Short Traditional and Long Simplified: the Paradox of Contemporary Traditional Taiwanese Characters that Consist of Fewer Strokes than their Equivalent Simplified Forms

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Introduction

It is common knowledge that simplified characters, the characters used predominantly in Mainland China, have fewer strokes than traditional characters, which used to be the standard way of writing characters in Mainland China and still are in Taiwan and Hong Kong. After all, reducing the number of strokes in characters was one of the primary methods of simplification used in the Mainland Chinese simplification programme. And yet, careful examination of Taiwanese traditional and Mainland simplified characters reveals a paradox: there are traditional characters that have fewer strokes than the simplified forms of those same characters.

This paradox is the topic of this thesis. I will begin this thesis by discussing the history of character reform and simplification, in order to understand the historical context of the Mainland Chinese simplification programme and the modern debates on orthographic standards and character development. In chapter 2, I will present my methodology for finding characters that meet the criterion of inclusion in this study, namely that their Taiwanese traditional forms consist of fewer strokes than their equivalent simplified forms, and list all the forms that meet this criterion with brief descriptions. In chapter 3, I will discuss what has caused the characters listed in chapter 2 to have fewer strokes in their Taiwanese traditional forms than in their equivalent simplified forms, and analyze the orthographic principles that dictate their forms and stroke counts.

This thesis will show that there are several dozen such characters, making up about 0.5% of all common characters, which can be divided into three categories, namely Taiwanese traditional characters that have fewer strokes than their equivalent Mainland simplified forms due to: 1) stroke contraction, 2) consistently applied component substitution, and 3) their elimination from the Mainland Chinese orthographic standard in favour of character forms with more strokes of which the Mainland Chinese script authorities considered them to be variant forms. The standards on character writing that determine the relevance of these characters to this study can be found either in the

Taiwanese *Guózì Biāozhǔn Zìtǐ Yándìng Yuánzé* 國字標準字體研訂原則, or in the

Mainland Chinese *Dì Yī Pī Yìtǐzì Zhěnglǐ Biǎo* 第一批异体字整理表, and characters in all of

these categories can be found in sources that predate the Mainland-Taiwanese split in

character-writing standards.

In this thesis, I will generally use the terms 'simplification' and 'simplified' in the way in

which it has been used by those who carried out the reform of Chinese characters in

Mainland China after 1949, so that 'simplification' is used to mean the reduction of the

number of strokes in a character or the replacement of a character with another

character that has the same pronunciation, thereby reducing the number of characters in

use.[1] In reality, these are two different types of simplification, since the former simplifies

at the level of the individual graph, whereas the latter simplifies at the level of the

writing system as a whole. Simplifications at the level of the individual graph can cause

complications at the level of the system as a whole, and vice versa. Thus, whether or not

the act of reducing the number of strokes in a character or reducing the number of

characters in use should be considered a simplification is itself debatable. By attaching

more meanings to a character, as is the case when a character is replaced by a

homophonous character that already has a meaning of its own, it may become harder to

understand the intended meaning of the character in a specific context, in effect also

making the character harder to read correctly.[2] While reducing the number of characters

in use is one of the causes for characters to be relevant to this study, the focus of this

thesis lies at the level of the individual graph. As for reducing the number of strokes in a

character, some scholars have argued that it causes more characters to look alike,

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[1] Chen, Ping. *Modern Chinese: History and Sociolinguistics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 157.
Handel, Zev. *Can a Logographic Script be Simplified? Lessons from the 20th Century Chinese Writing Reform Informed by Recent Psycholinguistic Research*, in: Scripta, Volume 5, 2013, p. 40.
[2] Ibid. pp. 40-41.

making them harder to distinguish and thus harder to read.[3] A more fundamental problem with equating stroke reduction to simplification is that:

> "using stroke number as the metric by which to judge the efficacy of simplification […] is based on a fundamental misjudgment about Chinese characters: namely, that the stroke is the basic cognitive unit by which script users learn and remember characters."[4]

A character or a character component with more strokes is not automatically more difficult to learn or to remember than a character component with fewer strokes, so stroke reduction does not automatically make a character or a component simpler. At the heart of these criticisms of simplification lies the difference in ease of use of characters between the writer and the reader: making a character simpler to write can make it harder to read, so that the term simplification may be applicable to the process of writing a character, but not necessarily to its reading.

Furthermore, the way in which the term 'simplification' is used in this study is not the only way in which it can be used, for any change made to a character that the one who initiates the change considers to make the character simpler can be deemed a simplification. For example, changes to establish a perfect correspondence between phonetic elements in characters and their pronunciation can be considered simplifications.

In this study, I will use the term 'pre-simplified traditional' to refer to the standard characters that were used across the Sinosphere up until the Mainland Chinese simplification programme of the second half of the twentieth century. Conversely, I will

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[3] Chen. pp. 158, 160.
[4] Handel. p. 41.

use 'Taiwanese traditional' to refer to the standard characters that are presently used in Taiwan.

Finally, by 'relevant characters' I will mean all of the characters that have fewer strokes in their standard contemporary Taiwanese traditional forms than in their equivalent Mainland simplified forms, and therefore meet the criterion of inclusion in this study, regardless of whether this situation has arisen due to changes on the Taiwanese side or on the Mainland side.

1. History of Chinese Character Reform and Simplification

The Chinese writing system is one of the oldest writing systems in the world, and one of only a few thought to have been conceived independently from any other writing system. It has been in continuous use for thousands of years, making it the oldest writing system still in use. Naturally, over the course of its history the Chinese script has changed in its graphical appearance, and standards have arisen, been set, and been changed. In this chapter, I will discuss the key orthographic reforms and simplifications that affected the Chinese script over the course of its history, from the earliest detectable changes to the Mainland Chinese simplification drive of the 1950s and onwards.

Two currents have been and continue to be at work in this process of orthographic change; first, top-down, centralized efforts by political and intellectual authorities to dictate how characters are correctly written, and thus also how characters are incorrectly written; second, bottom-up, decentralized writing practices developed over time and across China, often unconsciously, by ordinary script users who may have learned non-standard character forms, who may inadvertently create new character forms, and who may knowingly choose to use non-standard forms for ease of writing. This chapter will show that these two currents are not necessarily opposed to each other, but often interact with each other and follow each other towards the same end point.

The history of Chinese characters may at first seem like a clean trajectory of progress from non-standardized character forms with high stroke counts to standardized character forms with lower stroke counts, but this is an oversimplification. This chapter will show that the history of script reform is not just one of logical and widely observed simplifications, but also one of abandoned reforms, complications, inconsistencies, and recurring debates.

Moreover, character reform is not and was not a purely technical process, but has been at least in part ideologically motivated for at least as long as we know the motivations of

those who sought to reform the script. Thus, in order to properly understand the actions of script reformers, it is necessary to understand their goals and the ideological context and considerations that motivated them.

Early Changes

The oldest surviving undisputed Chinese characters date to the Shang dynasty (c. 1600 BCE – c. 1046 BCE), and the first changes to characters that could be considered a form of character simplification happened during this period. For example, pictographic characters representing animals that during the earlier periods of Shang writing were conventionally written with two strokes to represent the animal's torso, during the later periods of Shang writing were conventionally written with one stroke to represent the animal's torso.[5] A couple of examples of such characters can be found in table 1 below.

Traditional form	Two-stroke-torso form	One-stroke-torso form
馬 'horse'		
鹿 'deer'		

Table 1. *Two examples of Oracle Bone animal characters with torsos depicted with one and two strokes*[6]

We should not apply the modern concept of character simplification onto the Shang writing system, since we know very little of the motivations of the Shang in making changes to their script, and since the changes that were made to characters during the Shang dynasty were not unidirectional towards fewer strokes. Instead, Shang writing included characters that came to be written more elaborately during the later periods of the Shang dynasty.[7] That being said, in choosing to write certain pictographic characters with fewer strokes, the Shang scribes chose to sacrifice a degree of semantic value, in

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[5] Keightley, David. *Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, p. 109.
[6] Ibid. p. 218.
[7] Ibid. pp. 109-110.

this case derived from pictography, for the sake of increasing the ease of writing through abbreviation. This development mirrors the character simplifications of later eras, wherein character components that provided the reader with information about the meaning or pronunciation of the character were sometimes eliminated or replaced with components that do not convey the same level of information in order to abbreviate the character.

The Qin Reforms

The most substantial deliberate reform of Chinese characters that has been recorded before the simplifications of the 20th century was carried out during the Qin dynasty (221 BCE – 206 BCE), under the first emperor of China, Qín Shǐ Huáng 秦始皇 (259 BCE – 210 BCE), as part of the Qin's wide ranging efforts towards standardization and centralization. After unifying the last of the independent states of the Warring States period (453 BCE – 221 BCE) under his rule, Qín Shǐ Huáng ordered the standardization of the various regional character variants of the official seal script (*zhuànwén* 篆文).[8] In addition to the standardization of seal script characters, the style of writing known as the clerical script (*lìshū* 隸屬) was developed by the Qin, building on preexisting writing practices.[9] On the shift from seal script to clerical script, Qiú Xīguī 裘錫圭 writes:

> "Insofar as the evolution of the forms and the styles of Chinese characters is concerned, the transformation of the seal script forms into clerical script forms was the most important change of all. This transformation caused the appearance of Chinese characters to undergo immense changes and had a profound effect on their structure as well […]."[10]

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[8] Qiú Xīguī 裘錫圭. *Chinese Writing*, Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2000, p. 98.
[9] Ibid. pp. 103-104.
[10] Ibid. p. 126.

Qiú gives the five main ways in which seal script forms were transformed into clerical script forms as follows: 1) decomposition of seal-style script, converting curved lines into straight lines, 2) contractions, 3) omissions, 4) distortion of character components, and 5) convergence of character components. Examples of these five types of transformation are given in table 2. In some instances, these transformations can be considered simplifications because they reduce the number of strokes or components in a character, or because they reduce the number of distinct character components in use. In other instances the opposite is true, for the distortion of character components increased the number of graphically distinct components.

Type of transformation	Seal script form	Clerical script form	Explanation
Decomposition, converting curved lines into straight lines			The curved central stroke representing a kneeling figure is changed into a straight stroke (and the character is partially rotated)
Contraction			The two arms are merged into '一', the torso and the left leg are merged into '丿'
Omission			Two of the three '田' components are omitted
Distortion of character components		independent form / left-component form	Some components take on (multiple) different forms when used as components compared to when used as independent characters
Convergence of character components			Multiple distinct components are replaced by a single component: and become 夫

Table 2. *Examples of types of transformation from seal script forms to clerical script forms*[11]

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[11] Ibid. pp. 127-130.

