

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 health and healing

Pronunciation: *yi* (Putonghua, 1st tone), *yi* (Cantonese, 1st tone)
Basic meaning: medicine, doctor

醫 = medical tradition/profession/practitioner: 西醫 (*xi yi* = western~medicine), 中醫 (*Zhong yi* = Chinese~medicine). Modern Chinese medical training is 中西醫結合 (*Zhong xi yi jie he* = Chinese~western~medicine~unite~combine), combining Chinese and western 醫學 (*yi xue* = medical~studies).

醫院 (*yi yuan* = medicine~institution = hospitals) hire 醫生 (*yi sheng* = medical~man = doctors). Patients respect 良醫 (*liang yi* = good~doctors), despise 庸醫 (*yong yi* = mediocre/bad~doctors). Chronic patients 久病成醫 (*jiu bing cheng yi* = longtime~ill~become~doctor = long illness makes them medical experts).

China's 醫療改革 (*yi liao gai ge* = medicine~healing~change~overturn = health care reform) implements 醫藥分家 (*yi yao fen jia* = doctors~drugs~separate~family = putting doctors and pharmacies under separate administrations).

by Diana Yue