Section 1: tools, lines and the first four characters

Free lessons with Master Eri Takase's video: takase.com/learn-japanese-calligraphy/

Master Eri Takase's first six lessons: the tools, the basic lines and strokes, and four characters. For practice, print out the samples for reference. The pages after this one are her sheets, one to a page: lay one under your practice paper and write over it, or dry-brush on the page itself. Each comes in two: her finished model (お手本, *otehon*), and the same model with the brush's path, direction and stroke order marked in red. Print every page at 100 %, not "fit to page".

Lesson 1: the tools

There are four essential tools for Japanese calligraphy: the ink stone (*suzuri*), the ink (*sumi*), the brush (*fude*) and the paper (*kami*). Remember that it is less important to have the best tools and more important to have tools that simply work well.

Lesson 2: lines

There are three types of horizontal lines and three types of vertical lines. Over and over again we emphasize applying the brush to the paper at a 45 degree angle. The reason is that we want to keep a nice point on the brush throughout the stroke.

Lesson 3: 永, eternity, and the eight basic strokes

The eight basic strokes are almost always introduced through 永, as *eijihappō*. This is because the character for Eternity has each of the fundamental strokes. The *harai* is a slow pull like a wave moving along the top of the ocean. The *hane* is a quick motion almost a flick of the brush.

Lesson 4: 本, book

This is a good chance to practice the *harai* strokes. The two *harai* strokes are not to be symmetrical. Rather the right *migibarai* should begin lower than the *hidaribarai*.

Lesson 5: 自, self

In this lesson we are going to work on the *hidarihane*, *tensetsu* and *yokoga*. At the corner of the *tensetsu*, draw the short 45 degree angle transition line before the vertical line, so the corner has a nice angled edge. Notice that the vertical lines are thicker than the horizontal lines.

Lesson 6: 由, reason

This new *kanji* combined with *ji* 自 Self gives us *jiyū* 自由 meaning Freedom. The central *tatega* should bisect the *yokoga*. Note that the *yokoga* does not touch the *tensetsu* on the right.

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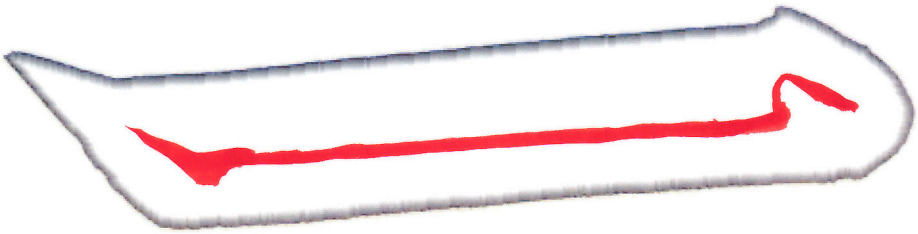