While the traditional view of the Qin reforms is that they were carried out rigorously and that the new standards were quickly adopted, the original writings from around the time of the reforms show that the change in orthography was much more gradual than this narrative suggests, with the creation of the clerical script predating the Qin unification of China and character variants continuing to be used widely after the reforms.[12] In fact, Imre Galambos has argued that "the changes were the result of a gradual historical process that began before the establishment of the Qin dynasty and lasted far into the Han, possibly even longer."[13] If preexisting writing habits contributed most of the source material for the reform and old character variants continued to be commonly used for many years after the reform was initiated, then that suggests that the Qin script reform was less a heavy-handed, top-down enforcement of newly created character standards, than the product of a gradual, evolutionary process with a significant bottom-up element.

Medieval and Early Modern Writing Practices

Much of what we know about medieval Chinese writing practices comes from the manuscripts found at the turn of the 20th century at Dunhuang, a monastery town on the Silk Road that flourished during the Tang dynasty (618 CE – 907 CE). In this large and diverse corpus of mostly handwritten texts, variant character forms are extremely common, displaying the flexibility of orthographic standards and practices at that time and place. Many of these variant character forms have continued to be used in Chinese handwriting since that time, and in some cases the view on which character variant was the standard or preferred form has changed over time.[14] Those character variants that have fewer strokes than what was or what became the standard or preferred character form, and that could thus be seen by comparison as abbreviated or simplified character

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[12] Galambos, Imre. *The Myth of the Qin Unification of Writing in Han Sources*, Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, 57(2), 2004, pp. 181, 189, 192.

[13] Ibid. p. 192.

[14] Galambos, Imre. *Popular Character Forms (Súzì) and Semantic Compound (Huìyì) Characters in Medieval Chinese Manuscripts*, in Journal of the American Oriental Society 131.3, 2011, pp. 399-400.

forms (see examples in table 3 below), constituted an important source for the simplifications that were instituted in Mainland China in the second half of the 20th century, which will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter.

Manuscript character	Contemporary simplified form	Traditional form	Pinyin
来	来	來	lái
与	与	與	yǔ
尔	尔	爾	ěr
闻	闻	聞	wén

Table 3. *A few examples of character variants in Dunhuang manuscripts that are now the standard simplified forms*[15]

Attempts at character reform did not always achieve a permanent change to the orthographic standard. Wǔ Zétiān 武則天 (624 CE – 705 CE), China's only female emperor, whose reign interrupted the Tang dynasty from 690 CE to 705 CE, propagated several new character forms that replaced a small number of common characters (see table 4). The exact number of such characters is sometimes disputed, but according to Shī Ānchāng 施安昌 there were eighteen.[16] While some of these new characters had fewer strokes than the characters that they were intended to replace, others had more, since the reform was not carried out to simplify characters for ease of remembrance or writing, but for "ritual and spiritual considerations".[17] Although Dunhuang manuscripts dating to Wǔ's reign show that these new characters were used, though not necessarily

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[15] These examples are taken from a manuscript known as the *Táng Tàizōng Rù Míng Jì* 唐太宗入冥記 (*Tang Taizong in Hell*), Dunhuang International Project Online Database, accession number S.2630.

[16] Shī Ānchāng 施安昌. *Yǔwén Cídiǎn Zěnyàng Chǔlǐ Wǔ Zétiān Zào De Zì* 语文词典怎样处理武则天造的字, in *Císhū Yánjiū* 辞书研究, 1984, no. 6, pp. 79-80.

[17] Galambos, Imre. *Dunhuang Characters and the Dating of Manuscripts*, in Whitfield, Susan & Sims-Williams, Ursula eds. *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith*. London: British Library, 2004, p. 74.

consistently, they were officially discontinued after the restoration of the Tang dynasty in 705, since the new characters were ideologically tied to Wǔ.

Table 4. *Wǔ Zétiān characters (top row) and the characters that they were intended to replace (bottom row)*[18]

In 1930, the *Sòng Yuán Yǐlái Súzì Pǔ* 宋元以來俗字譜 (*A glossary of popular Chinese characters since the Song and Yuan dynasties,* hereafter: *Súzì Pǔ*) was published, recording the variant character forms that appeared in twelve popular titles during the Song (960 – 1279), Yuan (1271 – 1368), Ming (1368 – 1644), and Qing (1644 – 1912) dynasties. Aside from showing that these variant forms existed, it also hints at the relative popularity of each variant over time, since it records the occurrence of variant forms in a couple of titles from several different periods. These variant forms, a few examples of which can be found in table 5 below, served as an important source of characters later selected for official recognition.[19]

	Variant form in the *Súzì Pǔ*	Contemporary simplified form	Traditional form	Pinyin
1		仪	儀	yí
2		得	得	dé
3		从	從	cóng
4		劳	勞	láo
5		伤	傷	shāng
6		后	後	hòu

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[18] Qí Yuántāo 齐元涛. *An Investigation of the Morphology of Newly-built Words of the Wu's Zhou Dynasty* 武周新字的构形学考察, in Journal of Shaanxi Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition) 陕西师范大学学报(哲学社会科学版), Vol. 34, No. 6, 2005, p. 78.

[19] Chen. p. 153.

Table 5. *Examples of popular character forms in the* Súzì Pǔ[20]

Taiping Character Forms

During the 1850s and the first half of the 1860s, China was effectively in a state of civil war due to the attempt to overthrow the Qing dynasty by the members of a vehemently anti-Manchu, indigenous Christian cult centered on Hóng Xiùquán 洪秀全 (1814-1864), a man claiming to be the younger brother of Jesus Christ. Named for the movement that sparked it, the civil war is known as the Taiping rebellion, one of the bloodiest conflicts in human history.[21] The Taiping ran a functioning bureaucratic state from their capital at Nanjing, and one of their reforms was the use of a considerable number of simplified characters. In his 1958 article *Tàipíng Tiānguó Wénxiàn Zhōng De Jiǎntǐzì* 太平天国文献中的简体字 (*Simplified Characters in the Documents of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*), Wú Liángzuò 吴良祚 lists several dozen simplified characters that the Taiping used in their official documents, such as religious texts, including many that would later also be included in the character sheets of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) simplifications, and some others that were simplified beyond the current standard in Mainland China (see table 7).[22]

Taiping character	Contemporary simplified form	Traditional form	Pinyin
怰	愧	愧	kuì
厷	魂	魂	hún
窃	窃	竊	qiè

朴	朴	樸	pǔ
証	证	證	zhèng

Table 7. *A few examples of Taiping simplified characters*[23]

During the ideological heyday of Chinese communism under Máo Zédōng 毛澤東, the

Taiping were lauded for their resistance to foreign imperialism and their pro-peasantry

leanings. The ideological connection between a love for the masses and character reform

should not be overlooked. After all, the primary goal of character simplification was

usually to increase literacy by making it easier to learn to read and write characters,

something that was valuable to the poorly educated lower classes but of little value to

the already educated elite.

Late Imperial and Republican Reforms

During the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, following

defeats by Western powers and Japan, there was a growing awareness in Chinese

intellectual circles that China had fallen behind other nations in terms of its development.

Various periods of reform were initiated, both by the Imperial government and by

Chinese intellectuals outside of government, whose ideas contributed to the 1911

Revolution that overthrew the Qing dynasty and began the Republican period (1912 –

1949). Unlike earlier periods in Chinese history when intellectuals viewed non-standard

character forms as not appropriate in formal settings and on the whole showed little

interest in them, a growing group of intellectuals now took the lead in the debate on

script reform. Western writing systems served as inspiration for how the script of a

modern, advanced nation should function, and during the final years of the Qing dynasty,

many reformers preferred fully phoneticizing the script, or at least using a phonographic

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[23] Ibid.

writing system alongside characters, over the less radical option of character

simplification.[24]

Sparked by anger at the Treaty of Versailles that handed control of Germany's former

colonial possessions in China over to Japan, and against the background of the political

failures following the 1911 Revolution that had already given rise to the New Culture

Movement, a new wave of nationalist and reformist sentiment swept through Chinese

intellectual circles from 1919, known as the May Fourth Movement. During this time of

reform-minded intellectual debate, key reforms often advocated by those who sought to

move away from the old Confucian hierarchy towards a modern social structure were the

shift from writing in Classical Chinese (*gǔwén* 古文) to writing in vernacular Chinese

(*báihuà* 白話), and an education system geared towards mass literacy.[25] As part of

attempts to increase literacy rates in the years after the end of the Qing dynasty, literacy

campaigns using alphabetized Chinese were being encouraged.[26] Some reformers, such

as Qián Xuántóng 錢玄同 and Hú Shì 胡適 at Peking University, advocated character

simplification as a stepping stone towards full phoneticization, and the simplified

character forms that had been in use in non-official texts and informal situations for

centuries became a topic of intellectual interest.[27] In line with this interest, the *Súzì Pǔ*

discussed on page 14 was published in 1930. Romanization systems of Chinese created

by Western missionaries date back to the 16th century, and although various systems of

phonetic transcription of Chinese were developed by Chinese linguists from the late 19th

century onwards, such as Zhuyin Zimu in the 1910s and Hanyu Pinyin in the 1950s,

Chinese characters have not been replaced with an alphabet or a syllabography.[28]

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[24] Chen. p. 151.
[25] Schwarcz, Vera. *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, p. 56.
Schoppa, R. Keith. *Revolution and its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, 2nd ed, Upper Saddle River, NJ; London: Prentice Hall, 2006, p. 113.
[26] Ibid. p. 147.
[27] Chen. pp. 152-153.
[28] Ibid. pp. 164-166.

The process of character simplification advocated by language reformers and educators appeared to gain official support in 1935, when the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China published a scheme of 324 simplified characters under the title *Dì Yī Pī Jiǎntǐzì Biǎo* 第一批简体字表 (*First List of Simplified Characters*), its name suggesting that more such lists were supposed to follow. The characters on this list were intended for widespread use in publications and in education. However, government support for this set of characters was short-lived, for the scheme was repealed half a year later on account of opposition from senior government officials.[29] Many of the simplified characters in the 1935 scheme can also be found in the People's Republic of China's simplified character schemes, though it also includes character forms that differ from their contemporary simplified forms, as can be seen in table 8 below. The explanation attached to the list describes the simplified characters as having fewer strokes and being easier to read and write, and states that they are taken from popular characters (*súzì* 俗字), ancient characters (*gǔzì* 古字), and cursive script (*cǎoshū* 草書).[30]

	1935 Republican simplified form	Contemporary simplified form	Traditional form	Pinyin
1	荅	答	答	dá
2	畄	留	留	liú
3	耺	职	職	zhí
4	扩	矿	礦	kuàng
5	庅	么	麼	me, mó
6	與	兴	興	xīng, xìng
7	个	个	個	gè
8	双	双	雙	shuāng

Table 8. *Examples of simplified characters in the* Dì Yī Pī Jiǎntǐzì Biǎo

[29] Ibid. p. 153.
[30] Zhōnghuá Mínguó Jiàoyùbù 中華民國教育部. *Dì Yī Pī Jiǎntǐzì Biǎo* 第一批简体字表, 1935, p. 4.

