

千字文	qiān zì wén	The One-Thousand-Character Essay
天地玄黄	tiān dì xuán huáng	Heaven and earth, dark and yellow
宇宙洪荒	yǔ zhòu hóng huāng	The universe, vast and great.
日月盈昃	rì yuè yíng zè	Sun and moon, full and setting;
辰宿列张	chén xiù liè zhāng	Stars and lunar mansion, arranged and spread.
寒来暑往	hán lái shǔ wǎng	Cold comes, and heat goes;
秋收冬藏	qiū shōu dōng cáng	Autumn gathering, and winter storing.
闰余成岁	rùn yú chéng suì	An intercalary surplus completes the year;
律吕调阳	lǜ lǚ diào yáng	Odd and even pitch-pipes harmonize Yang.
云腾致雨	yún téng zhì yǔ	Clouds rise, and cause rain;
露结为霜	lù jié wéi shuāng	Dew congealing forms frost.
金生丽水	jīn shēng lì shuǐ	Gold is born in the sands of the Li River;
玉出昆冈	yù chū kūn gāng	Jade comes out of the Kunlun Mountains.
剑号巨阙	jiàn hào jù quē	A sword of renown was Juque;
珠称夜光	zhū chēng yè guāng	And there was the pearl called Yeguang.
果珍李柰	guǒ zhēn lǐ nài	Of fruits, we prize plums and crab-apples;
菜重芥姜	cài zhòng jiè jiāng	Of vegetables, we value mustard and ginger.
海咸河淡	hǎi xián hé dàn	The sea is salty, and rivers are bland;
鳞潜羽翔	lín qián yǔ xiáng	The scaly ones submerge, and the feathered ones soar.
龙师火帝	lóng shī huǒ dì	In the age of the dragon masters, the Fire Emperor,
鸟官人皇	niǎo guān rén huáng	The bird officials, and the Human Sovereign.
始制文字	shǐ zhì wén zì	For the first time were devised written characters,
乃服衣裳	nǎi fú yī shāng	And also clothes were worn.
推位让国	tuī wèi ràng guó	Those who abdicated from the throne and gave up their kingdom
有虞陶唐	yǒu yú táo táng	Were the lord of Yu, and he who had been prince of Tao and Tang.
吊民伐罪	diào mǐn fá zuì	Comforting the people, and punishing the guilty,
周发殷汤	zhōu fā yīn tāng	Were Fa of Zhou, and Tang of Shang.
坐朝问道	zuò cháo wèn dào	Sitting in their courts, they inquired about the Way;
垂拱平章	chuí gǒng píng zhāng	With drooping robes, bowing they controlled and regulated.
爱育黎首	ài yù lí shǒu	They loved and nourished the Black-Headed Race;
臣伏戎羌	chén fú róng qiāng	They subjugated and laid prostrate the western tribes.
遐迩一体	xiá ěr yī tǐ	Far and near formed one body;
率宾归王	shuài bīn guī wáng	Rules and ruled returned to the king.
鸣凤在竹	míng fèng zài zhú	There was the cry of the phoenix in the bamboo;
白驹食场	bái jū shí cháng	And the white colt grazed in the fields.
化被草木	huà bèi cǎo mù	These emperors' transforming influence reached grass and trees;

赖及万方	lài jí wàn fāng	Reliance on them extended into ten Thousand regions.
盖此身发	gài cǐ shēn fā	Now this, our body and hair,
四大五常	sì dà wǔ cháng	Incorporates four great elements and five constant virtues.
恭惟鞠养	gōng wéi jú yǎng	Let us respectfully consider what our parents nourished and raised;
岂敢毁伤	qǐ gǎn huǐ shāng	How would we dare to destroy or injure our bodies
女慕贞洁	nǚ mù zhēn jié	A woman cherishes chaste purity;
男效才良	nán xiào cái liáng	A man imitates the talented and the good.
知过必改	zhī guò bì gǎi	He who knows of his errors, must reform;
得能莫忘	dé néng mò wàng	He who has acquired a talent for virtue should not neglect it.