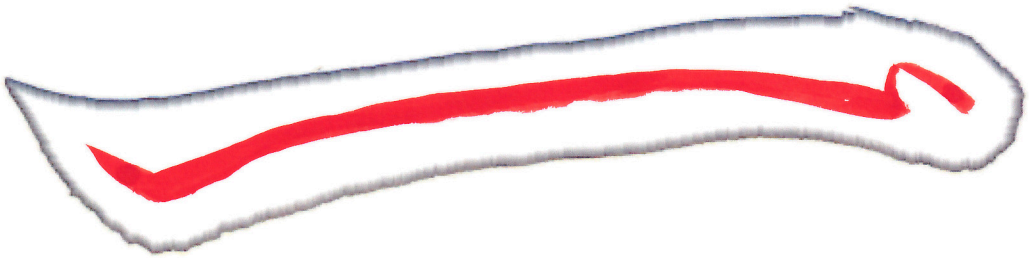

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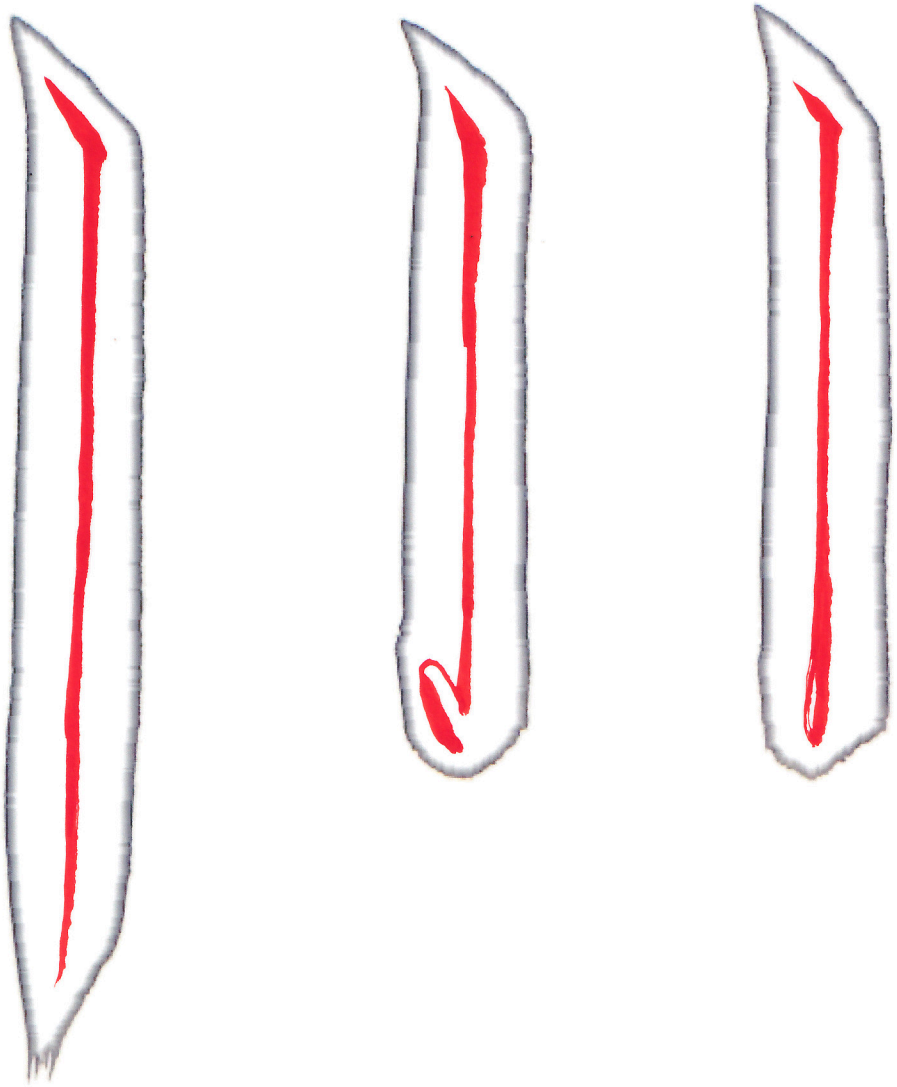

