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 Victory Harbour

Pronunciation: fan (Putonghua, 2\textsuperscript{nd} tone), faan (Cantonese 4\textsuperscript{th} tone)
Basic meaning: sail, sailing boat

帆船 (fan chuan = sail-boats) range from 西班牙大帆船 (xi ban ya da fan chuan = Spain-transliterated-big-sail-boat = Spanish galleons) to Chinese 舢舨 (shan ban = sampans) in Victoria Harbour. 帆影 (fan ying = sails- shadows) means sailing boats, poetically speaking.

Jeans are made of 帆布 (fan bu = sail-cloth = denim).
帆船運動 (fan chuan yun dong = sail-boat-turn-move = sailing-sport) = yachting. 滑浪風帆 (hua lang feng fan = slide-wave-wind-sail) means wind-surfing. 青島 (Qingdao) will host the 2008 奧運會 (ao yun hui = Olympics-transliterated-sports-meet = Olympics) 帆船賽 (fan chuan sai = sail-boat-competitions = sailing events).

一帆風順 (yi fan feng shun = one-sail-wind-smooth) describes someone’s smooth road to success.

by Diana Yue