

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 death

葬

Pronunciation: *zang* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *jong* (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: bury the dead

Mourning rituals include 祭奠 (*ji dian* = offer sacrifices/wine to the deceased), 唸經 (*nian jing* = recite~sutras: Diamond Sutra/Bible), 殮葬 (*lian zang* = put in coffin, bury). 葬禮 (*zang li* = burial~ceremonies) include 土葬 (*tu zang* = earth~burial = interment), 火葬 (*huo zang* = fire~burial = cremation), 海葬 (*hai zang* = sea~burial).

Ancients used 墓俑 (*mu yong* = funerary~figurines) to 陪葬 (*pei zang* = accompany~burial, serve decedents in after-life). 陪葬 also means dragged down by another person's destruction.

Fire victims 葬身火海 (*zang shen huo hai* = buried~body~fire~sea = are consumed by fire). Heart-broken people 埋葬 (*mai zang* = cover~bury) bad memories. Acting recklessly, people 葬送 (*zang song* = bury~give-away/forfeit = destroy) their promising futures/prospects.

by Diana Yue