

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 race

族

Pronunciation: *zu* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *juk* (Cantonese, 6th tone)
Basic meaning: clan, tribe, race

族 = 種族 (*zhong zu* = seed/ethnic-tribe), 民族 (*min zu* = people-race). 閃族 (*Shan zu* = “Semitic”-transliterated-race) = Semites. 家族 (*jia zu* = families-clans) keep 族譜 (*zu pu* = family/clan-notation = family lineage charts).

五族共和 (*wu zu gong he* = five-races-together-harmony) means peaceful co-existence of 漢 (*Han* race/people), 滿 (*Man*, Manchurians), 蒙 (*Meng*, Mongolians), 回 (*Hui* = 維吾爾 *Wei Wu Er*, Uighurs), 藏 (*Zang*, Tibetans) in China. Han and 少數民族 (*shao shu min zu* = few-number-people-race = non-Han ethnic minorities) are 兄弟民族 (*xiong di min zu* = elder-brother-younger-brother-people-race = brothers/family).

種族歧視 (*zhong zu qi shi* = seed-race-sideways/incorrect-look = racial discrimination) culminates in 滅族 (*mie zu* = eliminate-race = genocide).