

# 1.0

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

四 弘 誓 願

眾 生 無 邊 誓 願 度

煩 惱 無 盡 誓 願 斷

法 門 無 量 誓 願 學

佛 道 無 上 誓 願 成

# 1.1

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

Practice these 20 characters:

四, 口, 儿, 弘, 弓, 厶, 折, 言, 扌, 手\*,  
斤, 口, 原, 頁, 白, 小, 自, 八, 日, 目

Learn to recognize the characters and know what they mean.

Learn to write the characters one stroke at a time.

Learn how the characters are interconnected by composition and decomposition.

## 1.2

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

四 = 口 + 儿

(sì/four = wéi/circle + ér/child)

One way to "build" a new character is to take one character and put it inside another:

田 = 口 + 十

日 = 口 + 一

囟 = 口 + 乂 + 儿

## 1.3

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

弘 = 弓 + 厶

(hóng/great = gōng/bow + sī/secret)

Another way to build characters is to place two characters side-by side:

法 = 氵 + 去

佛 = 亻 + 弗

但 = 亻 + 旦

## 1.4

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

誓 = 折 + 言

(shì/vow = zhé/break + yán/words)

A third way to build characters is to place one character on top of another:

去 = 土 + 厶

空 = 穴 + 工

旦 = 日 + 一

## 1.5

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

願 = 原 + 頁

(yuàn/desire = yuán/source + yè/page)

This is another example of a character composed of two components placed side by side.

## 1.6

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

Recap:

四 = 口 + 儿

弘 = 弓 + 厶

誓 = 折 + 言

願 = 原 + 頁

So far that gives us 10 characters (in this lesson we'll skip 誓 & 願 for now).

**But wait, there's  
more .....**

# 1.7

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

Now we'll take decomposition a step further:

四 = 口 + 儿

弘 = 弓 + 厶

誓 = 折 + 言 

願 = 原 + 頁

折 = 扌 + 斤 (zhé/break = shǒu/hand + jīn/axe)

扌 = "radical" of 手 (shǒu/hand)

言 = 讠 + 二 + 口

yán/speech = tóu/lid + èr/two + kǒu/mouth



# 1.8

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

四 = 口 + 儿 (sì/four = wéi/circle + ér/child)

弘 = 弓 + 厶 (hóng/great = gōng/bow + sī/secret)

誓 = 折 + 言 (shì/vow = zhé/break + yán/words)

願 = 原 + 頁 (yuàn/desire = yuán/source + yè/page)

原 = 厂 + 白 + 小

(yuán/source = hǎn/cliff + bái/white + xiǎo/small)

白 = 丿 + 日

bái/white = piě/slash + rì/sun

頁 = 一 + 自 + 八

yè/page = yī/one + zì/oneself + bā/eight

自 = 丿 + 目

zì/oneself = piě/slash + mù/eye

# 1.9

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

Notice that when characters are combined to make new characters, they get squished so that the new combination still fits into the space of a single character:

原 = 厂 + 白 + 小

(yuán/source = hǎn/cliff + bái/white + xiǎo/small)

原 = 厂 + 白 + 小

The diagram illustrates the construction of the character '原' (yuán). It shows the character '原' in the center, with three arrows pointing towards it from its constituent parts: a red arrow from the left pointing to the '厂' radical, a green arrow from the right pointing to the '白' radical, and a blue arrow from below pointing to the '小' radical. The '原' character itself is color-coded to show these contributions: the top-left part is red, the top-right part is green, and the bottom part is blue.

