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 guerrilla warfare


Idealists 追尋 (zhui xun = pursue-seek) dreams. Detectives 追蹤 (zhui zong = follow-track = trail) suspects. Sages advise “窮寇莫追” (qiong kou mo zhui = cornered-robbbers-don’t-chase), because they might fight back recklessly.

Sixteen-word motto containing the Chinese Red Army's guerrilla strategy: “敵進我退 di jin wo tui = enemy-advances,-we-retreat, 敵駐我擾 di zhu wo rao = enemy-stations,-we-harass, 敵疲我打 di pi wo da = enemy-tired,-we-attack, 敵退我追 di tui wo zhui = enemy-retreats,-we-chase”.

by Diana Yue