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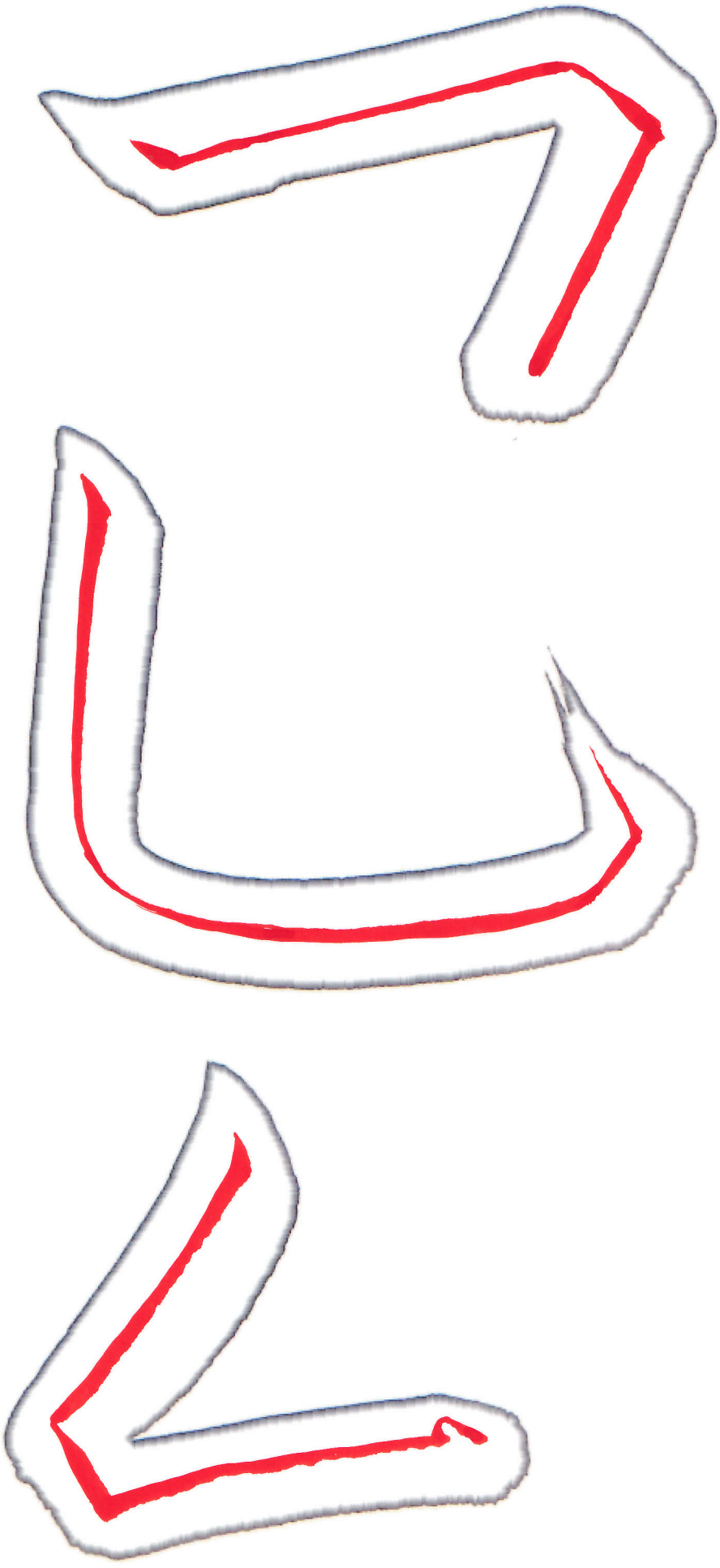

