

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 guerrilla warfare



Pronunciation: *mao* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *mo* (Cantonese, 4th tone)

Basic meaning: hair, surname (Mao Zedong's surname)

毛澤東 (*Mao Zedong*) led 中國工農紅軍 (*Zhong Guo gong nong hong jun* = Middle-Kingdom-workers-peasants-red-army = the Chinese Red Army), proved “槍桿子裡出政權” (*qiang gan zi li chu zheng quan* = gun-barrel-diminutive-inside-produce-rule-power = military force produces political power).

This inspired 切格瓦拉 (*qie ge wa la* = “Che Guevara”-transliterated) and others to 打游擊 (*da you ji* = fight-move-attack = fight guerrilla wars), 幹革命 (*gan ge ming* = act/work-revolution = achieve the revolution), penetrating 平原 (*ping yuan* = flat-plains), 森林 (*sen lin* = forests-woods), 山區 (*shan qu* = hilly/mountainous-regions).

尼共 (毛派) (*Ni gong (Mao pai)* = Nepal's Communist Party (Maoists)) now dominates the Nepalese parliament.

by Diana Yue