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 race

膚 (fu) = skin: 皮膚科 (pi fu ke = skin~skin~specialization = dermatology), 皮膚病 (pi fu bing = skin~skin~illness = skin disease), 皮膚癌 (pi fu ai = skin~skin~cancer), 護膚品 (hu fu pin = protect~skin~things = skin-care items).

紅種人 (hong zhong ren = red~race~person/people), 黃種人 (huang zhong ren = yellow~race~people), 黑種人 (hei zhong ren = black~race~people), 白種人 (bai zhong ren = white~race~people) have different膚色 (fu se = skin~color).

膚淺 (fu qian = skin~shallow = shallow) people only know 皮毛 (pi mao = skin~hair/down/fur = surface/superficial knowledge). When our direct interests are threatened/hurt, we feel 切膚之痛 (qie fu zhi teng = cut~skin~’s~pain).

Pronunciation: fu (Putonghua, 1st tone), foo (Cantonese, 1st tone)
Basic meaning: skin

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