

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 Buddhism

Pronunciation: *jing* (Putonghua, 1st tone), *ging* (Cantonese 1st tone)
Basic meaning: classic, scripture, sutra

經緯 (*jing wei*) = warp~weft or longitude~latitude, hence 經 means authority/classic. The Christian Bible is called 聖經 (*sheng jing* = holy~classic). The Qoran is transliterated as 古蘭經 (*gu lan jing*). The Five Classics of Confucianism (五經 *wu jing* = five~classics) include 詩經 (*shi jing* = Book of Poetry), 易經 (*yi jing* = Book of Change = the I Ching).

The famous monk 唐三藏 (*tang san zang* = Tang Dynasty's Tripitaka) translated many 佛經 (*fo jing* = Buddhism~scriptures = sutras) from Sanskrit into Chinese, e.g. 心經 (*xin jing* = heart~scripture = Heart Sutra).

天經地義 (*tian jing di yi* = heaven~authority~earth~significance) describes something indisputably rightful/deserving. 正經 (*zheng jing* = orthodox~classic) describes a person's decent/prim behavior.

by Diana Yue