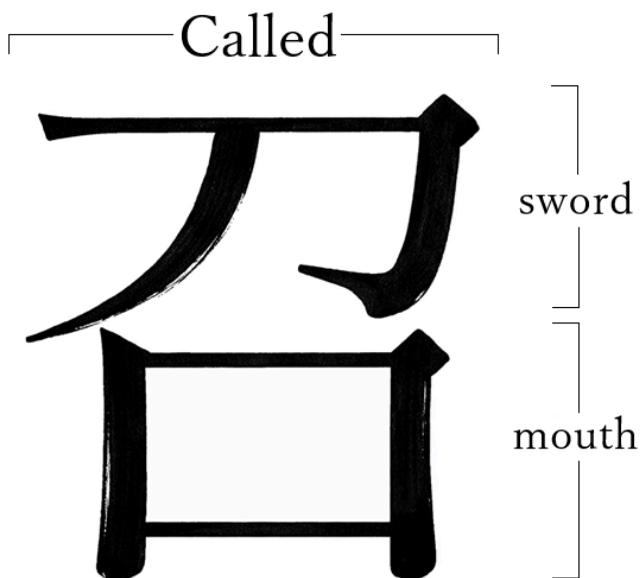


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Readings	Kun: me.shi; ON: SHOU
Meanings	calling; invite; summons; to send for
Parts	口 mouth; 刀 sword
Scriptures	Isaiah 49:1-2 (cf. Deut. 18:18; Eph. 6:17)

Day 1: 召 Called

“Listen to Me, O islands, and pay attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me. He has made My mouth like a sharp sword...”

Isaiah 49:1–2

God promised through Moses, “I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him” (Deuteronomy 18:18). Jesus later confirmed this Himself: “The words I say to you, I do not speak on My own authority” (John 14:10; cf. John 12:49–50).

Paul also speaks of the full armor of God and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17) and has divine authority over creation, evil, and death. His teaching astonished the crowds (Matthew 7:29). His word cast out demons (Mark 1:34), calmed the storm (Mark 4:39), and raised the dead (John 11:43–44). His words are spirit and life (John 6:63). They cleanse (John 15:3).

Isaiah called the distant islands to pay attention to the birth of God’s Son (Isaiah 49:1). Magi came from the east to worship Him (Matthew 2:1–2). They returned as bearers of good news (Isaiah 60:6). After going home (Matthew 2:12), they may have waited in expectation, searching the Scriptures about who the Messiah is and what His role would be, and decades later encountered the testimony of the risen Christ at Pentecost (Acts 2:32–33, 37–39).

The kanji for calling, 召, joins mouth 口 and sword 刀. It visually illustrates Isaiah’s prophecy. God called His Son to speak words of wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:20–25). Now His disciples are called to proclaim those same life-giving words to all nations (Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 1:8; cf. Romans 10:14–15). And those who believe are to take up the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

Has the Word of God captured your attention? Are you excited to read His Word and meditate on it?

Iniquity



Readings	Kun: toga; ON: KYUU; KOU
Meanings	iniquity; sin; wrongdoing
Parts	各 each/every/all; 人 person/man
Scriptures	Romans 3:23; (cf. Isa. 53:6; Gen. 2:16-17; 3:6)

Day 19: 咎 Iniquity

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Romans 3:23

The wise men learned from Scripture that there is one thing true of every person. All have sinned. This is a defining difference between the message of the Bible and many other religious systems. Scripture does not begin with the assumption that people are born innocent and only later corrupted by their surroundings. It states plainly that sin is part of the human condition from the beginning.

This understanding begins in Genesis. God commanded Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve disobeyed and ate from the tree anyway. Genesis records this rebellion and its consequence. From that moment on, sin entered the human story. What began with one act of disobedience became a condition passed on to all people. Sin now marks every life from birth (Genesis 2:16–17; 3:6).

The kanji for iniquity or guilt, 咎, reflects this truth. It is formed from the kanji for every or all 各, and person 人. The picture is clear. Iniquity belongs to every individual. Each person stands responsible for their own guilt. Sin is not only something that happens around us. It is something that exists within us.

Isaiah speaks directly to God’s answer to this problem. He writes that the Lord placed the iniquity of us all on His servant. Isaiah 53 describes a substitute who bears what does not belong to Him. God did not deny the reality of human guilt. He addressed it by transferring that guilt to His Son.

This is the heart of the good news. Scripture clearly declares that God placed the iniquity of each person on Jesus (Isaiah 53:6).

Have you accepted God’s forgiveness through His Son’s death on the cross? Are you faithfully sharing that good news with others?

