

HOW TO SELECT

Seal Script 篆书 Zhuan Shu

Seal Script was developed in the ancient Qin Dynasty (221-206B.C.). If you visit the ghostly Terracotta Warriors outside of Xi'an, you can see the kind of impressive achievements the people of this period accomplished.

The Seal Script actually evolved in the preceding Zhou Dynasty, when the practice of carving characters onto objects such as turtle shells was still widespread. It was, however, also often written with ink. Because of its age, you can notice the characters are still quite close to their pictographic origins. Their alien appearance means that the average Chinese person cannot understand them today. However, this script is still widely used on contracts and other legal documents. You can read a little more about this further into the chapter.



Seal Script: The most ancient script still in use today.



Clerical Script: Born in the Han, is the first standardized system, closely resemble today's characters.

Clerical Script (隶书) Shu

The adoption of Clerical Script for official use began after the murder of the entire family in the fateful year 213 B.C. A brief period of chaos followed, after which the Han Dynasty was established. This is traditionally considered one of the greatest dynasties in Chinese history, and led to innovations as, the adoption of Confucianism, the development of the Silk Road, and the standardization of the writing system.

These were momentous events whose echoes can still be heard. Even today, China's largest ethnic group calls themselves "Han people" (汉族) and their writing system "Han Zi".

The standardization of the writing system fundamentally altered the system into something that closely resembles the characters we see today. No longer did cha...