Mainland Simplifications

After the Communists' victory in the Chinese civil war in 1949, two points of orthographic standard-setting existed, one in Mainland China (the People's Republic of China) and one on the island of Taiwan (the Republic of China, or ROC). The orthographic standards set by these two separate entities quickly began to diverge, as the PRC embarked on a process of character simplification while the ROC avoided large-scale prescriptive changes and kept the vast majority of its character forms the same as they had been before the split. The Communists' drive for character simplification was aimed at aiding the spread of literacy to the population at large.[31] This goal was in line with their political agenda to advance the class interests of the proletariat. Work on the simplification of Chinese characters in Mainland China began almost immediately after the founding of the PRC in 1949, with the Ministry of Education circulating a list of over 500 simplified characters for discussion in 1950 and with the setting up of the Committee on Script Reform in 1952.[32] Mainland Chinese policy to standardize the character-writing system and reduce the number of characters in use first came into force in 1955 with the abolition of 1,053 variant character forms in the *Dì Yī Pī Yìtǐzì Zhěnglǐ Biǎo* 第一批异体字整理表 (*First Batch of Tabulated Variant Forms of Chinese Characters*, hereafter: *Yìtǐzì Biǎo*).[33] The 1956 publication of the First Scheme of Simplified Chinese Characters, the *Hànzì Jiǎnhuà Fāng'àn* 漢字簡化方案, followed soon after, consisting of 515 simplified characters that replaced 544 traditional ones, and 54 simplified character components that each replaced a traditional character component. A complete list of all 2,236 characters that were simplified by the First Scheme, including those that were simplified because they contained a character component that was simplified, was published in 1964, and re-published with minor changes in 1986.[34]

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[31] Wiedenhof, Jeroen. *A Grammar of Mandarin*, Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company 2015, p. 394.
[32] Chen. p. 155.
[33] Ibid. p. 154.
[34] Ibid.

The First Scheme mostly consisted of character forms that already existed as popular or variant forms, or in cursive script, and were thus by and large not new characters but old characters that had been elevated to the position of standard character, a principle known as *shù ér bú zuò* 述而不作, 'recognizing without creating'.[35] However, those in charge of script reform wanted to go further, and in 1964 the central government publicly stated its aim of simplifying all characters in common use down to no more than ten strokes, compared to nearly half of simplified characters in use today consisting of more than ten strokes.[36] To this aim, the Second Scheme of Simplified Chinese Characters (Draft), *Dì Èr Cì Hànzì Jiǎnhuà Fāng'àn (Cǎo'àn)* 第二次漢字簡化方案（草案）, was published in 1977. It contained 248 new simplified characters intended to be used immediately and 605 characters intended for trial use. A few examples of forms simplified in the Second Scheme can be found in table 9 below. However, the Second Scheme was unpopular and was officially repealed in 1986 after receiving much criticism. A number of reasons are generally given for the failure of the Second Scheme. Firstly, it was created with little input from senior experts and the public, and contained many forms that, although they had previously existed, were unfamiliar to most language users.[37] Secondly, it was poorly timed politically, since it came shortly after the death of Máo Zédōng and the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, and most people had lost their appetite for radical change.[38] Thirdly, literacy rates had increased rapidly between the time of publication of the First Scheme and that of the Second. Generally speaking, character simplification appealed to those who were not fully literate, since it was believed to make it easier for them to become so, whereas it appealed much less to those who were already literate, since they would have to learn the new standard way of

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[35] Zhao, Shouhui, and Baldauf, Richard. *Planning Chinese Characters: Reaction, Evolution or Revolution?*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2008, p.40.
[36] Chen. p. 155 & Wiedenhof. p. 398.
[37] Chen. pp. 155-156 & pp. 159-160.
[38] Ibid. p. 160.

writing while obtaining little benefit from it. Fourthly, the characters simplified in the

Second Scheme were on average considerably less common than those simplified in the

First Scheme, meaning that less time would be saved in writing so the benefit of learning

the new forms was smaller.[39] Fifthly, the Second Scheme considerably increased the

number of homonyms in written Chinese, making it harder for readers to correctly

identify the meaning of a character.[40] These reasons all contributed to the widespread

public opposition to the Second Scheme and its short-lived period of use.

Pinyin	cáng	jiǔ	qǐng
Contemporary simplified form	藏	酒	请
Second Scheme form	芷	氿	讠

Table 9. *Examples of simplified characters in the Second Scheme*[41]

After the 1949 split, the Nationalists on Taiwan at first continued considering the issue of

character simplification. However, after the institution of simplified characters on the

Mainland the ROC's official position on simplified characters shifted drastically, and in

1956 the use of simplified characters in publications was officially banned. Although

simplified characters continue to be used in Taiwanese handwriting, they are rarely seen

in print.[42]

Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter, I mentioned the paradigm of top-down versus

bottom-up change. The examples in this chapter have shown that these two currents are

often not opposed to each other, for characters that began their existence as non-

standard, popular forms have sometimes later been recognized as standard forms by

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[39] Ibid. pp. 161-162.
[40] Baldauf, Richard, and Kaplan, Robert, eds. *Language Planning and Policy in Asia, Vol.1: Japan, Nepal and Taiwan and Chinese Characters*, Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Multilingual Matters, 2008, p. 61.
[41] Wiedenhof. p. 395.
[42] Chen. pp. 162-163.

those who sought to define an orthographic standard or to simplify the script for ease of writing.

When looking at Chinese orthographic change over a period of thousands of years, it can be tempting to overlook details and to see a gradual evolutionary trajectory that has on a few occasions been codified and officialized after the fact. However, it is important to remember that characters do not change of their own accord, and to acknowledge the agency and the motivations of script reformers. Much like biological evolution, character reform and simplification has a history full of dead ends and aborted reforms, and was not a gradual, unidirectional, or inevitable process. In the words of Imre Galambos:

> "While we cannot deny a temporal succession in a historical narrative, this model fails to recognize that the evolution of characters was often a complex process with countless sidesteps and backloops.
> The neat line of evolution based on standard characters only makes sense from a retrospective point of view, once we know the forms that succeeded and survived in the long run."[43]

In this chapter we have seen that the largest changes in the official orthographic standard, such as the Qin transition to clerical script and the simplifications carried out in the PRC, were made with political and ideological considerations in mind, and that the success of an attempt at script reform was closely tied to the political position of the reformers; the Qin transition was continued by the Han (202 BCE – 220 CE) and proved to be lasting, and the First Scheme has set a new orthographic standard for the vast majority of Chinese writers. Conversely, Wǔ Zétiān's new characters were abandoned after her death and the restoration of the Tang dynasty, the Taiping orthographic standard disappeared along with the defeat of their movement, and the Second Scheme

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[43] Galambos. *Popular Character Forms,* p. 399.

floundered in the face of opposition to further radical change following the trauma of the Cultural Revolution. Equally, opposition to character reform was often also ideologically motivated; the distinction between standard forms and popular forms was primarily upheld by an educated elite that had a vested interest in maintaining a degree of exclusivity for the correct use of the script, and the wholesale rejection of character simplification on principle by the Republican authorities in Taiwan was a reaction to the simplification programme in Mainland China and in contrast to previous Republican moves towards simplification.

Furthermore, while changes to the official standard were centrally decided, most changes in actual writing practices were made gradually over time by groups of people who did not directly consult with each other. The various times and places in which people modified the script and their various reasons, conscious or unconscious, for making these modifications mean that it is not surprising that the history of character reform and simplification has produced a script containing a considerable number of inconsistencies.

This chapter also shows that with the exceptions of attempts to replace the character script with a phonetic script and the more radical approach to simplification taken in the Second Scheme, which were both ultimately rejected, the debate about simplified forms over the past centuries has been almost entirely about forms that have by now existed and been in use for over a thousand years. In this sense, the debate about character simplification is less a linear trajectory towards increasingly simplified forms, and more a recurrent debate over which existent forms should be considered standard forms and which forms should only be considered acceptable in informal contexts.

2. Overview of Relevant Characters

In this chapter, I will give an overview of the characters that are relevant to this study on account of their Taiwanese traditional forms having fewer strokes than their equivalent Mainland simplified forms, separated into categories based on the three reasons that I have identified for this situation: stroke contraction (lists 1 to 3), consistent substitution of character components with components that have fewer strokes (lists 4 and 5), and elimination of traditional forms in favour of characters with more strokes in the Mainland Chinese orthographic standard (list 6). Together with the relevant character forms, I will provide short descriptions of the patterns causing sets of characters to meet the criterion of inclusion in this study, as well as any exceptions and inconsistencies that appear in the lists of relevant characters. In a few cases I will also briefly discuss characters that do not match the criterion of inclusion in this study consistently across the sources that I have consulted, but that do match the criterion in one of the sources. Furthermore, I will detail my methodology for finding potentially relevant characters and deciding on their inclusion or exclusion. I will also briefly discuss roughly how common this type of character is in contemporary usage.

In Chinese orthography, a distinction is often made between standard characters (*zhèngzì* 正字), and variant characters (*yìtǐzì* 異體字), also known as popular characters (*súzì* 俗字) or different characters (*biézì* 別字).[44] I have limited this study to standard forms, since including variant forms would produce long lists of characters without a clear cut-off point, and since it would be misleading to compare traditional variant forms to standard simplified forms, though in cases where it is debatable whether a character is a standard form or a variant form, I have tended to include the character. This often *is* debatable, since variant forms have always been common and views on which forms are standard forms and which forms are variant forms have often not been uniform. Thus the

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[44] Ibid.

listing of characters in this study as standard or variant forms is only as good as the sources on which it is based, and is not intended to be the final word on this discussion.

Methodology

For the purpose of gathering Taiwanese traditional characters that have fewer strokes than their equivalent simplified forms, I have relied primarily on character dictionaries, since these are the most comprehensive sources that are concerned with the form of individual characters. In order to put together a comprehensive overview of the characters relevant to this thesis, I have chosen two starting points, namely a character dictionary that is primarily a Taiwanese traditional character dictionary but that also gives information on the simplified forms of characters, and a primarily simplified character dictionary that also gives information on the traditional forms of characters. This is because these two types of dictionary provide different types of potentially relevant characters. The former type contributes Taiwanese traditional character forms that have been subject to an orthographic standard which has not been applied to simplified characters on the Mainland and does not normally show up in Mainland traditional dictionaries, since they usually take the pre-1949 traditional forms as their standard. The latter type contributes simplified characters that represent multiple traditional characters, at least one of which has fewer strokes than the simplified form that it is replaced by. Since in a traditional character dictionary the multiple traditional forms that are represented by such a single simplified form are given as separate characters, the reader has no way of knowing that one or more of those traditional forms have been replaced by a simplified form that has more strokes. Together, these two dictionaries provide an initial selection of characters for this thesis.

