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 slavery

虐 = 虐待 (nue dai = torture-treat = torture): 虐兒 (nue er = torture/mal-treat-son/child = child abuse), 虐妻 (nue qi = torture/mal-treat wife = wife-beating), 精神虐待 (jing shen nue dai = essence-spirit-torture-treat = mental torture).


Pronunciation: nue (Putonghua, 2nd tone), yeuk (Cantonese, 6th tone)
Basic meaning: torture

by Diana Yue