

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 Middle East

殺

Pronunciation: *sha* (Putonghua, 1st tone), *saat* (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: taking life, kill

Buddhists 戒殺生 (*jie sha sheng* = forbid/condemn~killing~living-things). 殺頭 (*sha tou* = kill~head) means decapitate. 猶太人大屠殺 (*you tai ren da tu sha* = "Judea"-transliterated~people~big~slaughter~kill = Jews massacred) = the holocaust.

War between 以色列 (*yi se lie* = "Israel"-transliterated) and 巴勒斯坦人 (*ba le si tan ren* = "Palestine"-transliterated~people = Palestinians) 殺死 (*sha si* = kill~dead) thousands. 自殺式襲擊 (*zi sha shi xi ji* = self~kill~style~ambush~attack) = suicide attacks. 濫殺 (*lan sha* = overflow~kill) means unnecessarily/unjustifiably killing large numbers.

“冤冤相報” (*yuan yuan xiang bao* = misdeed/wrong~misdeed/wrong~mutual~repay) means “An eye for an eye”. “殺人者死!” (*sha ren zhe si* = kill~person~doer~die) means “Killer must die!”

by Diana Yue