LESSON TWO

Dialogue I

Words like “this” and “that” are called demonstrative pronouns in English grammar, meaning pointer words. The word na⁴ 那 for “that” is not simplified, but zhe⁴ 這 is; the right hand element was changed from yan (words) to wen 文 (language; French is fawen 法文, Japanese riwen 日文, Chinese zhongwen 中文). Wen 文 is a logical substitution for yan 言; both are second tone words. The phonetic element in na 那 and zhe 這 is not obvious; it may be arbitrary for the whole graph.

Vocabulary item #2 zhang¹ 張 has two elements left / right. On the left is a bow on the right is a commonly used word meaning long (chang² 長) or grow up (zhang³ 長). A drawn bow describes a flat surface or plane. The word describes stretching or something stretched flat or out.

Vocabulary item #3 zhao 照 has four elements: on bottom are four dots representing fire, on the left, above fire, is the sun, on the right is knife (dao 刀) over mouth. Knife over mouth is pronounced zhao⁴ 召 and means to call or summon. The word seems to mean to make something visible by shining light on it, i.e., evoking or calling up an image. Pian⁴ 片 simply means a slice hence something flat, like a photo or a slide. As a graph pian 片 represents the split half of the graph mu⁴ 木(tree, wood). Mu 木 itself is a mono-graph.

Item #8, ge 個. This simplified form has been used for over 1000 years in printing as well as calligraphy. Still, it is useful to learn the more complex traditional form.

Item #19 mei 没. Basically a negative before nouns; before verbs it = meiyou 没有 meaning the absence or non-existence of an action; you 有 = exist. There is water on the left because the original meaning was “to sink,” pronounced mo 没.
For example, ta meiyou shuo 没有說 means he has not said; ta meiyou qian 他沒有錢 means he has no money. Bu 不, unlike meiyou 没有, only comes before a verb.
Item #20 xiao 小 in addition to small, little, means young. Xiaozhang 小張 means Young Zhang not Little Zhang. (He could be a basketball star.)

P. 46 Item #6 dou 都. This word is an adverb, as the book says, therefore it must precede a verb. It’s not the “end of an enumeration” but the modifier to a verb immediately following and refers to things preceding it. Avoid thinking of it loosely as English “all” and rather as inclusively, collectively, etc. Pronounced du 都, the word also means metropolis, where all things are gathered. Guodu 國都 means the capital.