

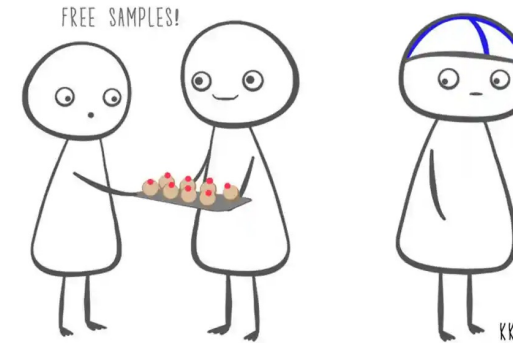
Small talk –
intercultural
stereotypes or
interindividual
differences?



精芬

Why do millions of Chinese people want to be 'spiritually Finnish'?

A Finnish cartoon about a socially awkward stickman has become a hit in China - even inspiring a new word in Mandarin. Why has it struck such a chord?



OBSESSIONS

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By **Ephrat Livni**

Senior reporter, law & politics, DC.

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If you find it awkward to make small talk, you may be “jingfen” (精芬) or “[spiritually Finnish](#).” That’s the newly coined Chinese buzzword for a burgeoning identity taking hold among millennials.

The term “jingfen” is inspired by a comic from Finland called “[Finnish Nightmares](#),” starring a cartoon figure named Matti who prefers minimal contact and avoids social situations. His creator Karoliina Korhonen [describes Matti](#) as “a stereotypical Finn who appreciates peace, quiet and personal space. Matti tries his best to do unto others as he wishes to be done unto him: to give space, be polite and not bother with unnecessary chit chat.”



Be conservative
in what you
send, be liberal
in what you
accept