Archer

弋人

ceremony man

Substitute

代

man ceremony

Readings	Kun: 代 ka.wari; ON: DAI; 弋人 YOKUJIN
Meanings	代 substitute; 弋人 archer
Parts	亻 (人) person/man; 弋 ceremony
Scriptures	John 11:51; (cf. Genesis 22:8; Isaiah 49:2)

Day 24: 代 Substitute

“Nor did he say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation.”

John 11:51

After the raising of Lazarus (John 11:43, 44), the religious leaders recognized that Jesus could not be controlled. His authority was growing, the people were responding, and they feared Roman intervention. In their minds, the survival of the nation required a hard decision (John 11:48).

John records that the high priest spoke plainly. One man should die for the people so that the nation would not perish. What the leaders heard as political necessity, God used as prophecy. John tells us that the high priest spoke these words because of his office, not because it was his idea (cf. Genesis 22:8).

Jesus entered Jerusalem during a ceremonial moment that looked like a coronation. Days later, Jesus would die in place of others. This is the heart of substitution. Humanity had missed the mark, and death followed. God’s solution was precise.

The kanji for substitute, 代, is formed from two parts: man 亻 and ceremony 弋. It describes a formal act carried out through a person. Nothing is added. Nothing is removed. The meaning is carried by order and purpose.

Isaiah 49:2 states this clearly, "...He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver." God is the archer, who has kept this arrow for just this moment. An arrow that would not miss the mark. If we flip the two parts of substitution 代: ceremony 弋 and man 人, the kanji now reads "archer" 弋人. In other words, the archer 弋人 substituted 代 His arrow (His Son) for us.

Do you see that God addressed your deepest problem not by force, but by sending someone to take your place?

十 cross

wound 戕

Judgment

裁

衣 garment

spear 戈

Readings	Kun: saba.ki; ON: SAI
Meanings	judgment; verdict
Parts	十 cross; 戈 spear; 戕 wound; 衣 garment
Scriptures	Isaiah 53:5; Ps. 22:16, 18; (cf. John 12:31-33)

Day 27: 裁 Judgment

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.”

Isaiah 53:5

Scripture foretold the exact form that judgment would take. Zechariah said they would look on the One they pierced (Zechariah 12:10; cf. Psalm 22:16). Isaiah said He would be wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (Isaiah 53:5). David recorded that His garments would be divided and lots cast for His clothing (Psalm 22:18). These prophecies converge at one place and one time, the crucifixion of Christ in John 19.

The kanji for judgment, 裁, gathers these details into a single image, like a tiny masterpiece of art. It is formed from four parts: the cross 十, the spear 戈, the wounds 戕, and the garment 衣. Each element appears at the cross. Christ is lifted up (John 12:31-33). He is pierced and wounded. His garments are taken. That testimony remains embedded in the character for judgment to this day.

After the resurrection, this same testimony is affirmed by Thomas. He said he would not believe unless he put his fingers into the wounds and his hand into Jesus' side (John 20:25). When Jesus appeared and invited him to see and touch the wound, Thomas answered, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Jesus then said, “Blessed are those who did not see, and yet believed” (John 20:29).

God did not merely reveal sin. He judged it. Paul explains, “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,” (Romans 8:3).

Do you trust that God's judgment for your sin was fully placed on Christ at the cross?

人人 people

tree 木

— Come —

十 cross

person 人

Readings	Kun: ku.ru ON: RAI
Meanings	Come = 人 + 十 + 人人 = 來
Parts	人 man/person; 木 tree; 十 cross; complete
Scriptures	John 10:10; (cf. Luke 23:41; Matthew 11:28)

Day 46: 來 Come

“When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.”

Luke 23:32

Luke records that two criminals were led out with Jesus to be executed. They crucified Him at the place called The Skull, with one criminal on His right and one on His left. Jesus was in the center (Luke 23:32–33). Isaiah had foretold that the Servant would be numbered with transgressors (Isaiah 53:12). He died among sinners, men who came to steal, kill, and destroy (cf. John 10:10).

One criminal recognized his guilt and turned toward Jesus. “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). Jesus replied, “Today you shall be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). The cross was not only where sin was judged. It was where access to God was offered, inviting us to come back to Him.

When Jesus yielded up His spirit, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:50–51). The barrier was removed. At Pentecost, Peter proclaimed that this happened according to the predetermined plan of God (Acts 2:23–24). The King who was once worshiped as a child had opened the way through His death.

Now consider the kanji for come, 來. The cross is described in the New Testament as a tree (Acts 5:30; Galatians 3:13). If you place the symbol for man 人 on either side of tree 木, you see Luke’s arrangement. The two men on either side of Jesus were real historical individuals. Yet visually, the kanji also presents the idea of all people. Two men 人 together form all people 人人. He gave Himself as a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:5–6). 人+十+人人=來 reads, One Man on the cross for all people. The invitation remains. Come.

Will you turn from what seeks to steal, kill, and destroy and come and receive the abundant life Christ freely offers us today?