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

**王**

Pronunciation: wang (Putonghua, 2nd tone), wong (Cantonese, 4th tone)
Basic meaning: king

王 (¼ king), 王后 (wang hou = king’s-queen) wear 王冠 (wang guan = king/ruler’s-crown), rule 王国 (wang guo = king-state = kingdom). 王朝 (wang chao = king-dynasty) = royal dynasty. Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom, is 英女王 (Ying nu wang = “Eng”land-transliterated-woman-king).

Christians call Jesus 萬王之王 (wan wang zhi wang = ten-thousands-kings’-s-king = king of kings). 孩子王 (hai zi wang = child-diminutive-king) means kindergarten/elementary school teachers. Pele is 球王 (qiu wang = ball-king = supreme soccer player).

拉麵王 (la mian wang = stretch/pull-noodles-king = ramen king) means best shop for ramen noodles.

成王敗寇 (chêng wang bai kòu = successful-king-defeated-bandit) is harsh reality: winners get justification/power/honor, their contenders/opponents are condemned/banished.

by Diana Yue