



# Decoding Kanji

A Practical Approach to  
Learning Look-Alike  
Characters

Yaeko S. Habein

With the assistance of Gerald B. Mathias

KODANSHA INTERNATIONAL

Tokyo • New York • London

# CONTENTS

---

**Introduction** ——— 6

In Japanese 6

In English 8

**PART 1: What Are Kanji?** ——— 12

**PART 2: Kanji Exercises** ——— 34

A. Simple Look-Alikes 34

B. More Complex Look-Alikes 44

C. Confusing Homonyms 67

D. False Homonyms 94

**Appendixes** ——— 103

A. Most Frequently Used Single-Unit Kanji 104

B. Kanji Made by Adding Strokes to Single-Unit Kanji 110

C. Commonly Used Classifiers 113

D. Pairs of Homonymous Kanji Compounds with One Kanji in Common 119

E. Components that Represent Two Different Semantic and Phonetic Values 129

F. *On*-readings of Kanji 132

Kanji Index by Stroke Count 134

Answers to Exercises 141