罔谈彼短	wǎng tán bǐ duǎn	Do not talk about others' shortcoming;
靡恃己长	mí shì jǐ cháng	Nor depend upon your own excellence.
信使可覆	xìn shǐ kě fù	Promises made should be those you can keep;
器欲难量	qì yù nán liàng	Your capacity for virtue - wish that it be hard to measure.
墨悲丝染	mò bēi sī rǎn	Mo (Modi) grieved when silk was dyed;
诗赞羔羊	shī zàn gāo yáng	The Book of Odes praises lambs.
景行维贤	jǐng xíng wéi xián	Admire conduct only if it is virtuous;
克念作圣	kè niàn zuò shèng	He who can think could become a sage.
德建名立	dé jiàn míng lì	With virtue established, a reputation will be founded;
形端表正	xíng duān biǎo zhèng	A figure that is proper will display correctness.
空谷传声	kōng gǔ chuán shēng	Hollow valleys transmit sound.
虚堂习听	xū táng xí tīng	Empty halls reverberate with what is heard.
祸因恶积	huò yīn è jī	Calamity is caused through evil amassed;
福缘善庆	fú yuán shàn qìng	Happiness originates in virtue rewarded.
尺璧非宝	chǐ bì fēi bǎo	A foot of jade is no treasure;
寸阴是竞	cùn yīn shì jìng	An inch of shadow on the sundial is fought for.
资父事君	zī fù shì jūn	Aid your father and serve your prince
曰严与敬	yuē yán yǔ jìng	With what is called dignity and reverence.
孝当竭力	xiào dāng jié lì	For filial piety's sake , you should exert utmost force;
忠则尽命	zhōng zé jìn mìng	And in loyalty, then, even sacrifice your life.
临深履薄	lín shēn lǚ bó	Act as though approaching a deep, or treading on thin ice;
夙兴温清	sù xìng wēn qīng	Rise early to warm or cool for them your parents' bed.
似兰斯馨	sì lán sī xīng	Like orchids will be this fragrance of such deeds:
如松之盛	rú sōng zhī shèng	They will last like a pine' s evergreen flourishing;
川流不息	chuān liú bù xī	Or endure like rivers that flowing never cease;
渊澄取映	yuān chéng qǔ yìng	They will dazzle like deep waters and clear, seizing the sunlight.
容止若思	róng zhǐ ruò sī	Let demeanor be like that of one who thinks,

言辞安定	yán cí ān dìng	With words in the phrases calm and decided.
笃初诚美	dǔ chū chéng měi	Diligence in the beginning is truly admirable;
慎终宜令	shèn zhōng yí lìng	While attentiveness to the end is proper and honorable.
荣业所基	róng yè suǒ jī	This is what forms the basis of splendid profession,
籍甚无竟	jí shèn wú jìng	And makes a reputation superlative and endless.
学优登仕	xué yōu dēng shì	Let education be superior, for rising to official posts,
摄职从政	shè zhí cóng zhèng	Assisting in governmental duties, and participating in administrative affairs.
存以甘棠	cún yǐ gān táng	Gain a name like the one which was preserved with a sweet pear tree;
去而益咏	qù ér yì yǒng	And when you are gone, you still will be increasingly sung about.
乐殊贵贱	yuè shū guì jiàn	In numbers of musician retainers exist between nobles and commoners;
礼别尊卑	lǐ bié zūn bēi	And rites differentiate the honored from the humble.
上和下睦	shàng hé xià mù	Let superiors be kindly and inferiors peaceable;
夫唱妇随	fū chàng fù suí	When the husband calls, the wife follows.
外受傅训	wài shòu fù xùn	Outside, abroad, is received the teacher's instruction;
入奉母仪	rù fèng mǔ yí	Inside, at home, we are honored to receive from our mothers our rules of etiquette.
诸姑伯叔	zhū gū bó shú	All parental aunts and elder and younger brothers of a father,
犹子比儿	yóu zǐ bǐ ér	Regard nephews like their children and make them comparable to their own sons.
