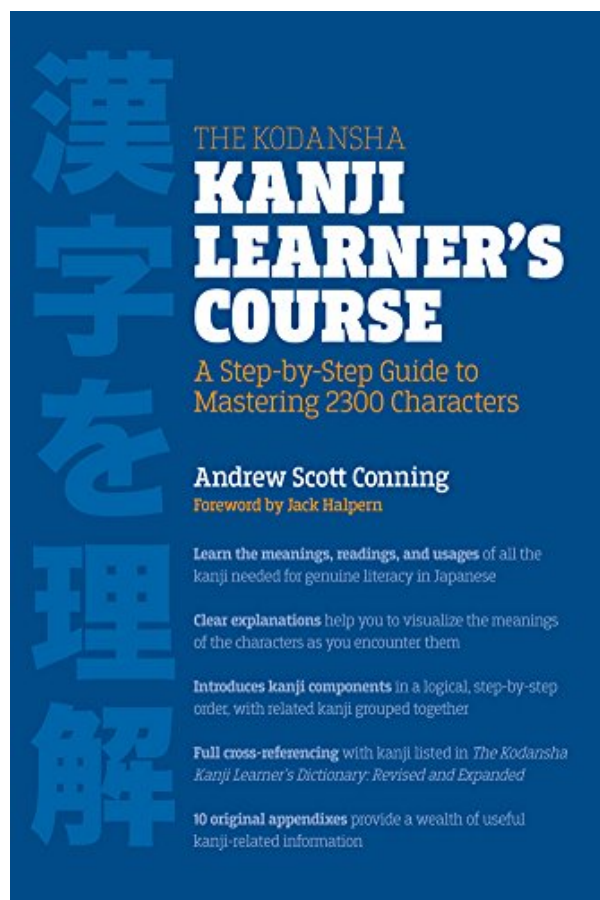
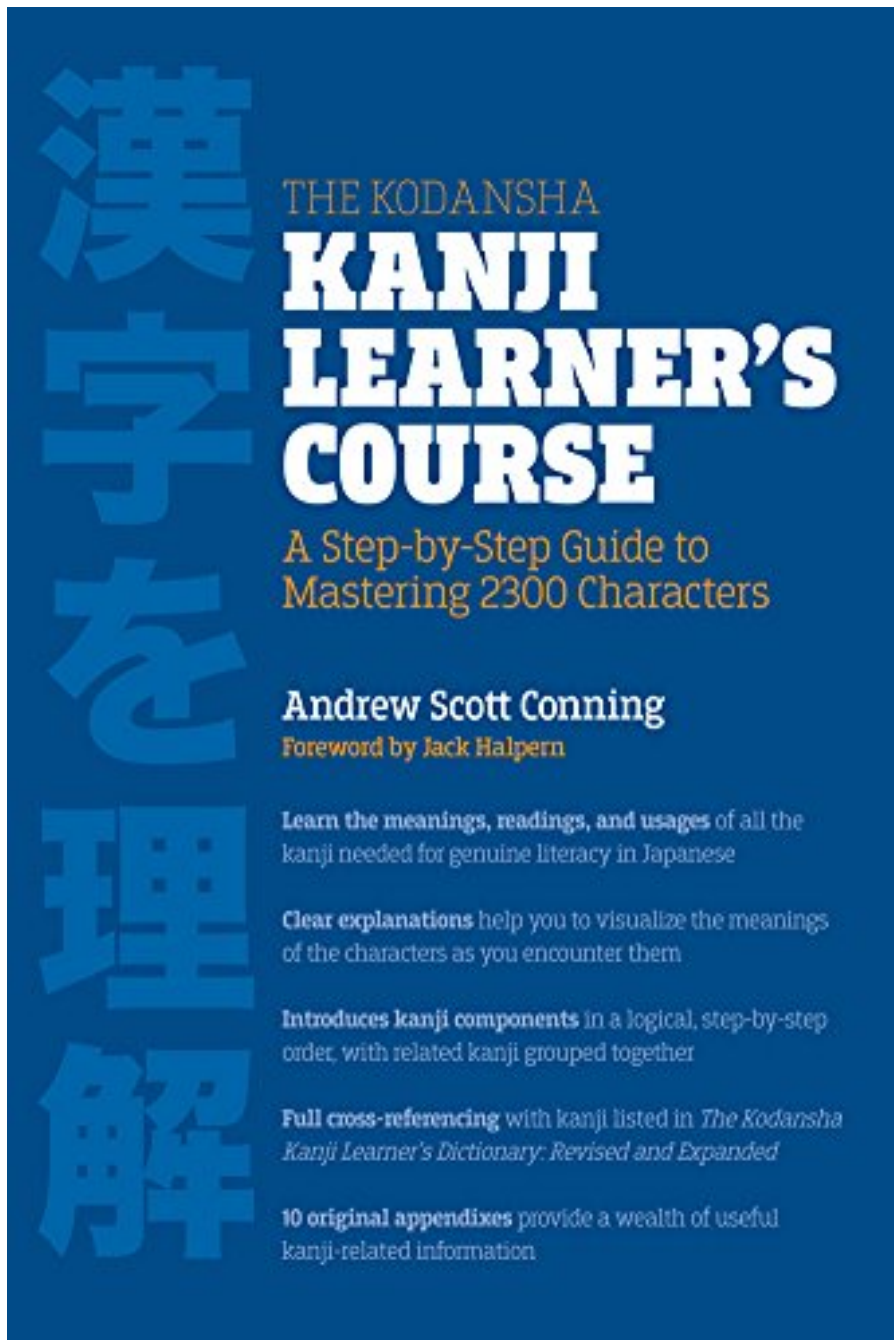


