

# 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: *zhi* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *ji* (Cantonese, 6<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: cure, remedy, administer, rule

治 (radical 治 *shui* = water) originally means control/eliminate flooding. Ancient hero 大禹 (*Da Yu* = the~Great~Yu) successfully 治水 (*zhi shui* = cure~water = implemented anti-flood projects), so he was asked to 治理 (*zhi li* = cure~manage = rule) the country.

Heads-of-family 治家 (*zhi jia* = rule~family = manage/control family affairs). Heads-of-state 治國 (*zhi guo* = rule~country). Police oversees 治安 (*zhi an* = rule~safety = law-and-order). Law-courts oversee 法治 (*fa zhi* = law~rule = rule of law). 大治 (*da zhi* = big-good-rule) means a period of stability and great prosperity.

Doctors治病 (*zhi bing* = cure~illnesses). Operations can 根治 (*gen zhi* = root~cure = fundamentally/thoroughly cure) ulcers/cancers. However, sometimes patients 不治 (*bu zhi* = not~cured = die).

by Diana Yue