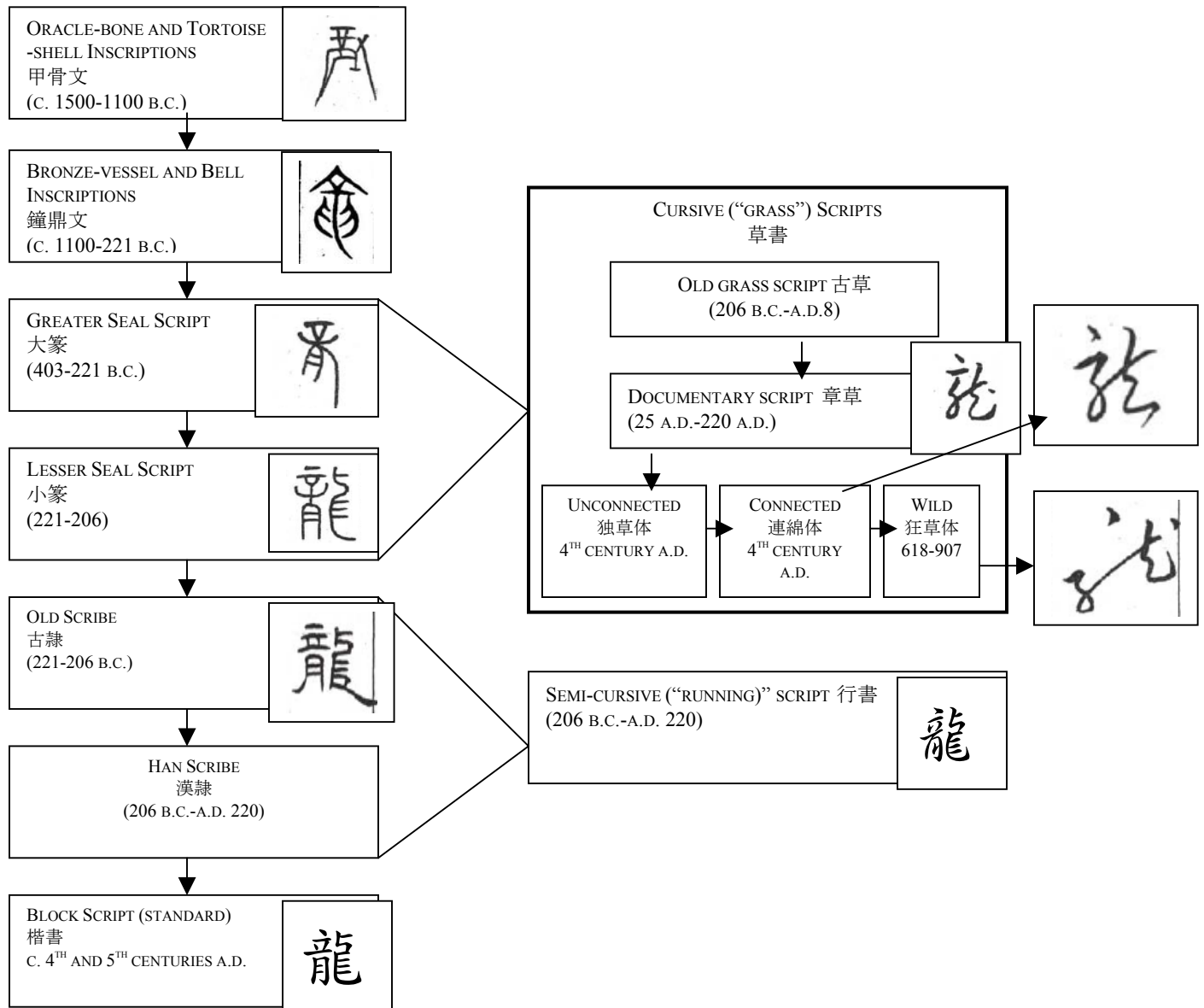


CALLIGRAPHY

Calligraphy is more than an art form in East Asia—it is useful for students to learn about the different types of calligraphy, their significance/meaning, and history. Here is a basic chart that covers the history of calligraphy. Examples are all the character 龍:



Today, seal script is often used for personal seals (Ch. *túzhāng* 圖章; K. *tocang* 圖章; J. 印鑑 or 判子), but otherwise is rarely seen. Scribe script is also rarely used. Block, semi-cursive, and cursive are the standard forms used in CJK.

In order to figure out what something is, knowing the stroke order is often very helpful. For example, the cursive form of “wind” 風 (see below right) might seem inscrutable at first, but if you follow the brush strokes with your eyes and do a little reconstructing, it is not hard to guess what the character is.



Informally, there are many abbreviations of characters. (See [examples of Chinese abbreviations](#) and [Japanese abbreviations](#)). Although some charts of these exist, there is no one convenient reference source to use: one must simply learn them through reading and practice.

Japanese and Korean phonetic scripts

It isn't hard to see how the development of the *kana* syllabaries in Japan was the direct result of cursive writing. (See [Variant Kana Forms](#)) From the Variant Kana Forms chart, you can see that more than one kanji was used phonetically in the days of early Japanese. This means that, in addition to the “standard” *kana* you have learned, there are also variant forms (called *hentaigana* 変体仮名). Although you may think them obscure, there are examples of them actually being *typeset*, which means that they were used regularly. There is a [nice page of Japanese hentaigana](#) available online, with examples of *hentaigana* used in the real world.

Cursive forms of kana are, in their most basic form, the result of NOT lifting one's brush or pen up off the paper. In its most extreme form, it can look like this →



If you are feeling zealous, you can buy a CD-ROM that will teach you how to read this calligraphy. It is called *KanaClassic: An Electronic Guide to Learning Classical Japanese Kana Writing* and is published by Columbia University.

Korean *hangul* has gone through its own transformation over the centuries. There are four basic forms: *pan bon go che* (板本古体), *pan bon pil sache* (板本筆寫体), *kung che*(宮体), and *min che*(民体).