孔怀兄弟	kǒng huái xiōng dì	Greatly cherish your elder and younger brothers,
同气连枝	tóng qì lián zhī	With whom you share the same life, and with whom you are connected like branches on
交友投分	jiāo yǒu tóu fēn	Those joined in friendship hand over shares or parts of what they have;
切磨箴规	qiē mó zhēn guī	Carve and polish away at improving yourself; needle your friends; and like an artisan using compasses, mould and round them off.
仁慈隐恻	rén cí yǐn cè	Benevolence, compassion, commiseration, and sympathy:
造次弗离	zào cì fú lí	From these, hurriedly, we should not be separated.
节义廉退	jié yì lián tuì	Moderation, righteousness, integrity, and humility;
颠沛匪亏	diān pèi fēi kuī	Should, in times of danger, not be lost from sight.
性静情逸	xìng jìng qíng yì	With a disposition that is calm, the emotions are quiet;
心动神疲	xīn dòng shén pí	But with a heart aroused, the spirit gets weary.
守真志满	shǒu zhēn zhì mǎn	Keep to what is genuine, and your aspirations will be fulfilled;
逐物意移	zhú wù yì yí	But, in pursuing worldly things, our thoughts get shifted.
坚持雅操	jiān chí yǎ cāo	Firmly hold to a fine purpose,
好爵自縻	hǎo jué zì mí	And excellent dignities will, of themselves, be attached to you.
都邑华夏	dū yì huá xià	The capital cities of China, the glorious and extensive realm,
东西二京	dōng xī èr jīng	Are the two metropolises, in the East and West.
背邙面洛	bèi máng miàn luò	Behind the one, Lo-yang, is Mang Hill; in front of it is the River Lo.
浮渭据泾	fú wèi jù jīng	Changan, the other capital, floats above the River Wei, and is defended by the River Jing.
宫殿盘郁	gōng diàn pán yù	The palaces and halls form a dense maze;

楼观飞惊	lóu guān fēi jīng	While towers and look-outs soar up astonishingly.
图写禽兽	tú xiě qín shòu	There are pictures depicting birds and beasts,
画彩仙灵	huà cǎi xiān líng	And painting in color of immortals and spirits.
丙舍旁启	bǐng shě bàng qǐ	Bright houses on the side open out;
甲帐对楹	jiǎ zhàng duì yíng	And excellent screens are facing the pillars.
肆筵设席	sì yán shè xí	For banquets, one has set out double mats and spread single mats;
鼓瑟吹笙	gǔ sè chuī shēng	There is a striking of the zither and blowing of gourd pipes.
升皆纳陛	shēng jiē nà bì	When great officials mount the stairs and are received at the steps of the throne,
弁转疑星	biàn zhuàn yí xīng	Their ceremonial caps moving about could be taken for stars.
右通广内	yòu tōng guǎng nèi	On the right, one goes through to the hall named Guangnei;
左达承明	zuǒ dá chéng míng	On the left, one penetrates into the one called Chengming.
既集坟典	jì jí fén diǎn	When there had been assembled the Records of the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors,
亦聚群英	yì jù qún yīng	There also gathered here multitudes of eminent men.
杜稿钟隶	dù gǎo zhōng lì	Here are manuscripts of Du in cursive style and of Zhong in the official script,
漆书壁经	qī shū bì jīng	As well as lacquer books and the wall classics.
府罗将相	fǔ luó jiāng xiāng	In the courts are ranged in order, generals and civil assistants;
路侠槐卿	lù xiá huái qīng	While by the road, side by side, are the Pagoda-tree Ministers.
户封八县	hù fēng bā xiàn	Their families have been entrusted with eight districts,
家给千兵	jiā gěi qiān bīng	And to each house have been given a thousand soldiers.
高冠陪辇	gāo guān péi niǎn	In their high caps they accompany the imperial chariot,
驱毂振缨	qū gǔ zhèn yīng	While the motion of rapidly driven wheels shakes their tassels.