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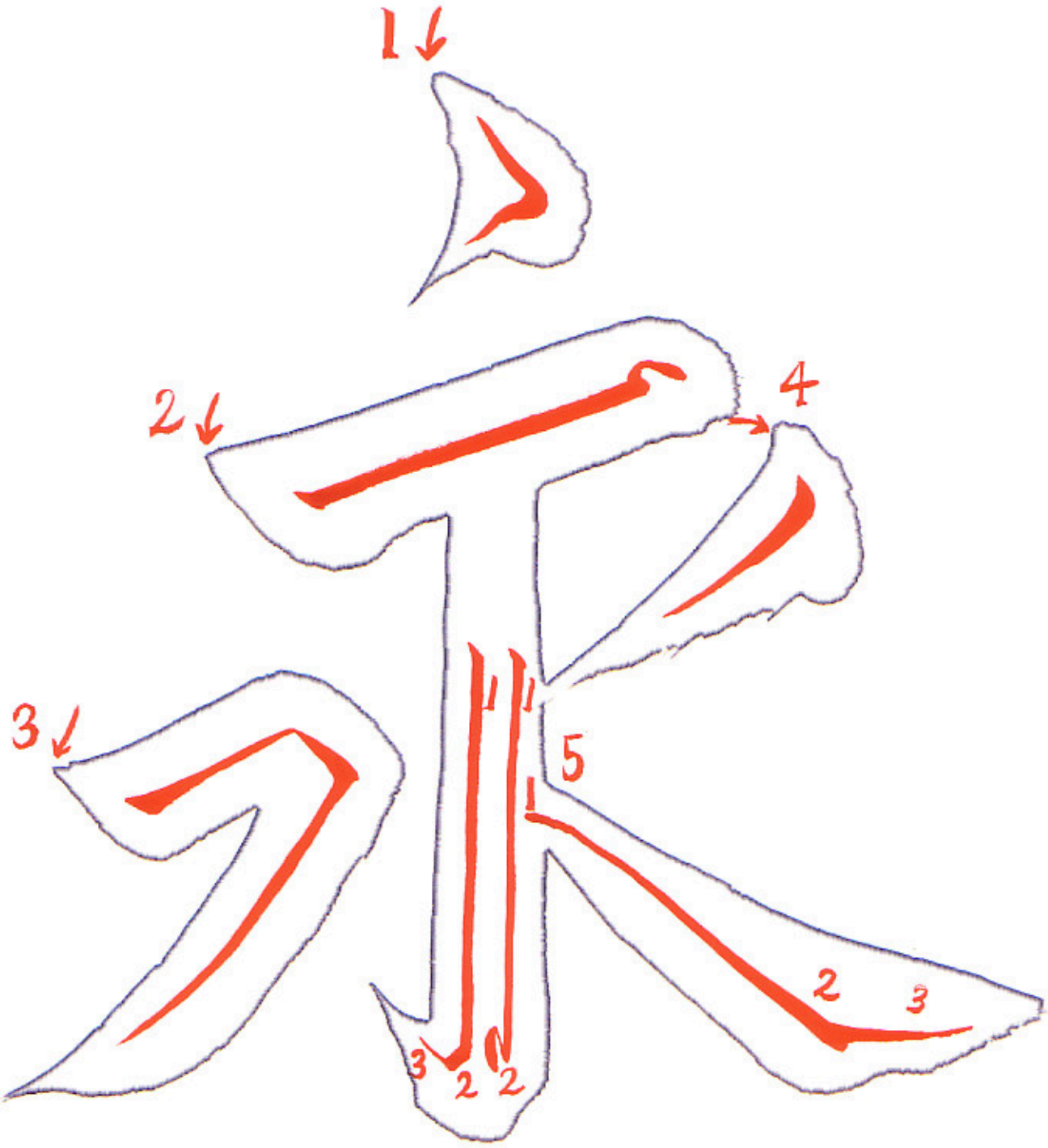

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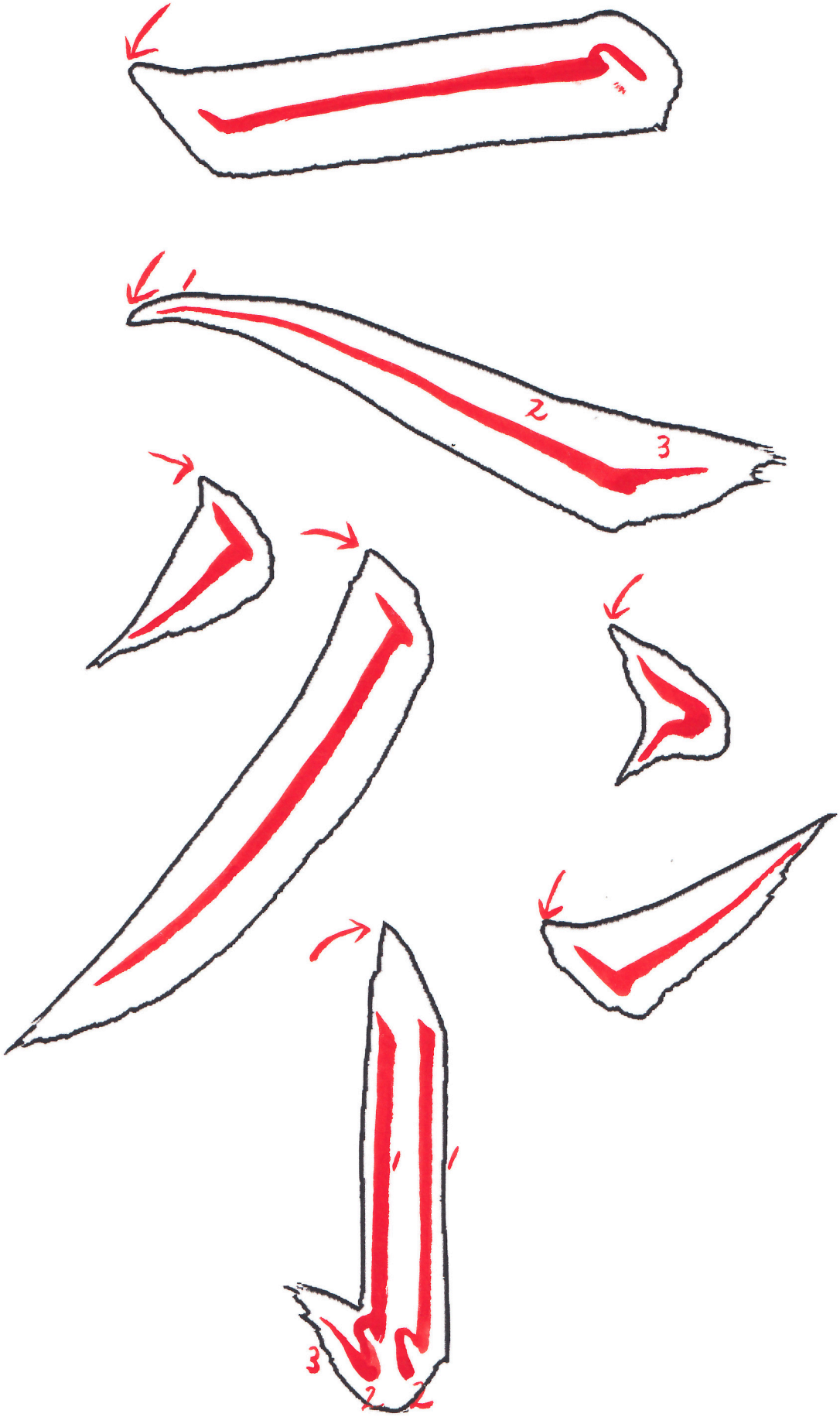