The first dictionary that I have selected for this initial stage of my research is the *Far East 3000 Chinese Character Dictionary* 遠東漢字三千字典 (2011, Taiwanese traditional and Mainland simplified, hereafter: *Far East Dictionary*), a Taiwanese traditional character dictionary which lists both the traditional and simplified forms of the 3000 most

common Chinese characters, and gives the stroke count of each form. This dictionary has allowed me to go through all 3000 characters comparing the listed number of strokes for each traditional form to the listed number of strokes for each simplified form relatively quickly, with the only downside being that it does not contain more characters. Since it was clear from the relevant characters that I found in this dictionary that certain stroke-saving principles are in use that have been consistently applied to all characters that contain a certain component, I then used character-finding tools on Zdic.net and in the Pleco Chinese Dictionary app to compile a list of characters that contained components that would cause them to be relevant to this thesis but that are not recorded in the *Far East Dictionary*, many of which are archaic or very obscure, which I then attempted to locate in one of the other character dictionaries that I used for this thesis, namely the *Guómín Zìdiǎn* 國民字典 (1974, Taiwanese traditional), the *Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* 新華字典 (1955, Mainland pre-simplified traditional), and the *Xiàndài Hànyǔ Guīfàn Zìdiǎn* 现代汉语规范字典 (1998, Mainland simplified, hereafter: *Guīfàn Zìdiǎn*). I then also looked up the characters that feature in at least one of these four dictionaries in the *Zhèngzì Biǎo* 正字表 (contemporary Taiwanese traditional), which I describe in more detail in the next paragraph. In some cases the stroke count has to be deduced by combining the stroke count of the radical listed in the radical index with the remaining stroke count of the character. The reason for these checks is primarily that the aim of this thesis is to chart *contemporary* Taiwanese traditional characters that have fewer strokes than their equivalent simplified forms, not to compile a long list of archaic characters that would hypothetically meet that criterion *if* they were written today. Therefore, for this method of finding relevant characters, I am using presence in one of the physical dictionaries that I have consulted as a proxy for contemporary use, and absence in all of them as a proxy for lack of contemporary use. Since my methodology for finding relevant forms starting from Taiwanese traditional sources is based on an extrapolation of writing principles that can be found in the 3,000 most frequently used characters, it is possible that characters

relevant due to stroke reduction principles not present in this sample are not included in this study.

The second dictionary that I have selected for the initial stage of my research is the aforementioned *Guīfàn Zìdiǎn*, a simplified character dictionary that also records the traditional forms of each character, if those differ from the simplified form, and many variant character forms. Thus in cases where multiple traditional forms have been replaced with one simplified form, this dictionary provides those traditional forms so that the reader may deduce the stroke count for each character from its graphic appearance and make a note of any traditional or variant forms that have fewer strokes than the simplified form that they are given with. The dictionary does not provide a stroke count next to the characters, but does do so in most cases in the character index. The drawback of this dictionary is that in cases where a simplified character has more than one traditional form (including a traditional form that is the same as the simplified form), the dictionary lists those traditional forms on which the simplified form was not based as variant forms. This means that in order to distinguish between standard traditional forms that have been replaced with a simplified character that has more strokes, i.e. a character relevant to this thesis, and variant forms, it is necessary to consult other dictionaries. In order to distinguish between standard traditional forms and variant traditional forms, I have consulted an online character dictionary called the *Yìtǐzì Zìdiǎn* 異體字字典 (*Variant Character Dictionary*) on the Taiwanese Ministry of Education's website, which includes a searchable list of standard forms, called the *Zhèngzì Biǎo* 正字表 (*List of Standard Forms*). I have chosen this dictionary because it is a comprehensive contemporary source, because it comes with a degree of official sanction, and because it explicitly distinguishes standard forms and variant forms.

In the lists in the first two sections, that is lists 1 through 5, I have only included characters that are listed in at least one source as a standard form, and that are listed in

at least one of the Taiwanese traditional sources (columns two through four) and in at least one of the simplified or pre-simplified traditional sources (columns five through seven), so that it is possible to compare the stroke counts.

Characters Relevant due to Stroke Contraction

List 1: characters containing 厶/云

Pinyin	*Far East Dictionary* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Guómín Zìdiǎn* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Zhèngzì Biǎo* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Guīfàn Zìdiǎn* (simplified)	*Far East Dictionary* (simplified)	*Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* (pre-simplified traditional)
chōng	充 (5)	充 (5)	充 (5)	充 (6)	充 (6)	充[45]
yù	育 (7)	育 (7)	育 (7)	育 (8)	育 (8)	育 (8)
liú	流 (9)	流 (9)	流 (9)	流 (10)	流 (10)	流 (10)
liú	琉 (10)	琉 (10)[46]	琉 (10)	琉 (11)	琉 (11)	琉 (11)
shū	梳 (10)	梳 (10)	梳 (10)	梳 (11)	梳 (11)	梳 (11)
yō	[47]	唷 (10)	唷 (10)	唷 (11)		唷 (11)
yù			淯 (10)	淯 (11)		淯 (11)
yù			堉 (10)	堉 (11)		
liú		硫 (11)	硫 (11)	硫 (12)		硫 (12)
liú		旒 (12)	旒 (12)	旒		旒 (13)
yù		毓 (13)	毓 (13)	毓		毓
chè	澈 (14)	澈 (14)	澈 (14)	澈 (15)	澈 (15)	澈 (15)
liú			鎏 (17)	鎏 (18)		
xī			醯 (18)	醯		醯

Description: the character component '云' in simplified forms is written as '厶' in

Taiwanese traditional forms, that is with one fewer stroke since the '丶' stroke of the '亠'

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[45] Characters without a stroke count are not explicitly given a stroke count in the source, but visually conform to the form given in the table.

[46] This character is listed as a variant form of the character 瑠.

[47] A blank space indicates that a character is not listed in a source.

component and the '∠' stroke of the '厶' component of the simplified form are written as

a single elongated '∠' stroke. As can be seen in the table above, this contracted way of

writing the component '厶/厶' is applied to all Taiwanese traditional forms in which it

appears, but not to any of the simplified forms in which it appears. Due to this

contraction, any Taiwanese traditional form containing the component '厶' that apart

from this difference is the same as its equivalent simplified form (or that has been

simplified in such a way that it does not reduce the stroke count) has one fewer stroke

than its equivalent simplified form. In theory, this same stroke-saving contraction of the

'、' stroke in a '亠' component with a '∠' stroke below it could be made in other

character components too, for example in characters containing a '玄' component, but

this is not done, at least not in typeface or standard forms.

List 2: characters containing 卸/卸

Pinyin	*Far East Dictionary* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Guómín Zìdiǎn* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Zhèngzì Biǎo* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Guīfàn Zìdiǎn* (simplified)	*Far East Dictionary* (simplified)	*Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* (pre-simplified traditional)
xiè	卸 (8)	卸 (8)	卸 (8)	卸	卸 (9)	卸 (8)[48]
yù	御 (11)	御 (11)	御 (11)	御 (12)	御 (12)	御 (12)
xián		啣 (11)[49]	啣 (11)[50]	啣 (12)[51]		啣(11)

Description: the character component '缶' in simplified forms is written as '缶' in

Taiwanese traditional forms, that is with one fewer stroke since the '│' stroke and the

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[48] The stroke count for this character is not explicitly given, but it is listed based on stroke count between two characters that also have 8 strokes.

[49] Listed as a variant form of the character 銜.

[50] Listed both as a standard form and as a variant form of the character 銜.

[51] Listed as a variant form of the character 衔.

'╱' stroke at the bottom of the component are combined into a single '⌊' stroke. The

component '缶/缶' appears with the component '卩' to its right. This contracted way of

writing the Taiwanese traditional component '缶' is applied to all traditional forms that

contain it, and generally not to simplified forms that contain it, though as the list above

shows, the *Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* is inconsistent in the way in which it writes this character

component. Of the three forms of this type relevant to this study, it gives the character

御 the same stroke count as the two simplified dictionaries consulted here give it, but the

characters 卸 and 唧 with one stroke fewer than those two dictionaries give them. A

close look at the characters in question (which can be found in table 10 below) confirms

that for the character 卸, the contracted component '缶' is used, explaining the stroke

count of 8. However, this is not the case for the character 唧, thus leaving this character

without a clear explanation for its reduced stroke count.

卸	唧	御
卸	唧	御

Table 10: *characters containing* 卸/卸 *in the* Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn

A similar contraction of a '⏐' stroke and a '╱' stroke into a '⌊' stroke is present in

certain traditional dictionaries, such as the *Guómín Zìdiǎn* (1974), the *Kāngxī Zìdiǎn* 康熙

字典 (1716), and the *Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn* 中華大字典 (1915), in characters containing

the component '此' in the upper half of the character, such as 些 (*xiē*, 'some') and 柴

(*chái*, 'firewood'), and sometimes also in characters that feature the component '此' in

other parts of the character, such as 雌 (*cí*, 'female') or 呲 (*cī/zī*, 'to scold'). In such

cases the aforementioned dictionaries give the component '此' as consisting of five

strokes, as opposed to the six strokes it has in simplified dictionaries, but also in other

traditional dictionaries such as the *Far East Dictionary*, the *Zhèngzì Biǎo*, and the *Hànyǔ*

Dà Zìdiǎn 漢語大字典. In some cases this contraction is visible in the depiction of the

character, in other cases it is not, and the component appears to have six strokes despite

being listed as having five strokes. Since this contraction is not present in the most

recent sources that I have consulted, I have not included these characters in this study.

List 3: characters containing 致/致

Pinyin	*Far East Dictionary* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Guómín Zìdiǎn* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Zhèngzì Biǎo* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Guīfàn Zìdiǎn* (simplified)	*Far East Dictionary* (simplified)	*Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* (pre-simplified traditional)
zhì	致 (9)	致 (9)[52]	致 (9)	致	致 (10)	致 (10)

Description: the component '夂' in the Taiwanese traditional character 致 (*zhì*, 'to cause')

is written as '夊' in simplified versions of the character, namely with four strokes

compared to three strokes. This way of writing the component '夂' in Taiwanese

traditional characters, in which the '一' stroke and the '㇒' stroke are contracted into a

single '㇇' stroke, could in principle be applied to all characters containing the component

'夂', such as 玫 (*méi*, 'rose'), but this is not done, at least not in typeface or standard

forms. The traditional character 緻 (*zhì*, 'fine, delicate') shows that this way of writing the

component '夂' is applied to other characters containing the character 致, though I have

not found any commonly used Taiwanese traditional characters that contain this

character and have fewer strokes than their equivalent simplified forms.

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[52] 致 is listed as a variant form.