世禄侈富	shì lù chǐ fù	Their hereditary incomes provide lavish wealth,
车驾肥轻	chē jià fēi qīng	And to their chariots, so light are yoked plump horses.
策功茂实	cè gōng mào shí	Commemorations of plans and achievements, vigorous and substantial,
勒碑刻铭	lè bēi kè míng	Have been carved on stone tablets, incised with inscriptions.
磻溪伊尹	pán xī yī yǐn	There are commemorated the man of Panji, and Yiyin:
佐时阿衡	zuǒ shí ā héng	One was a help in time, and one a pillar of the state.
奄宅曲阜	yān zhái qū fù	Then, to make a livable residence of Jufou,
微旦孰营	wēi dàn shú yíng	If not Dan, who could have managed it
桓公匡合	huán gōng kuāng hé	Duke Huan made reforms and united the empire;
济弱扶倾	jì ruò fú qīng	He helped the weak and supported the falling.
绮回汉惠	qǐ huí hàn huì	Ji restored Hui of Han, While Yue influence Wuting.
说感武丁	shuō gǎn wǔ dīng	Thus, superior and able men exerted themselves in the service of the state;
俊乂密勿	jùn yì mì wù	And with the help of many scholars
多士寔宁	duō shì shí níng	there was true peace.
晋楚更霸	jìn chǔ gēng bà	Jin and Chu were alternately chief of the feudal states,

赵魏困横	zhào wèi kùn héng	And the states of Zhao and Wei were distressed by the horizontal alliance.
假途灭虢	jiǎ tú miè guó	A false one was granted right of way to destroy Guo.
践土会盟	jiàn tǔ huì méng	And at Jiantu there was a meeting and a covenant.
何遵约法	hé zūn yuē fǎ	He complied with ideas agreed on previously, in forming a code of laws;
韩弊烦刑	hán bì fán xíng	Han, the legislator, came to grief through his own vexatious laws.
起翦颇牧	qǐ jiǎn pō mù	Bai Ji, Wang Qian, Lian Po, and Li Mu,
用军最精	yòng jūn zuì jīng	Used troops most skillfully.
宣威沙漠	xuān wēi shā mò	Their display of awesome might reached to the sandy desert;
驰誉丹青	chí yù dān qīng	Fast riders spread abroad their praises, which also lived on in painting.
九州禹迹	jiǔ zhōu yǔ jī	The nine provinces bear Yu's footprints,
百郡秦并	bǎi jùn qín bìng	And the hundred prefectures by Qin were united.
岳宗泰岱	yuè zōng tài dài	Of the sacred mountain peaks, the most honored is Tai-dai;
禅主云亭	chán zhǔ yún tíng	Sacrifices to the Earth were based upon the hills Yun and Ting.
雁门紫塞	yàn mén zǐ sài	Take note of Yen-men Pass, and the Purple Barriers;
鸡田赤诚	jī tián chì chéng	The relay station Ji-tian, and Ji-cheng, the red city;
昆池碣石	kūn chí jié shí	Lake Kun, and Jie-shi, the hill of stone;
钜野洞庭	jù yě dòng tíng	And also, the lakes Juye and Dong-ting.
旷远绵邈	kuàng yuǎn mián miǎo	How distant and remote are these places, extending into far off regions,
岩岫杳冥	yán xiù yǎo míng	Where there are cliffs and caverns, dark and deep.
治本于农	zhì běn yú nóng	Good government is rooted in agriculture;
务兹稼穡	wù zī jià sè	Devote attention to it, sow and reap.
俶载南亩	chù zài nán mǔ	Beginning work in the southern fields,
我艺黍稷	wǒ yì shǔ jì	I sow glutinous and paniced millet.
税熟贡新	shuì shóu gòng xīn	Taxes are paid in ripe grain, tribute in new grain;
劝赏黜陟	quàn shǎng chù zhì	And let there be exhortations and rewards, dismissals and promotions.
孟轲敦素	mèng kē dūn sù	Mencius esteemed simplicity,
史鱼秉直	shǐ yú bǐng zhí	And the historian, Yu, was tenaciously straightforward.
