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Text 2: Cat cafes...a Chinese recipe (for cure) for the One-Child Generation

English translation of an article on the Al Jazeera Arabic website. Short Url to the original Arabic article on the Al Jazeera website: http://goo.gl/k1tQb6

[1]

Cat cafes...a Chinese recipe (for cure) for the One-Child Generation

Shen Zi Wei is a first year university student at the Faculty of Media¹ in one of the universities of the Chinese capital Beijing and has

[1]

مقاهي القطط.. وصفة صينية لجيل الطفل الواحد

شن زي وي طالبة جامعية في السنة الأولى بكلية الإعلام في إحدى جامعات العاصمة الصينية بكين، وقد

¹ Also called: Faculty of Mass Communications.

just turned twenty². She had grown up alone like the rest of her generation³, having no brother sharing her joys and griefs and no sister to disclose her secrets to as the "Law of One-Child", which the Chinese government has been imposing for three decades, forbids having more than one child per family.

أكملت للتو عقدها الثابي نشأت وحيدة كباقي أبناء أخت لتبوح لها بأسرارها، إذ يحظر "قانون الطف عائلة.

² Literally: has just completed her second decade of life.

³ Literally: like the rest of the people of her generation.

[2]

Shen renounced reality for⁴ the virtual world of the internet spending hours of her time in front of the computer screen. We found her doing just this when we visited her at her university hall of residence. However, her imagination led her, through an online games' website, to the south pole whence she returns with a penguin whom she brings up and takes care of.

[2]

هجرت شن الواقع نحو عالم الإنترنيت الافتراضي، وه أمام شاشة الكمبي زرناها في سكنها بالجامعة، غير أن خيالها قادها لد مواقع الألعاب الإلكترونية إلى القطب بطائر بطريق تربيه وترعاه،

⁴ Literally: toward.

She uses her money in her credit card balance to buy food and bath soap for him and also exchanges love and affection with him till he has with time become her bosom buddy⁵.

وتستخدم رصيدها المالي من بطاقتها الائتمانية لتشتري له الطعام وصابون الاستحمام، وتبادله الود والعطف. حتى غدا مع الوقت صديقها الصدوق.

⁵ That is: a sincere, truthful and trusted friend.

[3]

Shen tells us that she prefers penguins over many of her friends as all of them have their concerns and things that keep them busy. They are unable to visit her nor can she visit them whenever [any of them would like]; whereas she can call her preferred penguin⁶, whenever she wants, with just one mouse click.

[3]

تقول لنا شن إنها تفضل مرن أصدقائها، فلك يستطيعون أن يزوروها أو تزورهم في أي وقت، دعى طائرها المفضل

⁶ Or: bird.

[4]

Breaking out of Isolation

However, Shen has come considerably out (of loneliness) and has decided to break the barrier of her isolation, to bid farewell to her virtual world and respond to the call of reality, as she has realised that she is in need of a living being that she can touch and feel; [a being] that she can play with, call, and talk softly and tenderly to who would respond or whom she can chide and would (promptly) obey.⁷

[4]

كســـر الطــوق

⁷ The translation provided above is based on تَلْمُسَنُ being in the subjunctive mood (مَعْطُوفٌ) due to it being connected (مَعْطُوفٌ) to تَلَامِينَ (مَعْطُوفٌ). Alternatively, مَرْفُوعٌ could be the beginning of a new sentence and would therefore be in the indicative mood (مَرُفُوعٌ). The sentence would then be read as follows: ثَدَاعِيهُ وَتُنَاعِيهِ وَتُنَادِيهِ فَيَسْتَجِيبُ أَوْ تَنْهُوهُ فَيَنْصَاعُ . Translation: She will play with, call and talk softly and tenderly to it and it will respond or she will chide it and it will (promptly) obey. The letter في before يَشْتَجِب عُمَلُونَ مُعَلِقُونِهُ وَيَشَاعِهُ وَلَمُعَامِيهُ وَلَمُعَامِعُ عَمُلُونُ مَعْلُونِهُ وَلَمُعَامِعُ عَمُلُونَ مُعَلِّعُ اللهِ عَمْلُونُ عَمُلُونُ مَعْلُونِهُ وَلَمُعَامِعُ عَمُلُونَ مُعَلِّمُ وَلَمُعَامِعُ عَمْلُونُ مَا عَمْلُونُ مَعْلُونُ عَمْلُونُ مُعَلِّمُ وَلَمُعَامِعُ عَمْلُونُ عَمْلُونُ مَعْلُونِهُ وَلَمُعُونُ مُعَلِّمُ وَلَمُعَامِعُ عَمْلُونُ مُعَلِّمُ عَمْلُونُ عَمْلُونُ وَلَمْ عَمْلُونُ عَمْلُونُ عَمْلُونُ عَمْلُونُ عَمْلُونُ مُعَلِمُ وَلَمْ عَمْلُونُ عَمْلُونُ عَمْلُونُ وَلَمُعَلِمُ عَمْلُونُ عَمْلُونُ مُعَلِمُ وَلَمْلُونُ مُعَلِمُ عَمْلُونُ وَلَمُ عَمْلُونُ وَلَمُعَلِمُ عَمْلُونُ وَلَمُعَلِمُ وَلَمُعُونُ وَلَمُ عَمْلُونُ وَلَمُ عَمْلُونُ وَلَمُعُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلِي مُعْلِمُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمُعُونُ وَلَمُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمُونُ وَلَمُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَعُونُ وَلَعْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَالِهُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَوْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَالُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَوْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَالِمُعُلِمُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُولُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلِمُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمُ وَلَمُ وَلَمُعُلِمُ وَلَمُ وَلَمُعُلِمُ وَلَمُعُلِمُ وَلَمْلُونُ وَلَمُ