Characters Relevant due to Consistently Applied Component Substitution

List 4: characters containing 強/强

Pinyin	*Far East Dictionary* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Guómín Zìdiǎn* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Zhèngzì Biǎo* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Guīfàn Zìdiǎn* (simplified)	*Far East Dictionary* (simplified)	*Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* (pre-simplified traditional)
qiáng, jiàng, qiǎng	強 (11)	強 (11)	強 (11)	强 (12)	强 (12)	強 (11)
jiàng			犟 (15)	犟		
jiǎng			膙 (15)	膙 (16)		
qiǎng		襁 (radical +11)	襁 (17, radical +11)[53]	襁 (17)		襁 (17, radical +12)[54]
jiàng			糨 (17)	糨 (at least 18)		糨[55]

Description: the component '虽', which appears alongside a '弓' component in the character 強/强 (*qiáng*, 'strong') and in characters that contain that character, is written in Taiwanese traditional characters with a '厶' component, whereas it is written as '虽', i.e. with a '口' component, in simplified characters, causing the Taiwanese forms to have one fewer stroke, unless other changes have been made in the simplification of the character that affect the stroke count. The decision to write the simplified form of the character 強/强 with the '口' component was formally made in Mainland China in 1955 in the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo*, which lists 强 as the standard form from then on, and 強 as a variant form that has been eliminated. The *Yìtǐzì Biǎo* will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter. These two distinct ways of writing the component '虽/虽' are usually consistent

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[53] The stroke count given here is made up of six strokes for the radical '衤', plus eleven strokes for the rest of the character. The traditional radical '衤' is written with five or six strokes depending on the source.

[54] The stroke count for this character is not explicitly given, but can in this case be deduced based on the stroke count of the previous character in the dictionary.

[55] 糨 is listed as a variant form of 襁. 糨 is also listed as a variant form, though not directly next to 襁.

in Taiwanese traditional and simplified forms respectively, though again the *Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* is inconsistent in this regard. The inconsistent use of '黾/虽' in pre-simplified traditional dictionaries will be discussed in chapter 3.

List 5: characters containing 毒/毒

Pinyin	*Far East Dictionary* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Guómín Zìdiǎn* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Zhèngzì Biǎo* (Taiwanese traditional)	*Guīfàn Zìdiǎn* (simplified)	*Far East Dictionary* (simplified)	*Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* (pre-simplified traditional)
dú	毒 (8)	毒 (8)	毒 (8)	毒	毒 (9)	毒
zhóu			碡 (13)	碡 (14)		碡 (14)

Description: the component '母' in simplified characters is written as '毋' in traditional characters when it appears below a '三' component, that is with the two '丶' strokes replaced by a single '丿' stroke, thereby reducing the stroke count by one. This contraction is present in all Taiwanese traditional characters that contain the character 毒/毒, but not in any of the simplified forms that contain it. This contraction or substitution of '母' for '毋' cannot be applied to the character 母 (*mǔ*, 'mother') without equating it to the character 毋 (*wú*, 'no, not'), but could in theory be applied to other characters that contain the component '母', like 每 (*měi*, 'every'), but this is not done, at least not in typeface or standard forms. Unlike 強, 毒 is not a variant form eliminated from the Mainland Chinese orthographic standard by the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo*. The reason for the use of 毒 in Taiwanese traditional script will be discussed in chapter 3.

Characters Relevant due to the Elimination of their Traditional Form in Favour of a Character with More Strokes in the Mainland Chinese Orthographic Standard

List 6: Characters relevant due to the elimination of their traditional form in favour of a character with more strokes in the Mainland Chinese orthographic standard

Pinyin	Traditional form with fewer strokes than the simplified form	Post-1955 Mainland traditional form	Simplified form
bī	偪 (11)	逼 (13)	逼 (12)
cǎi	跴 (13)	踩 (15)	踩 (15)
cuò	剉 (9)	銼 (15)	锉 (12)
dé	悳 (12)†56	德 (15)	德 (15)
diāo	彫 (11)	雕 (16)	雕 (16)
diāo	琱 (12)	雕 (16)	雕 (16)
diào	弔 (4)†	吊 (6)	吊 (6)
dié	啑 (11)	喋 (12)	喋 (12)
dié	蜨 (14)	蝶 (15)	蝶 (15)
dìng	椗 (12)†	碇 (13)	碇 (13)
fàn	氾 (5)	泛 (8)	泛 (7)
fàn	汎 (6)	泛 (8)	泛 (7)
fèi	疿 (10)†	痱 (13)	痱 (13)
fǔ	俛 (9)†	俯 (10)	俯 (10)
gē	肐 (7)†	胳 (10)	胳 (10)
guǎn	筦 (13)†	管 (14)	管 (14)
huǎng	怳 (8)†	恍 (9)	恍 (9)
huí	痐 (11)†	蛔 (12)	蛔 (12)
huí	蚘 (10)†	蛔 (12)	蛔 (12)

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56 Forms marked with a '†' are listed as standard forms in the *Zhèngzì Biǎo*, but are also given as variant forms in the description of the character or alongside the traditional form in the center column. Some are also listed as variant forms in other sources, such as the *Guómín Zìdiǎn*, others are not. Their inclusion in this list is therefore debatable, but I have chosen to include them with this annotation for the sake of a comprehensive overview of the relevant forms.

jiǎn, kǎn	城 (12)†	碱 (14)	碱 (14)
jīng, gēng	秔 (9)[57]	粳 (13)	粳 (13)
jiù	捄 (10)†	救 (11)	救 (11)
kàng	匠 (6)	炕 (8)	炕 (8)
láng	蜋 (13)†	螂 (15)	螂 (14)
lí	琍 (11)	璃 (15)	璃 (15)
lí	藜 (16)	藜 (19)	藜 (18)
lín	燐 (16)	磷 (17)	磷 (17)
lù	剹 (13)	戮 (15)	戮 (15)
lù	勠 (13)	戮 (15)	戮 (15)
mì, bì	祕 (9)[58]	秘 (10)	秘 (10)
ná	拏 (9)†	拿 (10)	拿 (10)
nán	柟 (9)†	楠 (13)	楠 (13)
ní	蜺 (14)	霓 (16)	霓 (16)
pèng	揰 (11)	碰 (13)	碰 (13)
qí	旂 (10)	旗 (14)	旗 (14)
qǐn	寑 (12)†	寢 (14)	寝 (13)
què	搉 (13)	榷 (14)	榷 (14)
rú	蝡 (15)†	蠕 (20)	蠕 (20)
sù	泝 (8)†	溯 (13)	溯 (13)
tóng	仝 (5)†	同 (6)	同 (6)
xī	郄 (14)†	膝 (15)	膝 (15)
xiān	秈 (8)	籼 (9)	籼 (9)
xiǎn	尟 (13)	鮮 (17)	鲜 (14)
xù	卹 (8)	恤 (9)	恤 (9)
yǎn	黶 (22)	黡 (23)	黡 (23)

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[57] Listed as a variant form in the *Zhèngzì Biǎo*, but as a standard form in the *Guómín Zìdiǎn* and *Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn*.
[58] The stroke count of this character is sometimes given as 10, of which 5 strokes are the radical, but I have followed the *Far East Dictionary* here, which gives it a stroke count of 9.

yào	燿 (18)	耀 (20)	耀 (20)
yí	迻 (10)	移 (11)	移 (11)
yì	瞖 (16)	翳 (17)	翳 (17)
zhà	吒 (6)	咤 (9)	咤 (9)
zhà	搾 (13)	榨 (14)	榨 (14)
zhài	砦 (11)†	寨 (14)	寨 (14)
zhào	炤 (9)†	照 (13)	照 (13)
zuǎn	篹 (16)	纂 (20)	纂 (20)
zuì	冣 (10)†	最 (12)	最 (12)

Description: the left-hand column of characters in the table above contains traditional character forms that the *Zhèngzì Biǎo* gives as contemporary standard forms (*zhèngzì* 正字), but that have been eliminated from the Mainland Chinese orthographic standard in 1955 by the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo* in favour of the traditional forms in the second column of characters. The criteria deciding which forms were eliminated will be discussed in the next chapter. In the years following this elimination of variant forms, the Mainland Chinese government carried out its simplification programme of the script, creating the simplified orthographic standard present in the third column of characters. Due to this elimination, the characters in the first column have a lower stroke count than their equivalent simplified forms in the third column. In most cases in the table above the traditional forms in the second column were not structurally altered by the Mainland simplifications, though in some cases the difference in stroke count between the eliminated form in the first column and the maintained form in the second column is larger than the stroke reduction carried out as part of the Mainland simplification, so that the character in question is relevant to this study. For example, the simplified character 锉 (*cuò*, 'file') has three fewer strokes than its traditional form 銼, but still has three more strokes than its traditional form 剉. A few of the changes made in the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo*

were reversed in the 1980s, which must be taken into account when considering the contemporary simplified orthographic standard.

Inconsistencies

When comparing characters across dictionaries it quickly becomes apparent that different sources adhere to different notions of which character form is the standard form and which form is the variant form, and of how many strokes a character consists. In some cases, inconsistencies are even found within a dictionary, as has been discussed for the *Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* earlier in this chapter. An example of an inconsistent standard between various dictionaries not included in the lists above is the character 髯/髥 (*rán*, 'beard').

The *Zhèngzì Biǎo* lists 髥 only as a variant form and together with the *Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* lists 髯 as the standard form, but the *Guómín Zìdiǎn* does the opposite by giving 髥 as the standard form and 髯 as a popular form (*súzì* 俗字). An example of inconsistent listings of the stroke count of a character is the character 熙 (*xī*, 'splendid'), which in most dictionaries that I have consulted has fourteen strokes, but in the *Guómín Zìdiǎn* and *Kāngxī Zìdiǎn* is listed as having thirteen strokes, on account of the contraction of a '｜' stroke and a '「' stroke into a '凵' stroke in the left-hand half of the character, so that

the character is written like this: 熙.

Frequency of Relevant Characters

Taiwanese traditional characters with fewer strokes than their equivalent simplified forms unsurprisingly make up only a fraction of all Chinese characters. No indisputable number of Chinese characters in existence can be given, since new characters can be created and old characters can fall out of use, and it is arguable at which point to start or stop

including a character in the total number of existing characters.[59] Furthermore, the inclusion or exclusion of variant forms and forms considered to be incorrect is also debatable. The same problems arise when trying to put an exact number on the total amount of characters that match the criterion of this study. I have limited this study to characters with some degree of contemporary usage, in the form of being listed in at least one of the physical dictionaries that I have consulted for this study, but an argument could be made for the inclusion of all characters that would in principle be relevant, no matter their frequency of use. To give a sense of how often an ordinary script user may expect to encounter such characters, we may once again consider the *Far East Dictionary.* Out of the 3,000 characters deemed to be the most frequently used in modern Chinese writing, 15 have traditional forms that contain fewer strokes than their equivalent simplified forms. In other words, roughly 0.5% of characters in frequent use may paradoxically be written with fewer strokes in Taiwanese traditional script than in simplified script. That the characters discussed in this study include both very common and less common characters suggests that very roughly speaking, we may expect that the rate of such characters remains similar when the sample size is enlarged.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified three reasons for Taiwanese traditional characters consisting of fewer strokes than their equivalent simplified forms, namely stroke contraction, consistently applied component substitution, and the elimination of traditional forms in favour of simplified forms with a higher stroke count. The third category and the characters containing 強/强 in the second category suggest that stroke reduction was not one of the aims of the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo*. The consistent application of stroke contractions in characters in the first category suggests an awareness of stroke reduction in Taiwanese traditional characters, but the fact that these stroke contractions have not been applied in other instances where they could be suggests that no effort is being made to

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[59] Wiedenhof. pp. 380-382.

systematically reduce the stroke count of traditional characters. These two points will be

discussed in more detail in the next chapter of this study.

