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 money


Laborers/prostitutes earn 血汗錢 (xue han qian = blood-sweat-money). Movie-makers treat stars as 搖錢樹 (yao qian shu = shake-money-tree = money-generating instruments).


by Diana Yue