[5]

Shen found the object of her quest at one of the (several) cafes that have started to spread in Chinese cities and are hugely popular⁸ with the "one-child generation" segment of the youth that are suffering from boredom and loneliness, as they go to those places to play with the pets, to have them for company and to remove their loneliness.

[5]

د المقاهي التي باتت في المدن الصينية، وتلقى رواجاً كبيراً لدى الطفل الواحد" ممن يعانون

⁸ Literally: receiving huge popularity among those from.

In this regard, a recently published study has revealed that 60% of Chinese youth have grown up without brothers or sisters due to the one-child law and are considered the "young playboys" or the "sun of the family" as the Chinese say, that is, the entire family revolves around them. In spite of all this pampering they continue to feel lonely about their childhood. Moreover, around seven million of them suffer from loneliness⁹.

فقد أظهرت دراسة نشرت ۇخراً أن 60% م دون إخــوة أو أخ الواحد، واعتبروا "الأباطرة الصغار" أو "شمس العائلة" ولمم، ومع ک منهم من مرض التوحد.

⁹ Literally: from the disease of loneliness.

[6]

Yuan Kong, the owner of one such cafe, says to Al Jazeera Arabic's website "Everyone who frequents the cafe here is from among the youth¹⁰. The young women¹¹ usually spend more time playing with the cats whereas the young men spend more time chatting or trying to find a girlfriend and having some cups of coffee or tea. (All in all,) they all feel happy and at (their) ease¹²."

[6]

ويقول يوان خونغ أحد هذه المقاهي للجزيرة نت ے الـذين يـترددون علـ الشبباب، والإناث عسادة يقضين وقتاً أكثر في مداعبة القطط، وأما الشباب فيقضون وقتاً أكثر في الحديث أو في محاولة البحث عن وتناول بعض أكواب القهوة أو

¹⁰ Literally: youth segment [of society].

¹¹ Literally: the females.

¹² That is: inclined to open up.

[7]

Healthy Cats

One girl, playing with a cat that was leaping in front of her, comments: "Some of my male and female friends go to volunteer at centres that take care of pets¹³ like stray cats and dogs or pets¹⁴ that have been abandoned by their owners; these are gathered in dedicated centres." She adds: "However, I believe that the cats here are cleaner and free of disease. Moreover, I can't stand dogs as their barking is annoying."

7

قط ط سلمة

وتعلق إحــدى الفتيــات وهــ تلاعب قطأ ينط بين يديها "بعض أصدقائي وصديقاتي ذهبون للتطـوع في مراكــز للاعتناء بالحيوانات الأليفة كالقطط والكلاب الشاردة أو ــا في مراكــز خاصــ وتضيف "لكنني أعتقد أن القطط هنا أكثر نظافة وتخلو من الأمراض. كما أنني لا أطيق الكلاب فنباحها مزعج. ا

¹³ That is: pet care centres.

¹⁴ Literally: or those that have been abandoned.

[8]

That is the story of Shen Zi Wei, or rather the story of an entire generation that is the product of the one-child policy, as this generation grew up without brothers or sisters and suffers from boredom and loneliness. It is natural, therefore, that cafes like this (one) have become the best place for it and that their best companion to sit together with and close friend is a cat.

Didn't one of the Abbasid poets, who used to suffer¹⁵

[8]

تلك هي قصة شن زي وي بل قصة جيل بأكمله هو نتاج سياسة الطفل الواحد، فقد نشأ دون إخوة أو أخوات، ويعاني من الملل والوحدة، فمن الطبيعي أن يصبح خير مكان بالنسبة إليه مقهى كهذا، وخير جليس وأنيس بالنسبة إليهم قطة.

ألم يقل أحد الشعراء العباسيين ممن كانوا يعانون

¹⁵ Literally: who was among those who used to suffer.

from boredom and loneliness, say centuries ago:

When the chest gets packed with its worries, we say: perhaps one day they will have relief;

my drinking mate is my cat, the friend intimately close to me is my notebooks and my beloved is the lamp.

من الملل والوحدة منذ قرون:

إذا ازدحمت هموم الصدر قلنا عسى يوما يكون لها انفراج

نديمي هرتي وأنيس نفسي دفاتر لي ومعشوقي السراج