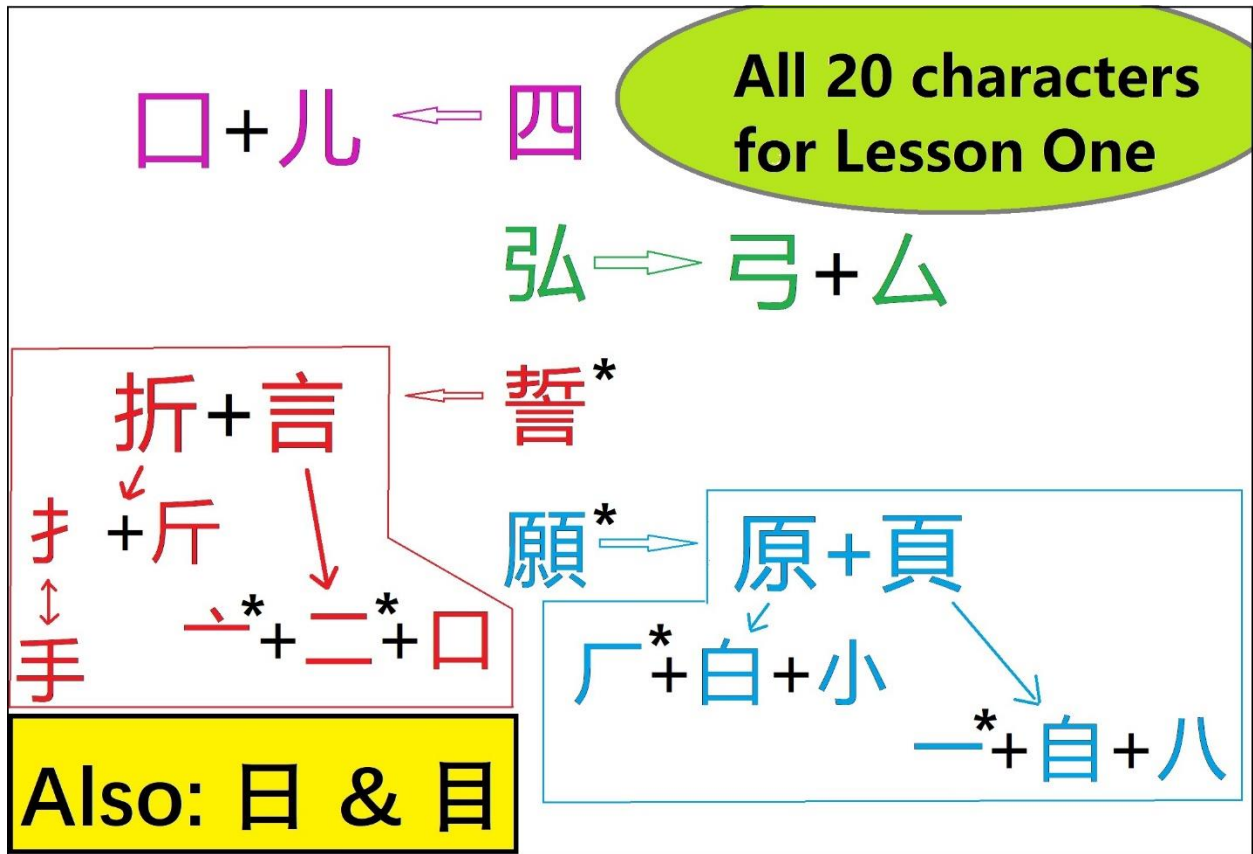
# 1.10

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

Now we have all 20 characters:

四, 口, 儿, 弘, 弓, 厶, 折, 言, 扌, 手\*,

斤, 口, 原, 頁, 白, 小, 自, 八, 日, 目



NOTE: characters not included:

誓, 願, 一, 二, 厂, 一 (These are marked with \* in the diagram above)

## 1.11

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

### Tricky characters:

- 𠃉 and 𠃊
- 儿 and 八
- 白, 𠃉, 日, and 目
- Notice that the radical 扌 is missing a stroke compared to 手.

## 1.12

(Four Great Vows, Lesson One)

**Where else might you see  
these characters?**

**HSK 1 & 2:**

四, 口, 儿, 弓, 厶, 讠 (言), 扌,  
手, 斤, 口, 白, 小, 自, 八, 日,  
目

(NOT in HSK 1 & 2: 弘, 折, 原, 頁)

**Heart Sutra:**

口, 儿, 弓, 厶, 言, 扌, 手, 斤,  
口, 頁, 白, 小, 自, 八, 日, 目