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 cartoons


三毛流浪記 (san mao liu lang ji = three-hairs-drift-wave-record) is the famous Chinese 連環圖 (lian huan tu = linked-circles-pictures = cartoon strip) telling the humiliating adventures of the homeless kid 三毛 (San Mao) in 1930s Shanghai.

動漫 (dong man = move-cartoon) = 卡通片 (ka tong pian = "cartoon"-transliterated-film) = animation cartoons, e.g. 迪士尼 (di shi ni = “Disney”-transliterated) productions.

by Diana Yue