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 Taiwan

**獨**

Pronunciation: *du* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *duk* (Cantonese 6th tone)

Basic meaning: single, independent

孤独 (*gu du* = alone/orphaned-single) means lonely.

獨身 (*du shen* = single-body) describes an unmarried person.

獨立 (*du li* = single-stand) describes someone with independent means or an independent character.


獨來獨往 (*du lai du wang* = single-come-single-go) describes a loner. 獨善其身 (*du shan qi shen* = alone~good-his/her~body/self) is the attitude/philosophy of keeping oneself clean and away from other people’s mess.