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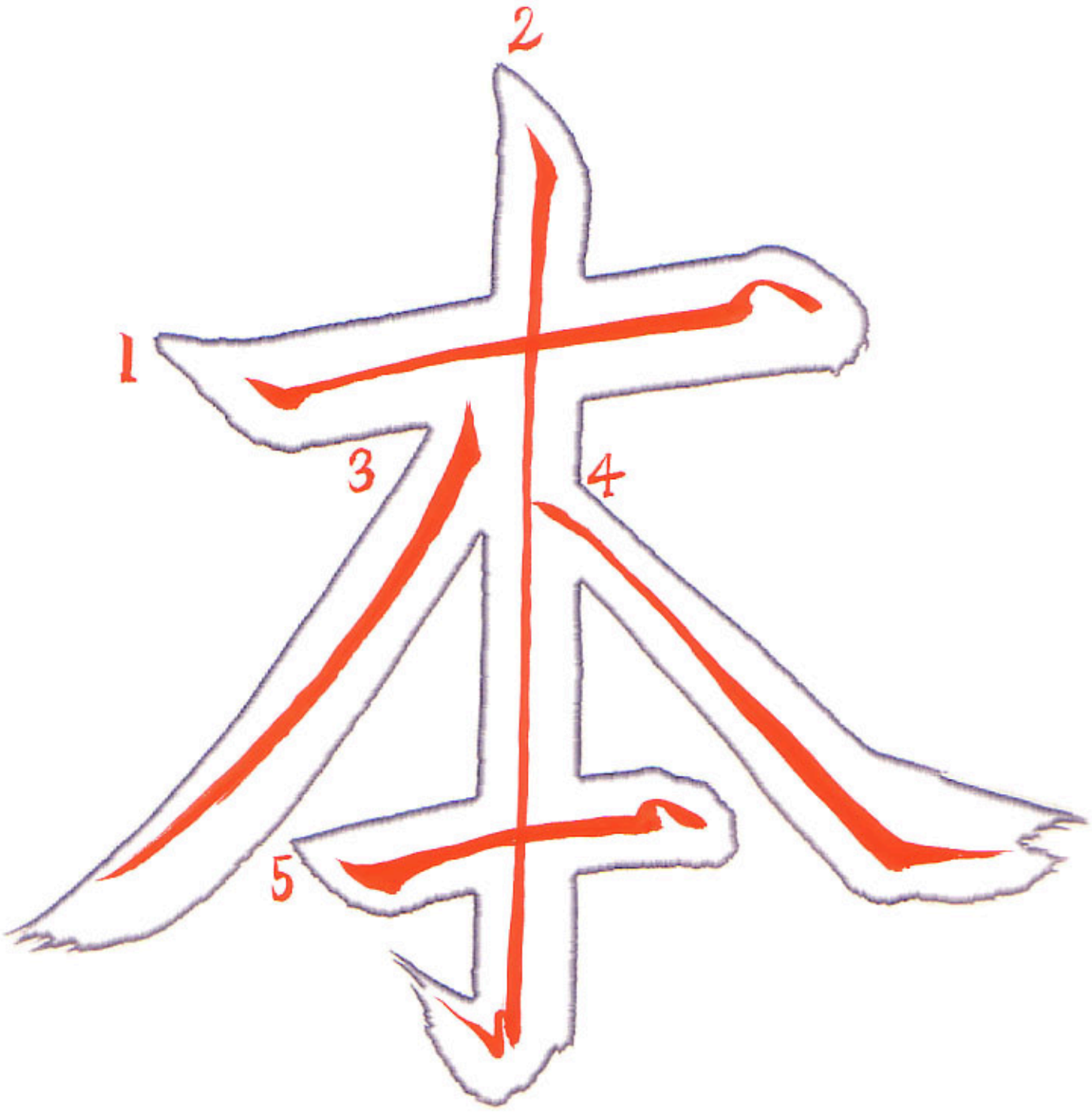

