

Editor-reader
interactionCuteness
drives up
demand

By Zheng Xiao'an

The "Cat's
Paw Mug"

Recently, Starbucks released a limited number of "Cat's Paw Mugs" in China. With its adorable design, the mugs sold out within a few days. It has quickly gone viral on the Internet as people are clamoring to buy them online. Starbucks made an additional 3,000 available online and reportedly it took only a few seconds for them to sell out.

One of the reasons for their sudden popularity may be the limited quantity. As the mugs are in short supply and some stores do not have enough in stock, consumers have had to line up to get

one. Some criticize the company's strategy of "hunger marketing" as it seems that the company intentionally limited the supply to create buzz.

Another explanation for this phenomenon is that consumers are more likely to indulge and spend money on items they perceive to be cute and playful rather than ordinary and plain. This can be understood as 萌经济 (méng jīng jì.) It refers to business opportunities that are generated with cute and lovely products.

The word 萌 (méng) is an adjective which originated in

Japanese animated series and comic book series. It is used to describe someone or something as adorable, cute, and lovely. When 萌经济 (méng jīng jì) is considered, it suggests that a buyers' preferences may lean toward cute items. At present, cuteness has become highly valued for marketing purposes because it attracts customers. For this reason, many coffee shops, themed restaurants, and shopping malls have their own cute mascots.

It appears obvious that in the worlds of marketing and consumerism, it is well known that cuteness sells.

One step
at a time

1. Wuhan dialect

jǐ mǎn

几满

Meaning: When?

Chinese:

zhōu jié lún dào dǐ jǐ mǎn
周 杰 伦 到 底 几 满

lái wǔ hàn kāi yǎn chàng huì ?

来 武 汉 开 演 唱 会 ?

English: When will Jay Chou come to Wuhan to give a concert?

2. Chinese characters

zhú

竹

Development:

Meaning: [n.] bamboo

Chinese:

yī chǎng chūn yǔ hòu, zhú

一 场 春 雨 后, 竹

lín lǐ xiān nèn de zhú sǔn yīng

林 里 鲜 嫩 的 竹 笋 应

shí ér chū。

时 而 出。

English: Fresh bamboo shoots appear in bamboo forests after a spring rain.

3. Buzzword

Appscription

Meaning: [n.] prescriptions by doctors and physicians via health apps
English: In the era of smartphones, many doctors use apps to provide appscription to remotely help patients relieve their pain.

Chinese:

zhì néng shǒu jī shí dài, bù

智 能 手 机 时 代, 不

shǎo yī shēng tōng guò yīng

少 医 生 通 过 应

yòng tí gòng chéng xù yào fāng,

用 提 供 程 序 药 方,

yuǎn chéng bāng zhù bìng huàn

远 程 帮 助 病 患

jiǎn qīng tòng kǔ。

减 轻 痛 苦。

4. Sentence of the week

English: The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today.

— Franklin Roosevelt

Chinese:

shí xiàn míng tiān lǐ xiǎng de

实 现 明 天 理 想 的

wéi yī zhàng ài shì jīn tiān de yí

唯 一 障 碍 是 今 天 的 疑

lǜ。

虑。

— 罗 斯 福

Translation
appreciation

Spring, the Resurrection Time

春

Written by James J. Kilpatrick (詹姆斯·J·凯尔帕特利克 著)

Translated by Song Deli (宋德利 译)

Springs are not always the same. In some years, April bursts upon our Virginia hills in one prodigious leap and all the stage is filled at once, whole choruses of tulips, arabesques of forsythia, cadenzas of flowering plum. The trees grow leaves overnight.

In other years, spring tiptoes in. It pauses, overcome by shyness, like my grandchild at the door, peeping in, ducking out of sight, giggling in the hallway.

"I know you're out there," I cry. "Come in!" And April slips into our arms.

The dogwood bud, pale green, is inlaid with russet markings. Within the perfect cup a score of clustered seeds are nestled. One examines the bud in awe: Where were those seeds a month ago? All the sleeping things wake up - primrose, baby iris, blue phlox. The earth warms - you can smell it, feel it, crumble April in your hands. (excerpt)

春天并非总是一模一样。四月,有时不知怎地一跃,就来到了弗吉尼亚的山坡上——转眼到处生机勃勃。郁金香组成了大合唱,连翘构成了阿拉伯式图案,洋李唱出了婉转的歌声。一夜之间,林木着装,绿叶瑟瑟。

四月有时又蹑手蹑脚,像我的小孙女一样,羞答答地倚在门外,避开视线,偷偷向里窥探,尔后又咯咯地笑着走进门厅。“我知道你在那儿藏着呢。”我喊道。“进来!”于是,春天便溜出进了我的怀抱。

山茶萼的蓓蕾,淡绿清雅,表面点缀着褐色斑痕,活像一只完美无缺的小杯,一撮撮种子,半隐半现地藏在里面。我敬畏地观察着这蓓蕾,暗自发问:一个月之前,这些种子在什么地方呢?一切冬眠的东西都在苏醒——美丽的樱草花,纤细的蝴蝶花,还有蓝色的草夹竹桃。大地开始变暖——这,你既可以嗅到,也可以触摸到——抓起一把泥土,四月便揉碎在你的手心里了。(节选)