3. Analysis

In this chapter, I will further analyze the characters presented in chapter 2, with the aim of establishing why these characters diverge from the usual situation of characters having more strokes in their Taiwanese traditional forms than in their simplified forms, despite stroke reduction being one of the stated goals of the Mainland simplification programme. After the Mainland-Taiwanese split in 1949, both sides went their own way in terms of script policy, following different ideals of how characters should be written and consequently prescribing different standards. Thus the differences between simplified and Taiwanese traditional characters can sometimes be traced back to decisions made in Mainland China, and sometimes to decisions made in Taiwan. Consequently, the perspective of this chapter will alternate between Mainland and Taiwanese script policy, at times comparing the two and at times focusing on one of the two. I will consult sources on simplified and Taiwanese traditional writing practices, as well as sources on pre-simplified traditional characters to allow us to compare the situation before the simplifications of the latter half of the twentieth century to the current situation. This way, it is possible to identify in most cases the origin of the divergence of relevant simplified and Taiwanese traditional characters, and the rules cementing that divergence into place. This chapter will show that many of the relevant character forms were not newly created in Taiwan, but existed before the 1949 split. Once again, I will discuss the relevant characters in the three following categories: characters eliminated from the Mainland orthographic standard as variant forms that remain as standard forms in the Taiwanese orthographic standard, characters featuring a contracted stroke in their Taiwanese traditional forms but not in their simplified forms, and characters featuring a shorter component in their Taiwanese traditional forms than in their simplified forms.

Variant Characters Eliminated from the Mainland Orthographic Standard

As the previous chapter has shown, many of the characters relevant to this study were eliminated from the Mainland Chinese orthographic standard in favour of character forms with a higher stroke count in the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo* in 1955. I have gone through the 1956

version of the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo* and counted 226 eliminated variant forms that have fewer strokes than their equivalent maintained forms, out of a total of 1,053 eliminated forms. These 226 eliminated forms do not all meet the criterion for inclusion in this study, since some of them are also considered non-standard forms by the *Zhèngzì Biǎo* and since some of the maintained forms had their stroke counts reduced by the Mainland simplifications that came after the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo*, but they clearly show that stroke count was not the primary criterion for elimination.

This begs the question, if not on stroke count, then on what did the compilers of the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo* base their decisions to maintain certain forms and eliminate other forms? The principles of selection underlying the 1955 elimination of variant forms are given by Shān Shí 山石 as follows: out of the possible forms, the character forms that are maintained 1) have existing (printing) moulds, 2) if moulds exist for multiple variant forms, are the forms that are most common in general use, 3) if the frequency of use is comparable, are the characters with the broader range of meaning, and 4) as much as possible, are characters with a left-right structure (as opposed to a top-bottom structure).[60] Evidently, stroke count is not included in these principles, which explains why forms were eliminated that have fewer strokes than their maintained equivalent forms.

The selection criteria above include frequency of use, so the question arises: are the forms in list 6 on pages 37-39 actually in use in Taiwan, or are they obscure forms that the Taiwanese script authorities have not formally eliminated through standardization? Indeed, Ping Chen describes the eliminated forms as "mostly variants with the highest number of strokes and rare or obsolete forms".[61] However, a close examination of our sources shows that many of the eliminated forms are neither rare nor obsolete, at least not in the Taiwanese traditional orthographic standard. Of the forms eliminated from the

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[60] Shān Shí 山石. *Dì Yī Pī Yìtǐzì Zhěnglǐ Biǎo* 第一批异体字整理表, in 语文建设 Yǔwén Jiànshè, 2001.3, p. 49.
[61] Chen. p. 154.

Mainland orthographic standard in 1955, two are even common enough to make it into the *Far East Dictionary*, namely 氾 (*fàn*, 'to spread') and 祕 (*mì/bì*, 'secret').

Furthermore, table 11 below shows that out of the 54 characters given in list 6 on pages 37-39, some 40 are in at least a moderate degree of use according to the *Zhèngzì Biǎo*, meaning that they neither consist of more strokes than the maintained form, nor are rare or obsolete. In fact, in some cases the eliminated form is a standard traditional character which has a meaning that does not completely overlap with the form deemed to be its standard form in the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo*, and in other cases the view on which form is the standard form and which is the variant form is reversed in Taiwanese traditional sources. For example, while the form 黶 (*yǎn*, 'mole') is listed as a standard form in the *Zhèngzì Biǎo* and in the *Guómín Zìdiǎn*, these two sources both list the form 黡, which is the form selected as the standard by the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo*, as a variant form. This demonstrates that some of the forms that were eliminated while having fewer strokes than the maintained characters are actually in common use, and presumably were so too when the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo* was published, and could therefore justifiably have been selected for continued use at the expense of other forms with more strokes, if stroke count had been one of the criteria employed by the compilers.

Category	Number of listings
Frequently used characters (常用字)	10
Less frequently used characters (次常用字)	30
Rarely used characters (罕用字)	12
Newly added standard characters (新增正字)	1
Not listed as a standard form in the *Zhèngzì Biǎo*	1
Total	54

Table 11: *frequency of use of characters in list 6 according to the* Zhèngzì Biǎo

As mentioned in chapter 2, this study focusses on standard character forms. Therefore, it is important to understand the Taiwanese position on which forms are to be considered

standard forms, so that we can understand why not all of the forms with fewer strokes that were eliminated in Mainland China by the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo* are listed as standard forms in our Taiwanese traditional sources and included in this study. Like the Mainland authorities in 1955, the Taiwanese script authorities have also standardized character forms, namely in the *Chángyòng Guózì Biāozhǔn Zìtǐ Biǎo* 常用國字標準字體表 (*List of Commonly Used Standard Character Forms*), published in 1979. However, the Taiwanese script authorities use a stricter definition of what is considered a variant form than the Mainland authorities, given as follows in the *Guózì Biāozhǔn Zìtǐ Yándìng Yuánzé* 國字標準字體研訂原則 (*Principles of Research and Designation of Standard Character Forms*, hereafter: *Guózì Yuánzé*):

"字形有數體而音義無別者，取一字為正體 [...] 。"[62]

"If a character has multiple graphical forms and the pronunciations and meanings are indistinguishable, select one [of them] as the standard form […]."

"字有多體，其義古同而今異者，予以並收。 [...] 古別而今同者，亦予並收 [...] 。"[63]

"If a character has multiple forms, and their meanings were the same in ancient times but are different now, all of them are collected [as standard forms]. […] Those that were different in ancient times but are the same now, are also all collected […]."
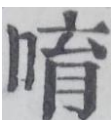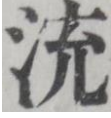
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[62] Zēng Róngfén 曾榮汾 (author) & Jiàoyùbù Guóyǔ Tuīxíng Wěiyuánhuì 教育部國語推行委員會 (ed.). *Guózì Biāozhǔn Zìtǐ Yándìng Yuánzé* 國字標準字體研訂原則, 1997, Quèdìng Biāozhǔn Zìtǐ Zhī Yuánzé 確定標準字體之原則, 1, https://language.moe.gov.tw/001/upload/files/site_content/m0001/biau/t00-8.htm?open. All translations of this source are my own.
[63] Ibid. 2.

Conversely, the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo* includes forms that have overlapping, but not identical, pronunciations and meanings among its eliminated variant forms. These differing definitions of what counts as a variant form have caused fewer characters to be eliminated from the Taiwanese orthographic standard than from the Mainland standard, and are the reason why the forms in list 6 in chapter 2 are considered standard forms in Taiwanese traditional script, but were eliminated in Mainland China.

Contraction-type Characters

Lists 1 through 3 in chapter 2 contain characters that, compared to their simplified equivalent forms, have fewer strokes due to the contraction of two strokes into one. In order to find out whether these contracted forms are characters newly created at some point after the Mainland-Taiwanese split or character forms that predate the split, I have consulted the *Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn* 中華大字典, a two-volume early Republican dictionary published in 1915. Looking up some of the more common characters in lists 1 through 3 reveals that all three types of contraction are present in this dictionary, though the contractions are not always consistently applied.

Pinyin	Character in the *Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn*	Image
liú	流 (9)	流
yù	育 (7)	育
yō	唷 (11)	唷
chōng	充 (6)	充
chōng	沆 (9)	沆

xiè	卸 (8)	卸
yù	御 (11)	御
xián	啣 (11)	啣
zhì	致 (9)	致
zhì	緻 (15)	緻
zhǐ	楖 (13)	楖 & 楖

Table 12: *selected contraction-type characters in the* Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn

As can be seen in table 12 above, characters containing the component '厽/厶' are not consistently given with the same form of the component, with some characters' stroke count indicating the use of the three-stroke version and others indicating the use of the four-stroke version. However, all characters of this type visually appear to contain the same component, so that it is impossible to tell by looking at the character whether it is considered to be written with the three- or the four-stroke component. Characters containing 卸/卸 and 致/致 are the opposite; they are consistently given with the stroke counts belonging with their contracted versions, but the characters do not always visually conform to the contracted forms that they need to have to correspond to their listed stroke count, nor are components that should have the same stroke count written identically to each other. For example, in the table above, 御 (*yù*, 'imperial') clearly uses the contracted component '𠂤', whereas 卸 (*xiè*, 'to unload') does not appear to, and the character 緻 visibly contains the contracted component '夂', without the small upwards

triangle that indicates the end of a horizontal typeface stroke at the top-right of the character, whereas 致 does have this triangle, and extends this horizontal stroke beyond the top of the left-falling stroke which it should be contracted with in order to make a nine-stroke character. Thus we see inconsistencies both in the stroke counts and in the depictions of contraction-type characters in the source material predating the simplifications of the twentieth century.

