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 jurisdiction

罪 = sin/crime. 法治 (fa zhi = law-rule = rule of law) forbids/punishes 罪行 (zui xing = crime-behaviour/acts = crimes).

犯罪 (fan zui = violate-law) = commit crime. 罪犯 (zui fan = crime-committer = law-offenders) are charged for 罪名 (zui ming = crime-name = offences), e.g. 貪污罪 (tan wu zui = greed-dirt-crime = corruption). They 認罪 (ren zui = admit-crime = plead guilty) or 不認罪 (bu ren zui = no-admit-crime = plead not guilty). If 定罪 (ding zui = confirmed-crime = found guilty), they receive 刑罰 (xing fa = sentence-punishment = sentence).

Sodom and Gomorrah are 罪惡之城 (zui e zhi cheng = sins-vice~’s-cities). 罪人 (zui ren = sin-person = sinners) go to Hell.