

Character Builder 您好嗎？

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 Easter



(radical 土 *tu* = earth)

Pronunciation: *mu* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *mo* (Cantonese, 6th tone)

Basic meaning: tomb

墓 = 墳墓 (*fen mu* = grave~tomb) = graves. After crucifixion Jesus' 遺體 (*yi ti* = remain~body = dead body) was put in 墓室 (*mu shi* = tomb~chamber).

Ancient Chinese liked 厚葬 (*hou zang* = thick~bury = extravagant funerals/burials). 皇陵 (*huang ling* = emperor 撥~tomb/mausoleum), 古墓 (*gu mu* = ancient~tombs) were robbed by 盜墓賊 (*dao mu zei* = steal-grave~thieves = grave-robbers).

During 清明節 (*Qing Ming jie* = Qing Ming Festival in April) descendants visit 墓園 (*mu yuan* = tomb~garden = graveyards) to 掃墓 (*sao mu* = brush~graves = clean ancestral graves' surroundings). 墓木已拱 (*mu mu yi gong* = grave~wood/tree~already~bent = trees have formed arbors over their graves) describes pensively people whose lives/influence have long ended.

by Diana Yue