

A Text

Woman in Foul Language

Chosen Text

他妈的
tāmāde

Equivalent to: dame it, f**king hell, etc.
Literal translation: His mother's

Shorter and 'politer' version for:
(f**k) his/your mother'
(f**k) his/your mother's (c**t)

Additional materials



[A Short Video]

A standup comedian giving a 'lecture' on the four grammatical uses of "tāmāde", which are: Modal Particle, Adverbial Intensifier, Discourse Filler: Friendly Banter, and Interjectory Phrase.

It's clear that "tāmāde" has become an extremely useful word for venting frustration, while its literal meaning and origin-linked to the insult and disrespect towards women-have been weakened and forgotten. Over time, swear words that degrade women have become normalised, gradually being rationalised as part of everyday language.

无论是谁，只要在中国过活，便总得常听到“他妈的”或其相类的口头禅。我想：这话的分布，大概就跟着中国人足迹之所至罢；使用的遍数，怕也未必比客气的“您好呀”会更少。假使依或人所说，牡丹是中国的“国花”，那么，这就可以算是中国的“国骂”了。

——鲁迅《论“他妈的”》一九二五年七月十九日

No matter who you are, as long as you live in China, you're bound to frequently hear the expression 'tāmāde'(damn it) or similar phrases. I think this saying probably spreads wherever Chinese people go, and it's likely used as often as polite expressions like 'Hello!' If someone claims that the peony is China's 'national flower,' then this expression could be considered China's 'national curse.'

——LU Xun, *On 'Tāmāde (Damn It)'*, 1925

[An excerpt from an article]

One of the representative writers of modern Chinese literature, Lu Xun, who wrote this piece a century ago, defines "TMD" as China's "national curse," explores its origins and evolution, and discusses why it has remained so widespread.

The essay highlights that Chinese culture places great value on ancestry and bloodline, so insulting someone's mother can feel like a "moral victory." However, I'm disappointed that it does not address the inherent disrespect toward women in this phrase.

01 Paraphrasing

<Cuteness>



tā mā de



tā miāo de
tā **meow** de



I replaced the word "mother" in the short video with the sound effect of a cat meowing.

<Gender opposition>



tā mā de



tā **diē** de
(Father)



I replaced the word "mother" in the short video with the pronunciation of "father".

