

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 Tibet



Pronunciation: *shan* (Putonghua, 1st tone), *saan* (Cantonese 1st tone)
Basic meaning: mountain

山, the radical in 峰 (*feng* = summit), 坡 (*po* = slope), 峻 (*jun* = steep) etc., indicates mountainous terrain.

喜馬拉雅山脈 (*Xi ma la ya shan mai* = Himalaya-transliterated~mountain~vein/range) = the Himalayas. 珠穆朗瑪峰 (*Zhu mu lang ma feng* = Qomolangma Peak) = Mount Everest. Western China also boasts of the 崑崙 (*Kun lun* = Kunlun) and 天山 (*Tian shan* = heaven~mountain = Tianshan) ranges.

青藏高原 (*Qing Zang gao yuan* = Qinghai~Tibet~high-plain/plateau) has 雪山 (*xue shan* = snow mountains) and 冰川 (*bing chuan* = ice~rivers = glaciers). 一山還有一山高 (*yi shan hai you yi shan gao* = one~mountain~still~has~one~mountain~tall) issues caution: “There may be someone even smarter than you.”

by Diana Yue