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About the Author

Andrew Scott Conning is a doctoral candidate and Presidential Fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He received a bachelor's degree in languages from Georgetown University (USA) and a master's degree in social anthropology from the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Mexico). He has been active in Japan as a lecturer and university administrator, and most recently as a research scholar at the University of Tokyo.

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THE KODANSHA KANJI LEARNER'S COURSE: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO MASTERING 2300 CHARACTERS BY ANDREW SCOTT CONNING PDF

The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Course is an innovative and highly effective system for learning and remembering kanji, or Sino-Japanese characters. The book contains 2,300 character entries, including all 2,136 Joyo Kanji ("regular-use kanji") plus 164 of the most useful non-Joyo Kanji. It offers a sophisticated, pedagogically sound method for remembering the basic meaning(s) of each character, conveniently summarized in concise keywords to facilitate memorization.

Each kanji is accompanied by an explanation of how to remember its meaning(s) clearly and distinctly. These mnemonic explanations teach you to associate each kanji's graphical form with its unique range of meaning, often by "seeing" its meaning in the form of the kanji itself. An outstanding feature of the course is the special attention it gives to the challenge of learning each kanji in a differentiated way. This allows you to associate the meaning of each character with the features that distinguish it from graphically similar characters.

Another unique feature-and a significant breakthrough in kanji pedagogy-is the sequence in which the course introduces kanji. Most kanji dictionaries and textbooks arrange their entries in ways that do not address the needs of non-native learners, such as by traditional radical or by the grades in which the kanji are taught in Japanese schools. The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Course uses an original sequence that presents graphically related characters one after the other to help you give significance to their contrastive features as you learn them, and thereby avoid having to relearn them later. It also introduces the meaning and usage of each graphical element-each kanji building block-the first time it appears, thus enabling you to seamlessly and rapidly acquire new characters. In short, The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Course makes learning and remembering kanji easier than ever before.

This book fills an urgent need for a timesaving yet sophisticated kanji-learning system that can be used from beginning through advanced levels-an enjoyable, no-nonsense path to proficiency. It is intended for anyone serious about learning to read Japanese.

Features

- *Includes 2,300 kanji entries
- *Completely up-to-date: includes all the 2,136 officially prescribed Joyo Kanji ("kanji for regular use")
- * Each entry explains how to remember the character's meaning clearly and distinctly, often through the innovative use of visualization and concrete imagery
- *Introduces kanji components in a logical, step-by-step order that makes learning new kanji easier than ever

*Can be used as a stand-alone resource or together with The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Dictionary. Includes cross-references, character meanings, readings, and sample vocabulary from the dictionary.

- Sales Rank: #19438 in Books
- Published on: 2013-12-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.00" h x 1.50" w x 8.90" l, 2.11 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 704 pages

About the Author

Andrew Scott Conning is a doctoral candidate and Presidential Fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He received a bachelor's degree in languages from Georgetown University (USA) and a master's degree in social anthropology from the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Mexico). He has been active in Japan as a lecturer and university administrator, and most recently as a research scholar at the University of Tokyo.

Most helpful customer reviews

40 of 41 people found the following review helpful.

The Best Book so far for Kanji

By Yurixy

I rarely post a review, but when I do, it's because the book really deserves it.

This book is a fantastic resource for anyone who is serious in learning Japanese, but why you ask? What it has to make it different from other similar books?

