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Good Characters announces the Chinese Character of the Year 2021 for America.

Good Characters, the California-based naming consultancy that specializes in Chinese languages, announces 漲 (zhǎng, pronounced *jahng*), meaning to rise or go upward, specifically, in prices, as the Chinese Character of the Year 2021 for America.

Why was 漲 (zhǎng) chosen?

You must have noticed the surge of inflation during 2021. It was the largest increase since 1990. And 漲 (zhǎng) is the single best character to represent this year's spike in prices.

The character 漲 consists of 氵 (water) on the left and 張 (expand, spread, open up) on the right.

On the waterfront, we see record-breaking queues of container ships outside major ports, especially the California ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

A surge in demand caused by the pandemic and the reopening of the economy has contributed to the congestion in American supply chains.

Examining the character further, we can dive deeper into another perspective that describes this year.

As mentioned, the character 漲 consists of 氵 (water) on the left and 張 (expand, spread, open up) on the right. Digging deeper, 張 can be further separated into 弓 (bow) and 長 (long, lasting). The original creation of 長 (long, lasting) was 亾 (death, the same as the modern 亡) written upside down; thus, the meaning of long or lasting was derived from the idea of not dying.

If we allow our imagination to stretch, the character suggests that widespread vaccination — liquid (液 , water) administered via syringe (弓, bow) — helped many survived (長, not die) in 2021.

We can think of many other rises during the year, but two significant nationwide rises in 2021 were 漲 (zhǎng): rises in prices and inflation. It is Good Characters' hope that as we enter into the new year and the pandemic winds down, in 2022 America will have a surge in economic growth that will outpace inflation.

A Brief History

In 1995, the Japanese Kanji Proficiency Society began its annual announcement of the kanji of the year. Kanji are the Chinese characters adapted for the Japanese language. "Kanji," quite literally, translates to — kan-: "Han Chinese" and -ji: "characters."

December 12 was pronounced "Kanji Day," the date the society announces its annual Kanji of the Year because 1212 can be read as いい字一字 (ii ji ichi ji), literally "good character one character," meaning "one good character" in Japanese.

Eleven years later, in 2006, the Chinese character of the year began to be announced annually in China. A few years later, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Macao, and finally Hong Kong each started to choose its own Chinese character of the year. The Character of the Year is something like *Time* magazine's Person of the Year — an image selected toward the year's end that reflects, or sums up, many of the main events, thoughts, and attitudes of the year.

In 2017, after another 11 years had passed, Good Characters, as Chinese language brand naming specialists, thought it would be fitting to designate a Chinese character of the year from the American perspective.

"We thought it would be fitting that there should be a Chinese character of the year from the American perspective," Andy Chuang, Chinese naming expert and founder of Good Characters, said. "After all, Chinese is the third most-spoken language at home in the United States according to the U.S. Census Bureau."

The Good Characters Chinese Character of the Year 2017 for America was 狂 (kuáng).
<https://service.goodcharacters.com/daily/character-of-the-year-2017.html>

The Good Characters Chinese Character of the Year 2018 for America was 戰 (zhàn).
<https://service.goodcharacters.com/daily/character-of-the-year-2018.html>

The Good Characters Chinese Character of the Year 2019 for America was 亂 (luàn).
<https://service.goodcharacters.com/daily/assets/character-of-the-year-2019.pdf>

The Good Characters Chinese Character of the Year 2020 for America was 抗 (kàng).
<https://service.goodcharacters.com/daily/assets/character-of-the-year-2020.pdf>

Chinese Character of the Year 2021

The Good Characters Chinese Character of the Year 2021 for America is 漲 (zhǎng, pronounced *jahng*), meaning to rise or to go upward, specifically, in prices.

Permanent Link: <https://service.goodcharacters.com/daily/assets/character-of-the-year-2021.pdf>

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