While these inconsistencies exist in pre-simplified traditional sources, we have seen in chapter 2 that the standards for contemporary traditional characters of the types discussed in this study are actually very consistent, especially when we exclude the *Guómín Zìdiǎn* (1974) and only consider the consistency between and within the *Far East Dictionary* and the *Zhèngzì Biǎo*, the more recent sources consulted for this study. The origin of this consistency can at least partially be traced back to the *Guózì Yuánzé*, which contains a set of 40 general rules (*tōngzé* 通則) and 120 specific rules (*fēnzé* 分則) on how to correctly write Taiwanese traditional characters according to the Taiwanese Ministry of Education, published in 1997. These principles describe and sanction many of the writing practices discussed in this study. While the aim of Mainland Chinese character authorities was and is primarily to make characters easier to write, for which it may be desirable to change the form of a character, Taiwanese character-writing principles instead aim to preserve their original structures:

> "字之寫法，無關筆劃之繁省者，則力求符合造字之原理。"[64]
>
> "As for the way of writing characters, regardless of the strokes being more or fewer, [we] strive to conform to the principles of character creation."

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[64] Ibid. 3.

"凡字之偏旁，古與今混者，則予以區別。"[65]

"Whenever the ancient and modern components of characters have been

conflated, they are distinguished."

The first of these two quotes shows that the goal of the rules in the *Guózì Yuánzé* is not

to reduce the stroke counts of characters, but to make them structurally conform to their

original forms. The second states the intention to differentiate contemporary character

components in cases where distinct ancient components might otherwise be written as

one identical component. The following sections of this chapter will discuss how these

principles of adhering to the original forms of characters and differentiating components

with different ancient forms cause many of the instances of Taiwanese traditional

characters having fewer strokes than their equivalent simplified forms due to stroke

contraction or component substitution.
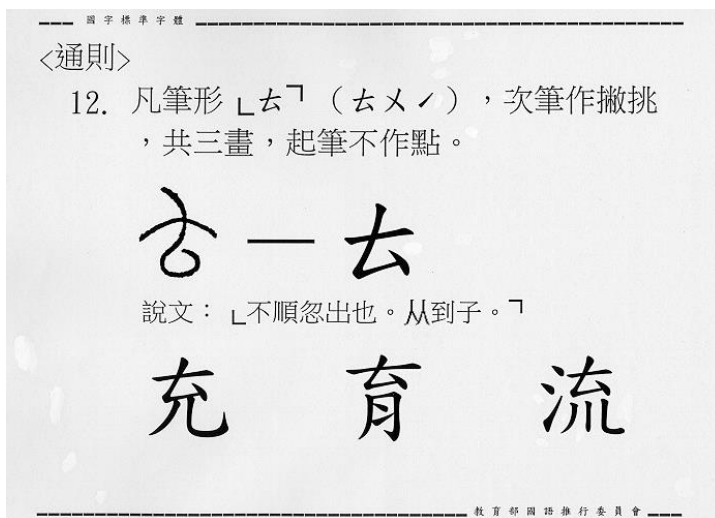
General rule 12: "all '去' components are written with a '∟' stroke, [so that the
component] has three strokes in total, with the first stroke not being a '丶' stroke."

In the case of '去/去', the consequence of this aim is that the component '去' is written

with three strokes to match its seal script form, which also features an uninterrupted

flowing stroke through the horizontal stroke of the component (see general rule 12). This

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[65] Ibid. 4.

also explains why the same stroke-saving contraction is not applied to other components in which it could theoretically be applied, such as in characters containing '亥': the contracted form is not used in order to reduce the stroke count, but to structurally correspond to the ancient form of the character. Therefore, characters of which the ancient form does not feature a single stroke that crosses a horizontal stroke will not use a contracted stroke in the same place in their contemporary Taiwanese form. While in previous times the traditional standard on '厽/厾' seems to have been flexible, judging by the *Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn*, the *Guózì Yuánzé* makes the official Taiwanese traditional standard clear, even if people's actual writing habits may continue to display variation in this regard. However, while the application of the contracted component '厽' to all Taiwanese traditional characters that contain it is consistent, the underlying principle of writing characters containing a single stroke that crosses a horizontal stroke in their seal script forms with a single contracted stroke in the same place in their Taiwanese traditional forms is not applied consistently. For example, characters containing '玄' contain '⟨seal⟩' in their seal script forms, a component of which the relevant part is identical to the component '厾', but are nonetheless written without such a contracted stroke, as can be seen in table 13.

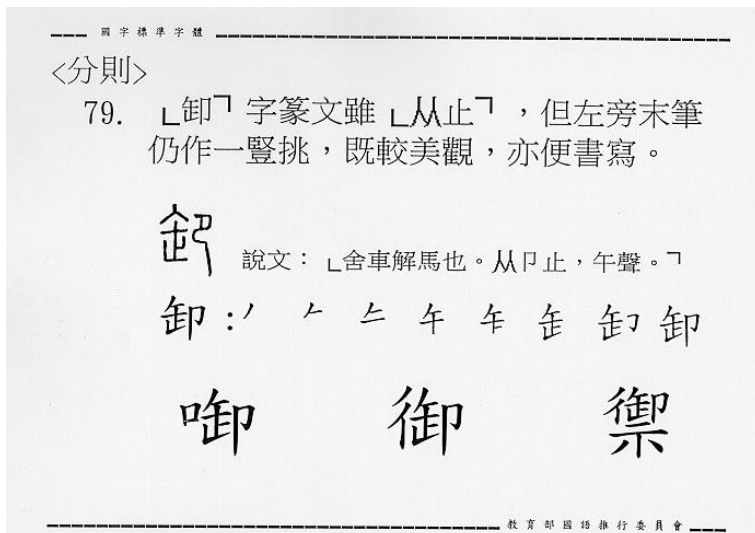| Pinyin	Taiwanese traditional form	Seal script form
chōng	充	⟨seal⟩
liú	流	⟨seal⟩
hài	亥	⟨seal⟩
ké, hāi	咳	⟨seal⟩

xuán	玄	
xuàn	泫	

Table 13: *selected characters containing '厷', '亥' or '玄' in the* Shuōwén Jiězì 說文解字[66]

Specific rule 79: *"although the character 卸 features the component '止' in its seal script form, the final stroke in the left-hand component is written as '⌊', since it is more aesthetically pleasing, and more convenient to write."*

As for Taiwanese traditional characters containing '卸', a decision is in effect made in specific rule 79 to use a form that more closely resembles the form used in the seal script version of the character 卸 instead of using the standard form of the component '止' as it is written in standard script (*kǎishū* 楷書). This choice is made "既較美觀, 亦便書寫", "since it is more aesthetically pleasing, and more convenient to write". However, while this contraction is consistently applied to all characters containing '卸', it could be more widely applied to all characters containing the component '止', since the motives of aesthetic quality and convenience of writing are equally applicable to those other

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[66] The *Shuōwén Jiězì* forms given in this chapter can be found in the *Hànyǔ Dà Zìdiǎn* 漢語大字典.

characters. I have discussed in chapter 2 how characters containing '此' such as 些 and

柴, despite being written with the contracted component '止' in some older dictionaries,

are written with the four-stroke version of the component in contemporary sources.

Furthermore, there are other characters containing '止' that are not written with the

three-stroke version of the component in any of the sources that I have consulted, such

as the character 武 (*wǔ*, 'martial'), despite the seal script component '止' being identical

in all of these characters, as can be seen in table 14.

Pinyin	xiè	xiē	chái	wǔ
Taiwanese traditional form	卸	些	柴	武
Seal script form				

Table 14: *selected characters containing '*止*' in the* Shuōwén Jiězì

General rule 39: *"the way of writing characters containing '夂' and '夊' is distinct. In the former the final right-falling stroke does not stick out, in the latter it does stick out."*
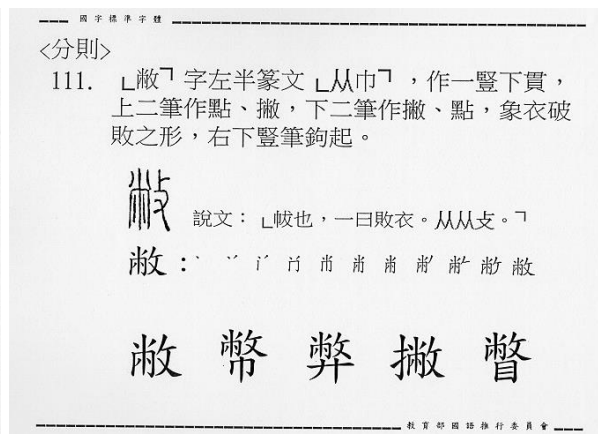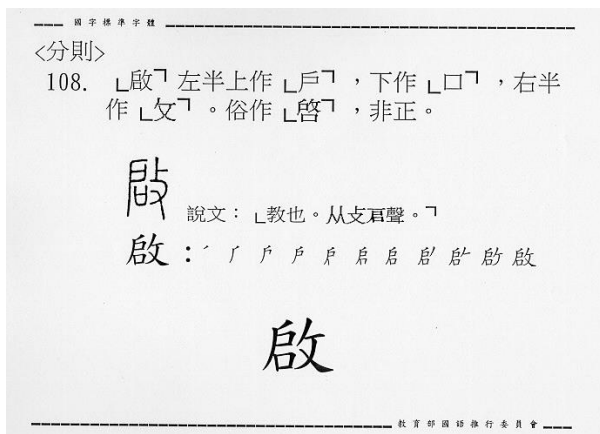
Specific rules 108 and 111. The rules themselves are not relevant to this study, only the example characters.

The distinction between '致' and '致' is not specifically mentioned in the character-writing rules of the *Guózì Yuánzé*, though it is clear from comparing the forms presented in general rule 39 to the forms presented in specific rules 108 and 111 that the distinction between the components '夊' and '夂' is made. General rule 39 deals with a different distinction, namely between the components '夊' and '夂', the distinction being the slight extension to the left of the final stroke in the latter component, whereby the character 致 is given as an example of a character containing the latter component. The other examples given all feature the component at the bottom of the character, a position in which it is written with the same three strokes in its simplified form. Only when featured in the right-hand side of a character does the difference in stroke count occur that causes this type of character to have fewer strokes in its Taiwanese traditional form than in its simplified form. Comparing the rules in question shows that the distinction between the three-stroke component '夂' and the four-stroke component '夊' stems from the different seal script components from which they are derived; the former is written as '夂' in seal script, while the latter is written as '夊', as can be seen in the examples in table 15. In the *Shuōwén Jiězì*, the component '夂' only appears in the bottom of characters, in characters containing '致', and in the character 舛 (舛, *chuǎn*, 'error'), which does not feature the

relevant component in standard script. This explains why there are not more Taiwanese traditional characters containing the contracted component '攵' that meet the criterion of inclusion in this study.

Pinyin	zhì	zhì	bài	méi
Taiwanese traditional form	致	緻	敗	枚
Seal script form				

Table 15: *selected characters containing* '攵' *or* '攴' *in the* Shuōwén Jiězì

Component-substitution-type Characters

Lists 4 and 5 in chapter 2 contain characters that in their Taiwanese traditional forms have fewer strokes than their equivalent simplified forms due to the substitution of a component with a component with fewer strokes. We have already seen that the form 強 was eliminated from the Mainland Chinese orthographic standard in favour of 强 in 1955, despite the former being considered the standard form in the *Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* and in the *Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn* (see table 16), and that in simplified dictionaries '强' is the form consistently used as a component in other characters, whereas '強' is used in Taiwanese traditional characters. We have also seen that in pre-simplified traditional forms both the component '強' and the component '强' are used, which can also be seen in table 16.

