

# Character Builder

# 您好學？

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.

In Putonghua (the spoken form of Modern Standard Chinese) each *zi* is pronounced in one of four tones:

1<sup>st</sup> tone: 1 = diacritical mark — pitch: 5 to 5, highest prolonged

2<sup>nd</sup> tone: 2 = diacritical mark / pitch: 3 to 5, middle to high

3<sup>rd</sup> tone: 3 = diacritical mark U pitch: 2 to 1 to 4, low to lowest to high

4<sup>th</sup> tone: 4 = diacritical mark \ pitch: 5 to 1, highest to lowest

To pronounce each *zi* below, follow its pinyin and the given tone number. Light-sound words, which have no definite pitch, carry no diacritical mark and are marked by 0.

This week: Words about the Hui people

禱

Putonghua pronunciation: *dao3*

Cantonese pronunciation: *to2*

Meaning: pray, prayer

禱 (radical 礻 = 示 *shi4*, reveal) = 祈禱 (*qi2 dao3* = beseech-pray = pray/prayers): 默禱 (*mo4 dao3* = silent-prayers), 公禱 (*gong1 dao3* = public-prayers), 代禱 (*dai4 dao3* = represent-pray = pray for/on behalf of sinners/patients/others). Christians 主禱文 (*zhu3 dao3 wen2* = master/lord-pray-text) = The Lord's Prayer. Five times daily, Muslims perform ritualistic prayers: kneel on 禱毯 (*dao3 tan3* = prayer-rug), face 麥加 (*Mai4 Jia1* = Mecca - transliterated), 禮拜 (*li3 bai4* = honor/pay-homage-worship), 禱告 (*dao3 gao4* = pray-speak/confess) to 真主 (*zhen1 zhu3* = True-God) 安拉 (An1 La1 = Allah - transliterated). 回教徒 (*Hui2 jiao4 tu2* = Hui-religion-followers = Chinese Muslims) use term “乃瑪子” (*nai3 ma3 zi0* = Persian word namaz - transliterated) for prayer-worship.

by Diana Yue