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 the crime

騙 = cheating. 騙子 (pian zi = swindle-person) = cheats/swindlers. Adjective 騙人 (pian ren = cheat/fool-person) means 說大話 (shuo da hua = say-big-words = telling lies = being dishonest).

Naïve people 被騙 (bei pian = passive-are- cheated), 騙去 (pian qu = cheat-gone = cheated of) savings/jewelry. Spies 騙過 (pian guo = cheat-pass = out-smart/out-trick) enemies to collect information.

千術 (qian shu = thousand-method) means confidence tricks. 老千 (lao qian = old-thousand = con-men) organize 騙局 (pian ju = swindle-set-up = fraud/hoax), 出千 (chu qian = out-thousand = use confidence tricks) to defraud people, 騙錢 (pian qian = cheat-money). 騙財騙色 (pian cai pian se = cheat-wealth-cheat-color) means playing Romeo and cheating women of their money.

Pronunciation: pian (Putonghua, 4th tone), pin (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: fool, cheat, hoodwink, swindle, con

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