

Character Builder 您好嗎？

The basic unit of the Chinese language is the *zi* (字), i.e. a Chinese word. Each *zi* has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string *zi* together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

This week: Words about sleep



(radical 目 *mu* = eyes)

Pronunciation: *shui* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *sui* (Cantonese, 6th tone)

Basic meaning: sleep

睡 = 睡覺 (*shui jiao* = sleep~sleeping-round = sleep). Overcome by 睡意 (*shui yi* = sleepy~feeling), we 睡著 (*shui zhao* = sleep~become = fall asleep), 熟睡 (*shou shui* = mature/ripe~sleep) = sleep soundly. 睡美人 (*shui mei ren* = sleep~beauty~person = Sleeping Beauty) was drugged into 沉睡 (*chen shui* = heavy/deep~sleep).

We love 小睡 (*xiao shui* = small~sleep = naps), 午睡 (*wu shui* = noon/afternoon~sleep = siestas), 打瞌睡 (*da ke shui* = hit~doze~sleep = dozing off) but hate 打鼻鼾 (*da bi han* = blow~nose~snore = snoring).

睡 = 眠 (*mian* = sleep). Bears 冬眠 (*dong mian* = winter~sleep = hibernate). The dead 長眠地下 (*chang mian di xia* = long~sleep~ground~under = have eternal sleep/rest).

by Diana Yue