

# 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 Taiwan

殖

Pronunciation: *zhi* (Putonghua, 2<sup>nd</sup> tone), *jik* (Cantonese 6<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: breed, plant, colonize

殖 (radical 歹 = rotten grease, bone remnants) means grow/multiply. Living things 生殖 (*sheng zhi* = give-birth~breed) and 繁殖 (*fan zhi* = multiply~breed). 生殖器 (*sheng zhi qi* = birth~breed~instrument) means the male penis.

器官移植 (*qi guan yi zhi* = instrument~organ~transfer~plant) = organ transplant. Cloning is done through 基因轉殖 (*ji yin zhuan zhi* = basic~factor~change~plant = genes~transplant) technology.

Settlers 墾殖 (*ken zhi* = cultivate~plant) on new land. Colonizers 殖民 (*zhi min* = plant~people): the Dutch in Taiwan (17th century), the Japanese in Taiwan (19th-20th centuries). Colony is 殖民地 (*zhi min di* = plant~people~land). Decolonization (非殖民地化 *fei zhi min di hua* = un/de~plant~people~ize) issues are brought to the UN's Decolonization Committee.

by Diana Yue