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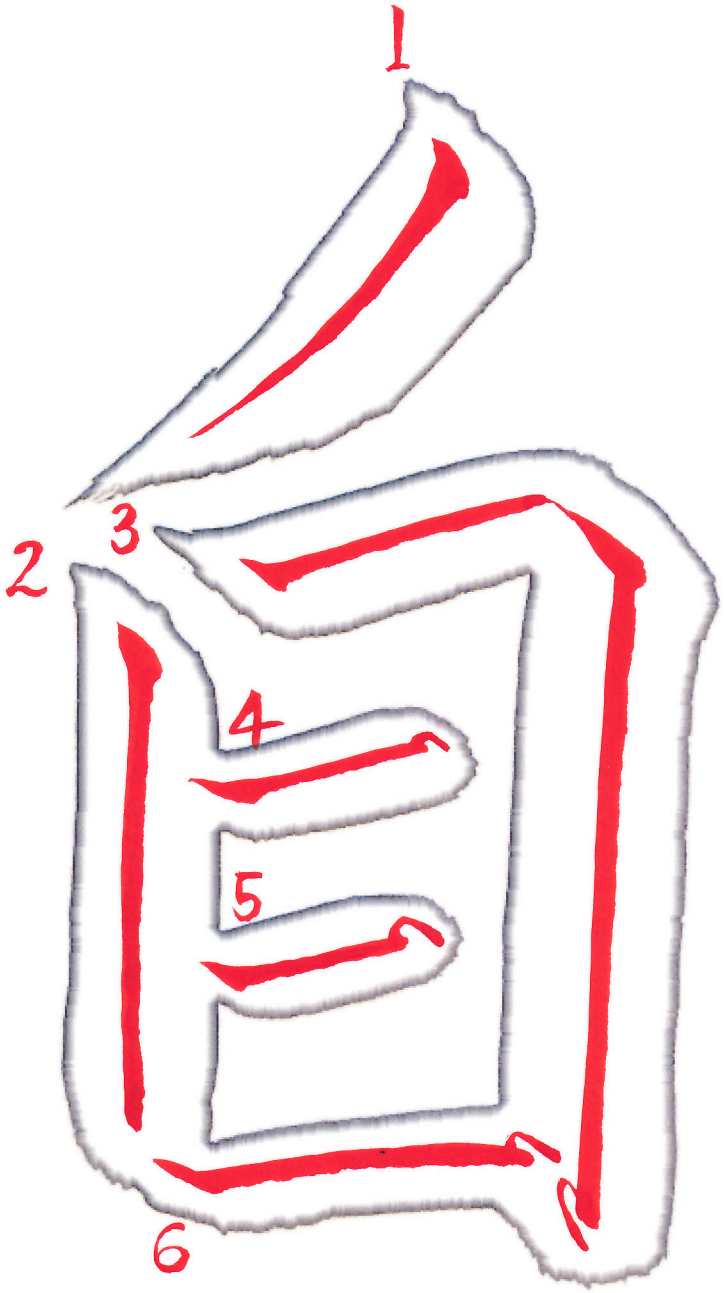

