

# # 85 THEMATIC EXPLORATIONS

## Parallel Features

Here is a memory trick that I've found very useful. In a few kanji with right-hand and left-hand sides, the first strokes in each element look alike. Consider these:

作      *SAKU, tsuku•ru*: to make  
物      *BUTSU, MOTSU, mono*: thing

Now visualize them as separate components:

亅      乍  
牛      勿

The initial stroke for all four components is a diagonal line on the upper left.

We see this pattern again in a different way with this character:

持      *Ji, mo•tsu*: to hold, have

It resolves into the following components:

扌      寺

Each starts with a + sign of sorts, though this may not be obvious until you draw them.

Now look at the next character:

硬      *kō, kata•i*: hard, stiff

This one doesn't fit the pattern in terms of stroke order; you start 石 by drawing a T shape, but you don't approach 更 that way. However, the finished product makes the left-hand and right-side look like T-twins, and it might help if you remember this kanji as such.

The pattern of parallel strokes applies to at least one compound:

先生      *sensei*: teacher

The first four strokes are alike in 先 and 生!

Finally, it may help to remember the following compounds if you focus on the identical components each contains:

健康      *kenkō*: health  
全国      *zenkoku*: the entire nation

In 健康, you see two variations on a "writing brush" (聿), and then 全国 includes two instances of a "king" (王). We saw many more examples of repeating components in Exhibit 47, "Thematic Explorations: Look-Alikes in Compounds."

In Japan, people hang paper lanterns (提灯, *chōchin*) outside drinking establishments, shops selling *yakitori* (skewers of grilled chicken and vegetables), and the like to attract business. If there is kanji on the paper, the typeface style is usually *chōchinmoji*. The lanterns here are from China, where shop owners similarly use lanterns to attract attention. The middle one says 福 (*FUKU*: good fortune), whereas the one to the right says 春 (*haru*: spring).