02 Relaying

It's only emotional venting? → Harm and trauma

Oral Foul Language → Visual Language

Visualisation of feelings

Sharing: confronting disrespect, revealing harm

Mind Map



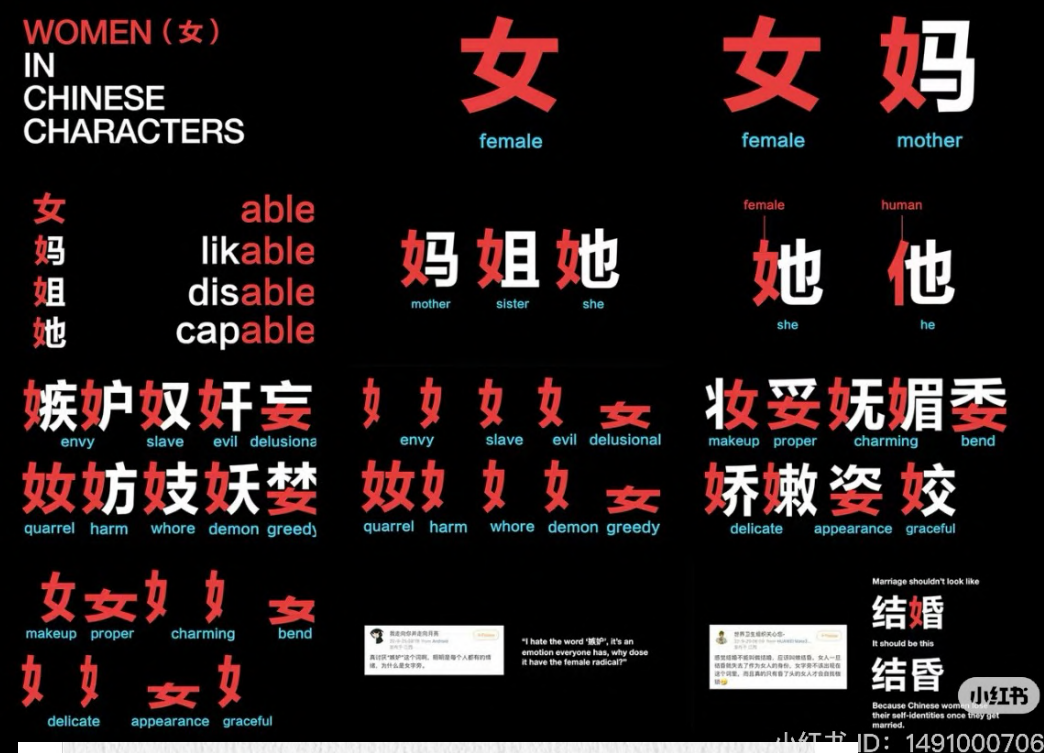
Moodboard



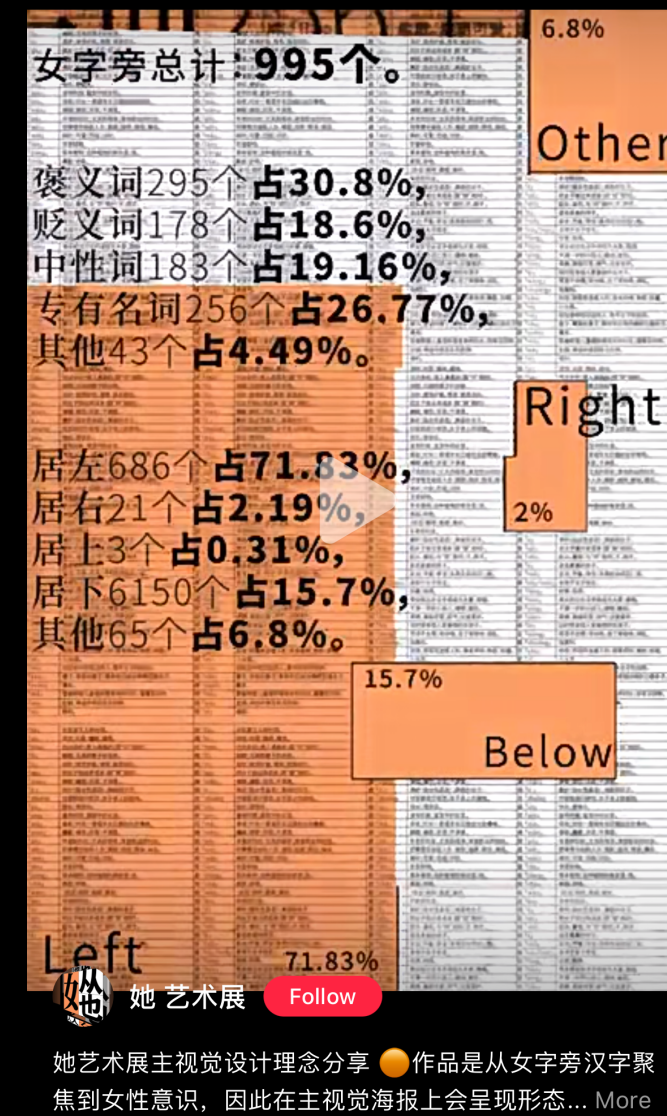


I chose the Chinese character equivalent to the English word "c**t" for visual design because in "tāmāde", this character is often omitted or replaced with a homophone. However, the discomfort and suffocating feeling it brings me do not go away.

