tools. For instance, '𠂇' is a kind of weapon with both hands called 'Ge'. At the beginning, it means the dance used for sacrifice, and later developed into the meaning of 'alert'. '𠂇' means 'weapons', and later developed into 'soldiers', that is, people with weapons. About '𠂇' and '𠂇', Xu Zhongshu thought they were suspected as a hunting activity, with hunting tools in hand.[2] '𠂇' is like a person holding a tool in front of the grass with double hands. It means weeding.

When the double hands symbols are written in the upper part of other construction components, they tend to describe an action that represents upward drag, salvage and lifting. '𠂇' is like people trapped in a trap, with double hands dragging him up, and the direction of this force is upward. The word evolved to mean 'save'. It also writes '𠂇', double hands hold people up. Later generations can not only mean 'save', but also can mean 'auxiliary', or an auxiliary emperor's official name. When double hands are written on the top of the other construction components, another case is that something is placed. '𠂇', this character consists of three parts, double hands, cattle head, table. There are going to place the cattle head on the table for sacrifice. There is also a font writing '𠂇', which is the abbreviation of '𠂇'. In addition, it is also possible to carry out a labor behavior with a tool in hand. For example, the concept of "scoop rice" has '𠂇' to indicate that the glyphs in the *Shuowen Jiezi* are in the same character form as the one hand holding a pestle.

When the double hands are one to the left and the other to the right, and the backs of the double hands face each other, it means that the direction of the force exerted by hands is in an opposite state. '𠂇' is a complex writing of '𠂇', which means 'violation, disagreement'. The glyph is to push the two people in opposite directions by hand. '𠂇' means 'delivery', that is, women give birth. It looks like human hands open the birth canal and remove the fetus.

If the double hands are in the same direction, that is to help each other to become friends, 'friends' in oracle bones is writing '𠂇'.

When double hands symbol conform to writing a hand symbol below, another hand symbol above, most of the time is the behavior of the two people together. '𠂇' and '𠂇' are like two people transfer goods up and down. However, there are exceptions. '𠂇' describes the situation where a person tries to open his eyes.

Finally, in this chapter we turn to the situation of the four hands symbol. Since there is only one example, and its meaning is similar to the example above--two people working together to complete the action, so we will not set up a separate chapter. That is, the four hands are actually two double hands symbol. There is only one example, the component constructions of '𠂇' can be divided into two parts: two pairs of double hands symbol and '𠂇' held up, with the meaning of four hands lifting together. The '𠂇' indicates the shelf, and the glyph as a whole indicates that everyone works together to lift the shelf.

4. Hands symbols from the perspective of cognitive psychology

In order to analyze the principle of these hand symbols as construction component within a single Chinese character in inscription on bones, we must first introduce some theories of cognitive psychology. According to the different characteristics of the objective objects reflected by human perception, the cognitive psychology community can divide perception into spatial perception, time perception and motion perception. Cognitive psychologist Lykooff calls it the orientation metaphor: up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep shallow, central-peripheral. He thinks that most of them have to do with spatial orientation.[3] They are simple structures that are constantly repeated in our daily physical experiences. These spatial relationships are formed in the process of continuous interaction between man and his surroundings in the first place, with the unique human experience of sensation and movement. Therefore, we can say that spatially oriented cognition is directly connected to the human sensory system.

Metaphorical thinking is the driving force behind the creation of Chinese characters. Without the role of metaphorical thinking, there would be no Chinese character system based on pictograms.[4] In the example we have given, when each hand symbols is in different directions such as the upper, lower, left, and right of other construction components, the prompting effect of its meaning shows a different metaphorical thinking. For example, when the hand symbol is in the upper part of

other construction components, it may be that the person is above to salvage, pressure, place, manipulate tools, etc. on the lower object. When the hand symbol is in the lower part of other construction components, it may be that the person is lifting, offering, or playing with something. There are also some interesting aspects of orientation relationship between the Double hand symbols, such as the direction of the double hands facing each other, that is, cooperating with each other to complete the action. The double hands are in the same direction, that is, to take the meaning of mutual help. The two hands are opposite in the direction, that is, to make the gap larger, and later developed to the opposite meaning.

5. Conclusion

As a large group of inscription on bones, its configuration mode made inscription on bones basically adapted to the needs of transmitting information and recording language at that time. From the above in-depth analysis of inscription on bones containing hand talismans, we can see that the internal configuration system of inscription on bones is self-contained and regular, and contains the original thinking logic of the ancestors. The oracle bone inscription is based on the memory image that emerges in the subject's consciousness, and further integrates the rational concept factors into it.[5] It is a natural product of the cultural system of the primitive labor society. Inscription on bones have been artistically processed so that they can be integrated into the lives of the general public. In order to make inscription on bones more easily accepted and used by the public.

References

- [1] Xu Zhongshu. *Inscription on bones dictionary* [M].Sichuan Dictionary Press,2006,P1303.
- [2] Xu Zhongshu. *Inscription on bones dictionary* [M].Sichuan Dictionary Press,2006,P243.
- [3] Lakoff,G. *Metaphors We Live By* [M].The University of Chicago Press,1980.P22.
- [4] Zhou Yunhui. *A Metaphorical Study of Chinese Characters'Constructions* [D].Doctoral Dissertation of Fujian Normal University,2015.P7
- [5] Fang Ming. *The Aesthetic Studies of the Relationship between Form and Meaning of Oracle* [D].Doctoral Dissertation of Nankai University,2014.P57