庶几中庸	shù jǐ zhōng yōng	Nearly approaching the unchanging middle,
劳谦谨敕	láo qiān jǐn chì	Be hard-working, modest, attentive, and cautious.
聆音察理	líng yīn chá lǐ	Listening to the sound of speech, investigate the reasonableness of what is said;
鉴貌辨色	jiàn mào biàn sè	Examine a person's manner, and form discriminating conclusions from appearance.
贻厥嘉猷	yí jué jiā yóu	A person should bequeath to them, his children, excellent plans of action,
勉其祗植	miǎn qí zhī zhí	And strive, so that his respectability be established.
省躬讥诫	shěng gōng jī jiè	Examine yourself, when you are ridiculed or admonished,
宠增抗极	chǒng zēng kàng jí	And also when favors increase and you have risen to the pear of good fortune.
殆辱近耻	dài rǔ jìn chǐ	When in disgrace, or near to shame,

林皋幸即	lín gāo xìng jí	One is happy to go off to woods and hills.
两疏见机	liǎng shū jiàn jī	The two Shu saw the opportune time
解组谁逼	jiě zǔ shéi bī	For retiring from office; yet who compelled them
索居闲处	suǒ jū xián chǔ	Dwell in isolation and live in retirement,
沉默寂寥	chén mò jì liáo	In deep silence and quiet solitude.
求古寻论	qiú gǔ xún lùn	Seek out the works of the ancients and investigate their discourses;
散虑逍遥	sǎn lǚ xiāo yáo	Dismiss anxiety and roam about at leisure.
欣奏累遣	xīn zòu lèi qiǎn	Let joy be advanced and troubles banished;
戚谢欢招	qī xiè huān zhāo	Refuse grief with thanks, and let gladness be hailed.
渠荷的历	qú hé dí lì	See the canals with lotus flowers, fresh and bright,
园莽抽条	yuán mǎng chōu tiáo	And when in the garden there is too much undergrowth, Pull up the shoots of plants.
枇杷晚翠	pí pa wǎn cuì	The loquat, until the evening of the year, stays green,
梧桐早凋	wú tóng zǎo diāo	The wutong tree is early in losing its leaves.
陈根委翳	chén gēn wěi yì	Old roots break off and decay,
落叶飘摇	luò yè piāo yáo	And falling leaves whirl and drift with the wind.
游鸱独运	yóu kūn dú yùn	The roving Kun bird circles alone in the sky,
凌摩绛霄	líng mó jiàng xiāo	And rises to touch the red empyrean.
耽读玩市	dān dú wán shì	Wang Chong was so fond of reading that he would peruse the books in the market place,
寓目囊箱	yù mù náng xiāng	And let his eyes dwell upon sacks and boxes of books.
易轡攸畏	yì yóu yǒu wèi	Speaking thoughtlessly and lightly is that which should be feared,
属耳垣墙	shǔ ěr yuán qiáng	Because listening ears may be up against the walls.
具膳餐饭	jù shàn cān fàn	Prepare your food and eat cooked rice,
适口充肠	shì kǒu chōng cháng	Thus suiting your taste and filling your intestines.
饱饫烹宰	bǎo yù pēng zǎi	The surfeited have no appetite for boiled or slaughtered food;
饥厌糟糠	jī yàn zāo kāng	The hungry are satisfied with dregs and chaff.
亲戚故旧	qīn qī gù jiù	Relatives and old friends,
老少异粮	lǎo shào yì liáng	The old and the young, all eat different kinds of gain.
妾御绩纺	qiè yù jī fǎng	The concubine attends to spinning,
侍巾帷房	shì jīn wéi fāng	And waits upon her master when he puts on his kerchief in the bedroom.
纨扇圆絜	wán shàn yuán jié	White silk fans are round and clean,
银烛炜煌	yín zhú wěi huáng	And silver candle holders glow and glitter.
昼眠夕寐	zhòu mián xī mèi	For daytime naps and nighttime sleep,
蓝笋象床	lán sǔn xiàng chuáng	There are blue mats, and beds decorated with ivory.