Projects and Designs about 'woman' in Chinese characters



她艺术展主视觉设计理念分享 作品是从女字旁汉字聚焦到女性意识，因此在主视觉海报上会呈现形态... More



Radical and component with 女/woman: 995 characters

Positive term: 295 characters, 30.8%

Negative Term: 178 characters, 18.6%

Neutral Term: 183 characters, 19.16%

Proper Noun: 256 characters, 26.77%

Others: 43 characters, 4.49%

Left: 686 characters, 71.83%

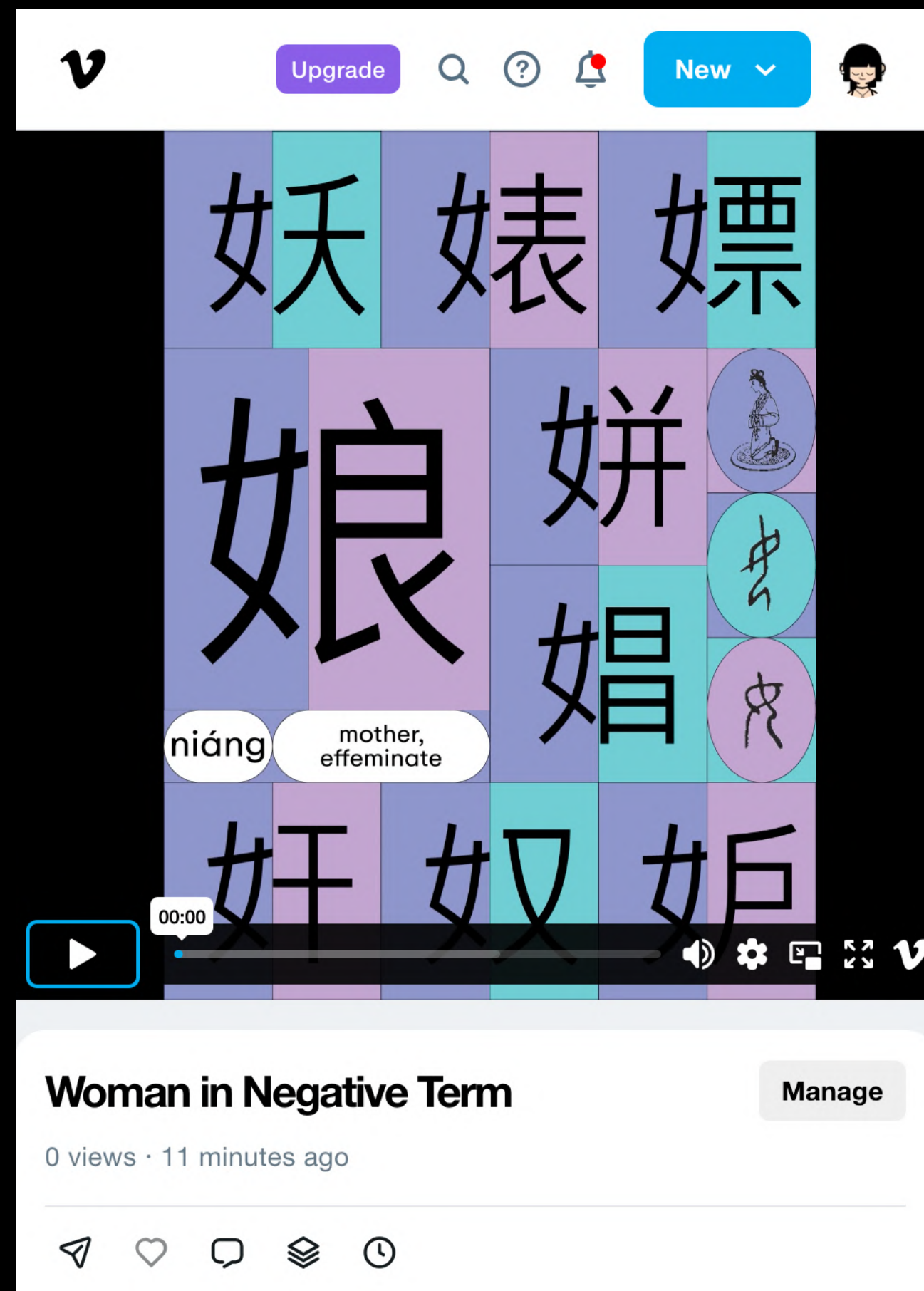
Right: 21 characters, 2.19%

Above: 3 characters, 0.31%

Bottom: ? characters, 15.7%

Others: 65 characters, 6.8%

I chose 9 negative terms with the 'woman' radical on the left and created a motion graphic design based on them



Watch it here

<https://vimeo.com/1029964799?share=copy>

FEEDBACK

“This design better conveys the intended concept compared to the previous version and feels like a more comprehensive visual communication.”

“However, improvements can be made in the choice of colours, such as considering colours that represent women in Chinese culture. Alternatively, you could use colours that are completely opposite to those typically associated with women in stereotypes.”