

# 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 slavery

Pronunciation: *nue* (Putonghua, 2<sup>nd</sup> tone), *yeuk* (Cantonese, 6<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: torture

虐 = 虐待 (*nue dai* = torture~treat = torture): 虐兒 (*nue er* = torture/mal-treat~son/child = child abuse), 虐妻 (*nue qi* = torture/mal-treat wife = wife-beating), 精神虐待 (*jing shen nue dai* = essence~spirit~torture~treat = mental torture).

Torture methods include 拷打 (*kao da* = flog/whip~beat), 拔指甲 (*ba zhi jia* = pull-out~finger~nails). Guards who 虐囚 (*nue chou* = torture~prisoners) violate 人權 (*ren quan* = human-being~right = human rights). Pet-owners who 虐畜 (*nue chu* = torture~animals) risk prosecution.

Psychopaths 虐殺 (*nue sha* = torture~kill) victims. Sexual perverts like 性虐待 (*xing nue dai* = sexual~torture). SM (sodomasochism) = 虐待狂 (*nue dai kuang* = torture~madness = sadism) + 被虐狂 (*bei nue kuang* = is~tortured~madness = masochism).

by Diana Yue