

# 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 jurisdiction

法

Pronunciation: *fa* (Putonghua, 3<sup>rd</sup> tone), *faat* (Cantonese, 3<sup>rd</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: law, method, religious truth

法 = 法律 (*fa lu* = law-rules = law). Hongkong's 《基本法》 (*ji ben fa* = foundation-basis-law = the Basic Law) is a 小憲法 (*xiao xian fa* = small-charter-law = mini-constitution).

立法會 (*li fa hui* = establish-laws-society/council = Legislative Council) makes/vets 法例 (*fa li* = law-regulations = ordinances). 法院 (*fa yuan* = 法庭 *fa ting* = law-courts) use 普通法 (*pu tong fa* = universal-apply-law = common law). Companies/organizations are registered 法人 (*fa ren* = legal-persons = legal bodies/entities).

Buddhism is 佛法 (*fo fa* = Buddha-law). Priests 弘法 (*hong fa* = manifest/preach-message/gospel). Dieticians teach 減肥法 (*jian fei fa* = reduce-fat-method). Magicians know 隱身法 (*yin shen fa* = vanish-body-method = disappear).

by Diana Yue