PROS

You actually learn vocabulary in this book. The best way to learn on/kun readings is definitely learning the vocabulary with the kanji, what is more, this book always give you about three to five words/sentences for each kanji you learn, making this a super valuable tool for learning. The title of the book may be humble in its way, because it doesn't teach you 2300 characters. It teaches you much more than that, including the 2300 characters plus around a 6000 to 9000 words vocabulary to learn (rough guess, I didn't count). The vocabulary is taken from "The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Dictionary: Revised and Expanded", another great asset in combination with this book.

To learn Kanji, this book have some things that makes it much more easier to learn than most books out there (believe me, I have several books for Kanji, and this is my favorite one so far), the order of characters is very well implemented and yes, the order you learn is really important, because you have to fortify the memories from what you learn. The best way to fortify your memories is through mnemonic, short stories or phrases that makes you learn and retain the Kanji. This book tries to follow a solid, concrete aspect, so you can distinguish between similar Kanji and meanings, although, of course with so much mnemonics in the book, a few of them may be not so helpful for you, in that case, you can think of your own story or mnemonic to complement the Kanji you are having difficulty.

Aside from Kanji meanings/readings and Vocabulary, you can also learn the Kanji stroke order - very useful to learn to write them; and the traditional Kanji (probably used in specific literature books) which can be useful for advanced learners of the language.

CONS

The only thing I would change in this book, which would be great in my opinion, is to add the type of each

word presented to you. For example, noun, verb, adjective, etc. It has sometimes distinction for verb transitive and intransitive. Problem is, this is a flaw from the Kodansha Kanji Dictionary itself, not this book itself. What happens is this book takes the vocabulary from there, therefore it doesn't include the type of the word nor any indication of what type of word is that vocabulary coming from. A simple example would be like this: ?? (nibai) double, ???? (bainisuru) double. One is a noun, and the other is a suru verb (to double), but as Kodansha Kanji Dictionary doesn't have indications for type of words, the new learner may have a difficulty time figuring out what the word really means. This was just a simple example that can cause confusion, but most of times you will never know if the word is a verb or noun if you are a beginner, so it's a good idea to use other dictionaries to pair up with this book.

COMPARING WITH - Remembering the Kanji - by James W. Heisig

I studied and completed the book Remembering the Kanji 1 - by James W. Heisig, and I have to admit, while Heisig does a good job on teaching the meaning of the Kanji, I personally dislike how the RTK book is lazy with stories and mnemonics. In the introduction, it says you need to create your own stories and mnemonics using the keywords of each Kanji, but in reality, the learner just wants to learn, and most of the time he/she won't have the time to create everything for each Kanji. This book on the other side is much more complete in that sense, because it gives you more stories, more phrases, and more content to build your memory with, without the need to waste time being super creative with tons of characters. You clearly see that this book loves more the Kanji than RTK or other similar books.

Other problem is that RTK does not teach you the vocabulary in the same scope as you are learning each Kanji. This book here shines in this aspect, because you are learning the Kanji, and you are also learning common words that uses that Kanji, what is more, in a cumulative way. You won't see strange Kanji in the vocabulary until you learned them.

SUMMARY

This book is definitely the best book released so far to learn and memorize the Kanji and useful Vocabulary as extra. The only downside is the source - "The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Dictionary: Revised and Expanded" which doesn't teach you the type of the words - if it's a noun, verb or adjective.

22 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

Effective building block approach, plus uses appropriate (visual/radical/etymological) aids based on individual kanji

By C. Cameron

I know Japanese up to the lower intermediate level (three college classes; ~1,000 words), and I really wanted to continue learning the language on my own, with a preliminary goal of reading shounen manga in their native tongue. Alas, every English speaker learning Japanese knows the huge hurdle that kanji represent when it comes to reading. I needed a method to pick up kanji effectively, so after reading the reviews and book descriptions, I selected this book because it was highly rated and, most importantly, because it includes all of the 2300 basic kanji (most books only include several hundred up to a thousand, requiring you to inconveniently jump ship to another book when you finish).

I've been using this book for just over a month, having made a New Year's resolution to learn 4 kanji per day, a goal I set using the book's layout of 4 kanji per page. This will allow me to begin my dive into native materials before the year's end. I have found that compared to my experience studying kanji from textbooks (e.g. Genki, Tobira), Kodansha offers a much more intuitive experience. The basic Japanese textbooks just throw kanji at you and tell you to memorize them. They do not explain radicals, which can really simplify the learning and association process; they do not use visual mnemonics or etymological backgrounds; and they do not introduce kanji in an order conducive to learning. As two examples of many, Genki teaches the character for "road" (?) without ever first explaining the character for "head/neck" (?); or, Genki teaches the

character for mother (?), without telling you that this represents breasts (turned sideways)...trying forgetting the character now! This isn't to fault the textbooks, as such explanations are beyond their scope; it's merely to point out the textbooks are a rather ineffective way to learn all of the kanji, particularly complicated ones.

