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 meetings

決 (radical 氵 = 水 shui = water) means water bursting: floods cause 決堤 (jue ti = water-breaks-embankment/dam). Thus 決 also means determined/decided/decisive: 決心 (jue xin = break/firm-heart = determination), 決裂 (jue lie = break-split = sever friendship/partnership), 決定 (jue ding = break/firmly-determine = decide), 裁決 (cai jue = adjudge-firmly-decide = court judgment).

Converts 決志 (jue zhi = decide-will = pledge their faith). Leaders make 決策 (jue ce = final-strategy/decision). Procrastinators 講而不決, 決而不行 (yi er bu jue, jue er bu xing = discuss-and-not-decide, decide-and-not-act).

Saying “決不!” (jue bu = “Definitely no!”) indicates downright denial/refusal. 決一死戰 (jue yi si zhan = decide-one-death-battle) = fight with determination to win or die.

by Diana Yue