Furthermore, a close look at the forms 襁/襁 (*qiǎng*, 'swaddling clothes') and 糨/糨 (*jiàng*, 'starch') in the *Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* and in the *Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn*, shows that in both cases the two dictionaries use different versions of the component '強/强' (though the *Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* gives versions using both components for 糨/糨), suggesting that the use of these two components was somewhat interchangeable in pre-simplified traditional script, rather than each of the two components being consistently used in specific

different characters. Although the standardization of simplified characters containing '強/強' to all use the component '强' is not specified in the 1955 elimination of variant forms or in any of the simplification schemes of 1956, 1964, 1977, or 1986, the forms given in simplified dictionaries show this to be the case.

Pinyin	Character in the *Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn*	Image
qiáng, jiàng, qiǎng	強 (11)	
qiáng, jiàng, qiǎng	强 (12, popular form)	
qiǎng	襁 (radical+11)	
jiàng	糨 (18, radical+12)	
dú	毒 (radical+4)	
zhóu	碡 (14, radical+9)	

Table 16: *selected component-substitution-type characters in the* Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn

Specific rule 82: "the seal script form of the character 毒 features the components '屮' and '毐', in which the lower component is written as '毋'. The '丿' stroke must stick out, and [the component] is written differently from '母'."

Table 16 shows that the use of the '毋' component or the '母' component in characters containing 毒/毒 (dú, 'poison'), like the use of '強/强', is also inconsistent. Although the exact stroke count of the character 毒 in the *Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn* is unclear, since the '母' component is the radical and since the '毋' and the '母' components are considered to be the same radical in the dictionary's index, it is evident that the character 毒 is written with two '丶' strokes, while the character 碡 (zhóu, 'stone roller') is instead written with a single vertical stroke. However, despite visually conforming to a thirteen-stroke character, the character 碡 is listed as a fourteen-stroke character, so that just as with the contraction-type characters discussed above, the graphic form of certain characters does not correspond to the stroke count under which they are listed, nor are character components that we would expect to be written identically always uniform across the characters in which they appear. Unlike 強/强, 毒/毒 is not listed in the *Yìtǐzì Biǎo*. Instead, the origin of the difference between the Mainland and Taiwanese ways of writing the character can once again be found in the *Guózì Yuánzé*. Specific rule 82 explains that the seal script forms of '毋' and '母' are distinct, and that, unlike in the character 碡 in table 16, the central left-falling stroke in '毋' should be extended below the lowest stroke that it crosses. Table 17 shows that the distinction between the seal script forms of '毋' and '母' corresponds to the distinction in their contemporary forms, namely that '毋' has a single long stroke where '母' has two shorter strokes. Due to the rotation of these components in standard script compared to seal script, the strokes in question are horizontal in seal script, but vertical in standard script. Thus, characters of this type are in line with the aim of the *Guózì Yuánzé* by corresponding structurally to their ancient forms.

Pinyin	wú	dú	mǔ	méi
Taiwanese traditional form	毋	毒	母	每
Seal script form		67		

Table 17: *selected characters containing '毋' or '母' in the* Shuōwén Jiězì

Conclusion

A close examination of character forms in the *Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn* has revealed that the types of stroke contraction and component substitution that cause part of the Taiwanese traditional characters in this study to have fewer strokes than their equivalent simplified forms are all present in the pre-simplified traditional script, though they were not as consistently applied as they are now. Both the Mainland Chinese authorities and the Taiwanese authorities have made efforts to standardize the way in which characters are written, and the different standards propagated by these different authorities are the direct cause of the differences between simplified and Taiwanese traditional characters. The PRC's simplification programme aimed to reduce the stroke count of characters, though as mentioned previously, this was not one of the criteria employed in the 1955 elimination of variant forms, and to reduce the number of characters in use, both by replacing characters with homonyms and by eliminating variant forms. While the retracted Second Simplification Scheme had attempted to prescribe many newly created character forms, the First Scheme mostly made use of forms that were already popular outside of formal situations. There is a contradiction in the approaches of the First and Second Schemes, since one cannot both make the official standard conform to preexisting popular writing practices *and* cause the official standard to diverge from popular writing practices by instituting newly created simplified forms. With the retraction of the Second Scheme and the lack of any further simplifications, the PRC in effect took

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[67] The *Hànyǔ Dà Zìdiǎn* gives this form with a '' component, that is with two strokes in place of one, despite indicating that it is made up of a component with a single stroke in place of the two strokes, but the form actually listed in the *Shuōwén Jiězì* is as given here.

an adaptive approach to script reform, and gave up on prescriptive simplification. In contrast, the Taiwanese authorities have based their rules for character writing on ancient writing practices, in several cases going back to the seal script of the *Shuōwén Jiězì* to determine the proper components and strokes of contemporary characters, so that their efforts can be seen as representing a conservative or even an originalist approach. That being said, both the Mainland and the Taiwanese approaches are not free from inconsistencies. The examples given in this chapter show that the Taiwanese principle of writing components according to their seal script structure has not been applied to characters containing '玄' or to all characters containing '止', even though it certainly could be. Of course, there are inconsistencies in the way in which simplified characters are written too. For example, certain traditional components have been replaced with simplified components when they appear in certain positions in characters, but not when they appear in other positions. The component '言', for instance, is written as '讠' when it appears in the left-hand side of a character, but not when it appears in the right-hand side or in the lower half of a character, causing a single traditional component to split into two simplified components.

The presence of the types of stroke contraction and component substitution discussed in this study in the *Xīnhuá Zìdiǎn* and the *Zhōnghuá Dà Zìdiǎn* shows that Taiwanese traditional characters containing these contractions and substitutions are not new creations of the Taiwanese script authorities or script users. Rather, the previously inconsistent ways of writing these characters in pre-simplified traditional script were standardized according to a different standard than the one used in the PRC. The rules in the *Guózì Yuánzé* have shown that the stroke contractions discussed in this study and the substitution of the '母' component with the '毋' component in characters containing '毒/毒' are conscious choices for the Taiwanese traditional script, and that the elimination of '強' in favour of '强' was a conscious choice for the simplified script. However, further

research is needed to determine if the Mainland script authorities consciously took as the starting point of their simplification programme forms that were already not the shortest way of writing the characters that they represent, and to determine if Taiwanese script authorities made a conscious decision to uniformly use '強' in all characters that contain '強/强'.

Epilogue

This study has demonstrated that some Taiwanese traditional characters paradoxically have fewer strokes than their equivalent simplified forms. The three categories of such characters are: 1) characters in which two strokes are contracted into one stroke only in their Taiwanese traditional forms, 2) characters in which a component is substituted for a component with fewer strokes only in their Taiwanese traditional forms, and 3) characters that were eliminated from the Mainland Chinese orthographic standard as variant forms of characters made up of more strokes, but that are considered standard characters in Taiwanese traditional script. The relevant characters in these categories can variously be explained by rules in the Taiwanese *Guózì Yuánzé* and by the eliminated forms in the Mainland *Yìtǐzì Biǎo*, and characters in all of these categories can be found in dictionaries that predate the Mainland-Taiwanese orthographic split. The Taiwanese authorities use a stricter definition of what forms count as variant forms, namely only forms that are indistinguishable in both pronunciation and meaning, so that more forms were maintained than in Mainland China, including forms that have fewer strokes than the forms with which they were replaced in the PRC. Furthermore, unlike simplified characters, Taiwanese traditional characters are preferably made to structurally conform to their seal scrip forms in the *Shuōwén Jiězì*. In some cases this means that strokes are contracted or components are replaced with components with a lower stroke count, leaving certain Taiwanese traditional characters with lower stroke counts than their equivalent simplified forms.

The Mainland Chinese simplification drive resulted in a substantial change to the appearances and structures of many standard-form characters, giving rise to a new simplified orthographic standard and causing a split between simplified characters and the traditional characters used in other parts of the Sinosphere such as Taiwan and Hong Kong. However, the initial plan of having multiple waves of simplifications, thereby further reducing the number of characters in use and reducing the stroke count of all commonly used characters to no more than ten strokes, was ultimately abandoned.

Ironically, the adherence to the character forms as specified in the final official character scheme of 1986 and the absence of incorporation of further stroke-saving contractions or substitutions mean that the Mainland orthographic standard is in effect a conservative standard, albeit one that conserves a standard that was set only a few decades ago. The stroke-saving contractions and substitutions discussed in this study certainly could be applied to simplified characters, and applying them consistently to all simplified characters that contain the relevant components, disregarding the originalist ideal of conforming to ancient character structures, would avoid the inconsistencies present in Taiwanese traditional script and satisfy the desire for conformity and simplicity in simplified script. The shunning of even minor stroke-saving changes that have already proven themselves to be unproblematic in Taiwanese traditional characters clearly shows that the Mainland script authorities have given up on their original vision for character simplification.

An alternative to another major simplification could be to unfreeze the orthographic standard and allow for minor simplifications to be instituted by the authorities when appropriate. This would be similar in principle to the spelling revisions periodically issued for other languages, such as those issued by the Dutch *Instituut voor de Nederlandse Taal*. This would allow for the adoption of stroke-saving contractions and substitutions such as are described in this study, and for the gradual formalization of any future changes in simplified script users' writing habits, thereby bringing simplified orthographic policy in line with its initial ideology of adapting the script to the way in which people actually write characters. Another alternative would be to take a more liberal approach to character-writing standards, allowing minor distinctions such as the stroke-contractions discussed in this study to be written or to not be written depending on the preference of the writer in question. In practice, this is already what happens and what has happened for millennia in informal contexts, with few negative consequences.

On balance, the characters discussed in this study do not support the notion of character simplification being an evolutionary process, for a number of reasons. As discussed above, they are generally not newly created forms, and their fewer-stroke forms are often justified by their structural correspondence to their ancient forms. Furthermore, these characters meet the criterion of inclusion in this study due to conscious decisions by script authorities about how characters should be written, not due to organic changes in writing practices by script users en masse, and there is at present no indication of ongoing changes to simplified or Taiwanese traditional characters. Finally, both simplification and standardization, which by necessity depends on a central authority overruling and ruling over people's writing practices, have always at least in part been motivated by political or ideological concerns, and were never solely the consequence of factors innate to characters themselves, but always a consequence of human agency. The recurrence of the seal script forms in the *Shuōwén Jiězì* as bases for Taiwanese traditional character components and the recurrence of the same forms over and over again both in simplified and in traditional script suggest not a linear process of progress towards ever simpler forms, but a circular deliberation on which preexisting forms should be considered standard forms, and which should not.

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