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 zis together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

This week: Words about jurisdiction

法 (fa) Pronunciation: fa (Putonghua, 3rd tone), faat (Cantonese, 3rd tone) Basic meaning: law, method, religious truth

法 = 法律 (fa lu = law-rules = law). Hongkong’s 《基本法》 (ji ben fa = foundation-basis-law = the Basic Law) is a 小憲法 (xiao xian fa = small-charter-law = mini-constitution).