Kodansha, fortunately, uses a multi-dimensional approach focused on one thing: making the kanji stick in your mind. Depending on what is useful for an individual kanji, the book explains the kanji's meaning using the appropriate and salient selection of radicals, visual mnemonics, or etymological backgrounds, or any combination thereof. I like that this book (unlike others) does not force awkward or ill-fitting visual mnemonics or complicated and obscure etymological backgrounds on kanji where it doesn't work; the book uses only what relatively simple learning aid makes the most sense for each individual kanji. Furthermore, the book introduces kanji in a building block order, allowing you to utilize what you have already learned to simplify the learning of new kanji. For example, kanji are often introduced as combinations of kanji you have already studied; as conceptually related groups tied around a similar radical or idea; or as contrasting groups where similar appearing kanji with different meanings are compared by the stroke to emphasize what makes them visually different, explaining how to interpret that visual difference to underscore the different meanings. It achieves this without becoming dull and repetitive.

Each kanji includes several, typically 3-6, example words. The example words are strategically selected to use kanji previously covered in the book, which helps reinforce what you have studied. Per the book's own recommendation, I find it most effective to learn each kanji in the context of the example words (instead of just associating the sounds to the single kanji), selecting 2-3 vocabulary that cover at least two (where two or more exist) of the kanji's pronunciations. As suggested, I write the new words at least 10 times each, reading aloud (or in my head) as I write, associating sound to character. Sometimes the words will be familiar -- you knew the word, just not how to write it. Sometimes, the word is new, so you increase your vocabulary. Using this method, I have not only expanded my kanji knowledge base, I have expanded my vocabulary. Additionally, each day, before I begin to study my 4 new kanji, I return to the previous day's kanji to write them, and then I will select 2-5 kanji (often ones I struggled with) from even earlier pages. Over the past month or so, I have comfortably learned ~150 kanji (I up to kanji #188, but already knew some of the kanji introduced).

The book's main negative is its lack of context: it does not use example sentences for the words. I understand, however, that this is a space issue (the tome would be enormous were this included for all 2300 kanji), and furthermore, this is a kanji book, not a vocabulary or grammar book. And it succeeds at teaching kanji quite well. Particularly for new verbs, I use a dictionary to get an idea of the verb's usage. With a quick search on my phone's Japanese dictionary app, I do not even have to close the book while I look up example sentences when needed. Thus, I do not feel inconvenienced by the lack of examples.

Granted, this is the first book of its kind that I have purchased, but I am convinced that there is not another book on the market to beat it for teaching non-native speakers kanji quickly and effectively.

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Absolutely Essential for all students of Japanese!

By R. Nagell

It is a fact that any serious student of Japanese must have a working knowledge of Kanji, the building blocks for the majority of Japanese vocabulary. One cannot go far in acquiring a substantial vocabulary without Kanji, and it is essential for technical vocabulary. This book is the single best resource for learning Kanji. That Jack Halpern, author of the Kodansha Kanji Learner's Dictionary recommended it was sufficient for me to purchase it. The brief mnemonics are creative, memorable and hew closely to traditional Japanese radical or component meanings. The truly unique and outstanding feature of this book is that Kanji are presented in

order of frequency of appearance in Japan, each with a short vocabulary accompanying each Kanji example, with all vocabulary items consisting only of previously presented/learned Kanji! As a Kanji learning tool, this book has no peer. You start from the first Kanji, learning the meaning and pronunciation, and with the next Kanji, you learn vocabulary that includes the previous Kanji with pronunciation. This approach is unique to this book and facilitates the most rapid acquisition of Kanji facility. It is a perfect mate to Jack Halpern's book if additional vocabulary examples are desired, but is truly a stand-alone resource. Get this with a good Japanese Text (like Genki), A Japanese Verb handbook (I like Kodansha's), the three Japanese Grammar Dictionaries by Makino and the Kodansha particle Dictionary and you are set for self-study.

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About the Author

Andrew Scott Conning is a doctoral candidate and Presidential Fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He received a bachelor's degree in languages from Georgetown University (USA) and a master's degree in social anthropology from the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Mexico). He has been active in Japan as a lecturer and university administrator, and most recently as a research scholar at the University of Tokyo.

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