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 Christmas

聖

Pronunciation: sheng (Putonghua, 4th tone), sing(Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: holy, sacred, saint

神聖 (shen sheng = god-holy) means sacred.
Christians read 聖經 (sheng-jing = holy classics/scriptures = the Bible), worship 聖父 (sheng fu = holy-father), 聖子 (sheng zi = holy-son), 聖靈 (sheng ling = holy-spirit), 聖徒 (sheng tu = holy-followers = the apostles/saints).

聖 = immortal: Confucius/Mohammed are 聖人 (sheng ren = saint-persons), 杜甫(Du Fu) is 詩聖 (shi sheng = poetry-saint), Beethoven is 樂聖 (yue sheng = music-saint). 超凡入聖 (chao fan ri sheng = pass-mortal-enter-saint/holy) describes their immortal art/morality.


by Diana Yue