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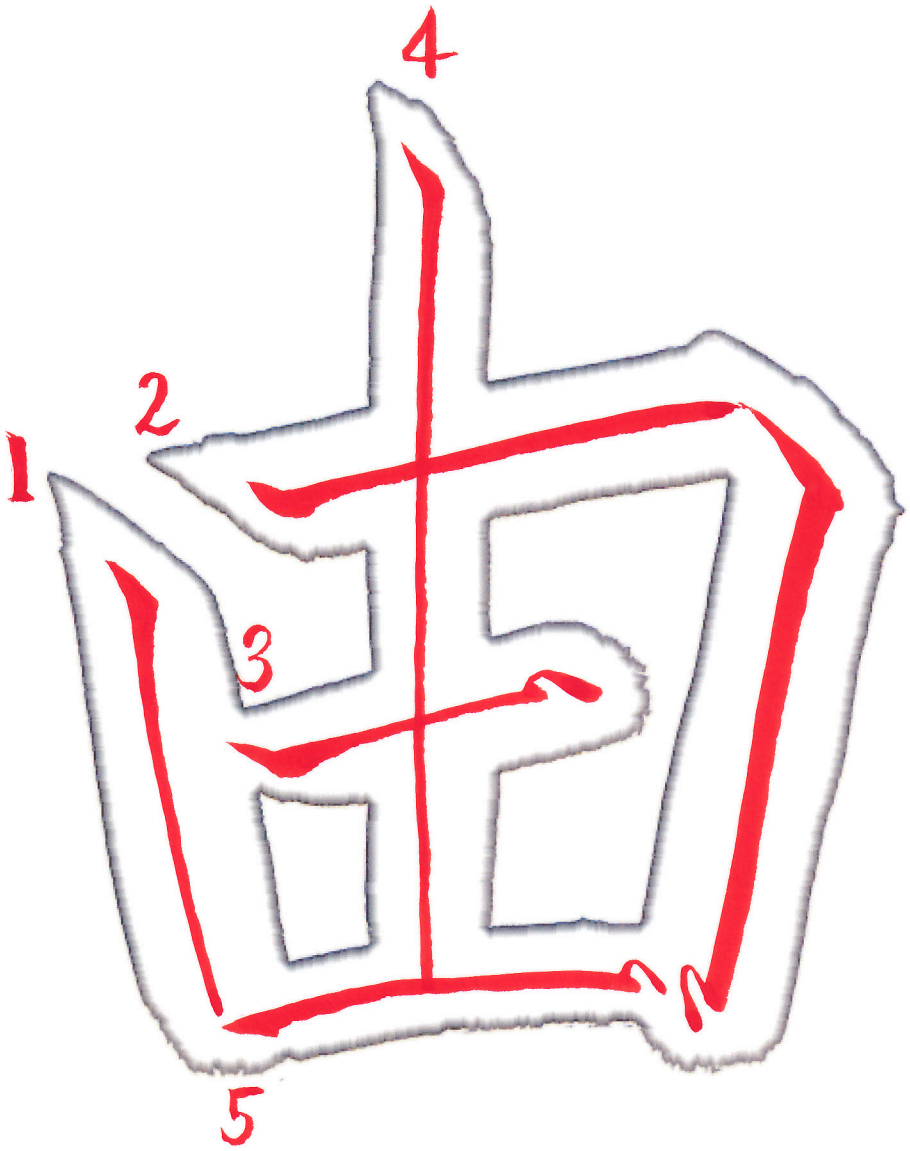

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