

Character Builder 您好嗎? 救

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 earthquakes

救

Pronunciation: *jiu* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *gau* (Cantonese 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: save

救 means help/save: 救命 (*jiu ming* = save~life = save someone's life), 救援 (*jiu yuan* = save~aid = physical/material/military aid), 救濟 (*jiu ji* = save~irrigate = economic support), 救傷車 (*jiu xiang che* = save~injure~car = ambulance).

求救訊號 (*qiu jiu xun hao* = beg/seek~save~message~sign) = SOS. 獲救 (*huo jiu* = receive~save) means is rescued. 見死不救 (*jian se bu jiu* = see~dead/death~no~save) means heartlessly ignoring someone's desperate plea. 救國救民 (*jiu guo jiu min* = save~country~save~people) describes the deeds of a national hero.

Christianity preaches 救贖 (*jiu shu* = save~redeem = redemption) by the 救世主 (*jiu shi zhu* = save~world~lord = saviour). 救星 (*jiu xing* = save~star) means someone coming to timely rescue.

by Diana Yue