

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 Taiwan

獨

Pronunciation: *du* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *duk* (Cantonese 6th tone)
Basic meaning: single, independent

孤獨 (*gu du* = alone/orphaned~single) means lonely. 獨身 (*du shen* = single~body) describes an unmarried person. 獨立 (*du li* = single~stand) describes someone with independent means or an independent character.

獨裁者 (*du cai zhe* = single~decide~person) means dictator. A country 獨立 (achieves independence) through 獨立運動 (*du li yun dong* = single~stand~work~move = independence movement). Wisdom is needed to solve the problems of 台獨 (*Tai du* = Taiwan~independence), 疆獨 (*Jiang du* = Xinjiang~independence), 藏獨 (*Zang du* = Xizang/Tibet~independence) in China.

獨來獨往 (*du lai du wang* = single~come~single~go) describes a loner. 獨善其身 (*du shan qi shen* = alone~good~his/her~body/self) is the attitude/philosophy of keeping oneself clean and away from other people's mess.

by Diana Yue