

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

和

Pronunciation: *he* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *woh* (Cantonese, 4th tone)
Basic meaning: blend, mild, harmony, peace

中和 (*zhong he* = middle~mild) is the Golden Mean in Chinese philosophy. Fine days are 風和日麗 (*feng he ri li* = winds~mild~sun~lovely). Cooks 調和 (*tiao he* = mix~blend) ingredients. Musicians study 和聲 (*he sheng* = blend~sounds = harmony).

Human relationships should be 和諧 (*he xie* = peaceful~harmonious). States at war should 議和 (*yi he* = negotiate~peace), sign 和約 (*he yue* = peace~treaty), 和平共處 (*he ping gong chu* = peace~harmony~together~relate = peacefully co-exist).

Tolstoy wrote “戰爭與和平” (*zhan zheng yu he ping* = War~and~Peace). Pacifists win 和平獎 (*he ping jiang* = peace~prize). 和平鴿 (*he ping ge* = peace~dove), 橄欖枝 (*gan lan zhi* = olive~branch) symbolize peace.

by Diana Yue