

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 tea

茶

Pronunciation: *cha* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *cha* (Cantonese 4th tone)
Basic meaning: tea

茶園 (*cha yuan* = tea gardens/plantations) grow 茶樹 (*cha shu* = tea-trees/shrubs). Girls 採茶 (*cai cha* = pick~tea) = pick 茶葉 (*cha ye* = tea-leaves). 青茶 (*qing cha* = green~tea), e.g. 龍井 (*long jing* = Long-jing tea), is un-roasted. 紅茶 (*hong cha* = red~tea), e.g. 普洱 (*pu er* = Pu-er tea), is roasted.

茶客 (*cha ke* = tea-guests) enjoy 清茶 (*qing cha* = plain-tea), 茶點 (*cha dian* = tea-snacks), chess-games, story-telling, singing performances in 茶館 (*cha guan* = tea-houses).

奶茶 (*nai cha* = milk~tea) = tea with milk. 清茶淡飯 (*qing cha dan fan* = plain-tea-bland/plain~rice) means frugal eating/living. Worries make people 茶飯不思 (*cha fan bu si* = tea~rice/meal~no~think = moody).

by Diana Yue