

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

密

Pronunciation: *mi* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *mat* (Cantonese 6th tone)
Basic meaning: tight, secret, hidden, Tantric

密 means secret: 秘密 (*mi mi*) are secrets, 密謀 (*mi mou* = secret~plan) means conspiracy.

In Buddhism, 顯教 (*xian jiao* = open/plain-teaching) emphasizes attaining enlightenment through understanding doctrine. 密教 (*mi jiao* = secret-teaching), also called 密宗 (*mi zong* = secret~sect = Tantric Sect), emphasizes attaining enlightenment through esoteric methods, e.g. 咒語 (*zhou yu* = vow~words = secret incantations), 祈禱 (*qi tao* = plead~pray = prayers), 儀式 (*yi shi* = rites~forms = rites), 轉法輪 (*zhuan fa lun* = turn~Dharma~wheel).

In Tibet, generations of re-incarnated 達賴喇嘛 (*da lai la ma* = Dalai~Lama-transliterated) and 班禪喇嘛 (*ban chan la ma* = Panchen~Lama-transliterated) were chosen as 靈童 (*ling tong* = soul-boys) and groomed to lead the theocracy.

by Diana Yue