弦歌酒宴	xián gē jiǔ yàn	To the sound of stringed instruments and songs, with wine and feasting.
接杯举觞	jiē bēi jǔ shāng	We take our cups and lift our goblets.
矫手顿足	jiǎo shǒu dùn zú	With raising of hands and stamping of feet,

悦豫且康	yuè yù qiě kāng	All are pleased and delighted, and also feel at ease.
嫡后嗣续	dí hòu sì xù	The legal wife's heir succeeds his father and carries on the family line;
祭祀烝尝	jì sì zhēng cháng	He offers the ancestral, as well as the winter and autumn sacrifices.
稽颡再拜	jī sǎng zài bài	He bows his forehead to the ground, and makes a second obeisance,
悚惧恐惶	sǒng jù kǒng huáng	In fearful awe and apprehensive agitation.
笺牒简要	jiān dié jiǎn yào	In letters and documents, be concise and to the point;
顾答审详	gù dá shěn xiáng	But let answers, given in person and face to face, be well considered, detailing the particulars.
骸垢想浴	hái gòu xiǎng yù	When the body is dirty, one thinks of bathing;
执热愿凉	zhí rè yuàn liáng	And on grasping something hot, you wish for something cold.
驴骡犍特	lú luó jiān tè	Donkeys, mules, calves, and bulls,
骇跃超骧	hài yuè chāo xiāng	When startled, will leap more than a spirited horse.
诛斩贼盗	zhū zhǎn zéi dào	One punishes and beheads thieves and robbers;
捕获叛亡	bǔ huò pàn wáng	And we arrest and seize rebels and fugitives.
布射僚丸	bù shè liáo wán	Skillful were Bu in shooting arrows, and Liao with the ball,
嵇琴任箫	jī qín ruǎn xiào	Ji with the guitar, and Yuan with the flute.
恬笔伦纸	tián bǐ lún zhǐ	Tian invented the writing brush, Lun invented paper;
钧巧任钓	jūn qiǎo rèn diào	Jun was a skillful artisan, Ren excelled in fishing.
释纷利俗	shì fēn lì sú	They cleared up confusion, and were of profit to the world;
竝皆佳妙	bìng jiē jiā miào	Also, all of them were excellent and admirable.
毛施淑姿	máo shī shù zī	Mao and Shi were pure beauties;
工颦妍笑	gōng pín yán xiào	One artfully knit her brows, the other was beautiful when she smiled.
年矢每催	nián shǐ měi cuī	The years fly like arrows, each pushing on the other;
曦晖朗曜	xī huī lǎng yào	Yet, the bright sunlight is clear and dazzling.
璇玑悬斡	xuán jī xuán wò	The astrolabe hangs suspended and revolves;
晦魄环照	huì pò huán zhào	The moon wanes and becomes dark, then after a circuit it shines again.
指薪修祜	zhǐ xīn xiū hù	By pointing to firewood, we can symbolize how to cultivate the blessing of Heaven;
永绥吉劭	yǒng suī jí shào	And the thought of lasting peace and happiness will stimulate our efforts.
矩步引领	jǔ bù yǐn lǐng	Regulate your step, and stretch your neck into a fitting posture;
俯仰廊庙	fǔ yǎng láng miào	Bow down or look up, with the demeanor of a gentleman in place corridors or in temples.
束带矜庄	shù dài jīn zhuāng	With bound girdle, be dignified and serious;
徘徊瞻眺	pái huái zhān tiào	And, unobtrusively walking to and fro, look up with reverence whenever you gaze about.
孤陋寡闻	gū lòu guǎ wén	A solitary, asocial rustic, meager in what he has heard of culture and the world.
愚蒙等肖	yú méng dēng qiào	For being stupid, dull, and the like, will meet with ridicule.
谓语助者	wèi yǔ zhù zhě	What are called the auxiliary particles
焉哉乎也	yān zāi hū yě	Are -yen, zai, hu, ye - words we use for interrogation, surprise, exclamation and finality.