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 plant symbolism

菊 symbolizes 隱士 (yin shi = disappear~scholar = hermit). 梅蘭菊竹 (mei lan ju zhu = plum~orchid~chrysanthemum~bamboo), called 四君子 (si jun zi = four~gentlemen), are common art motifs. 雛菊 (chu ju = baby~chrysanthemums) = daisies. Daisy chain is 菊花鍊 (ju hua lian = chrysanthemum~flower~chain).

菊展 (ju zhan = chrysanthemum~exhibitions) and 持螯賞菊 (chi ao shang ju = hold~crab~claw~admire~chrysanthemum = eat crabs, see chrysanthemums) are autumn activities.

菊 can 入藥 (ru yao = enter~medicine = be used in Chinese medicine) to 清熱 (qing re = clear/clean~heat = clean/cool the body system). 菊花晶 (ju hua jing = chrysanthemum~flower~crystals) solution makes chrysanthemum beverage. 菊花茶 (ju hua cha = chrysanthemum~flower~tea) is tea brewed with chrysanthemum petals.

Pronunciation: ju (Putonghua, 2nd tone), guk (Cantonese 1st tone)
Basic meaning: chrysanthemum

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