



## Did ceremonial shovels cause Hsinchu baby boom? 動土鏟放床下 不孕夫妻有子望？

**H**sinchu's medical community is awash with rumors that childless couples are falling pregnant after placing ceremonial shovels under their beds.

Local obstetricians and gynecologists report patients telling them of this new use of the **ceremonial** shovels, which are traditionally used when breaking ground on construction sites. The superstition can trace its origins to a linguistic similarity. In Chinese the word for shovel is *chan*, which rhymes with the word for "give birth to a child." Despite the claimed successes, the medical community maintains that the births should be attributed to improvements in reproductive medicine, which have increased the probability of getting pregnant.

A woman surnamed Wu from Hsinchu City started to take human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) shots because she was infertile and remained childless after several years of marriage. Later on, she found out that her friend surnamed Lin borrowed a ceremonial shovel, placed it under her bed and unexpectedly succeeded in falling pregnant. Wu then asked to borrow the shovel from Lin.

After placing the shovel under her bed for about a year, Wu also discovered that she had **a bun in the oven**. Then after Lin gave birth to a boy, Wu also gave birth to her own chubby baby boy. Wu said that she was originally going to give the shovel back to Lin, but said that a workmate of hers who wanted to become pregnant borrowed it from her straight away. It wasn't until later that Wu found out the shovel had been used by at least five couples before her and that they had used the shovel to give birth to four boys and one girl.

Lin Cheng-kai, head of the Reproductive Medicine Center at Hsinchu Cathay General Hospital said that he had heard of several women who wished to get pregnant talk about the use of such methods and that originally he did not believe

in such a nonscientific method. However as the number of "successful" cases increased, he even considered collecting statistics on the number of successful clinical tests.

A doctor became curious and asked an expecting mother how she had placed the shovel under the bed. One of his pregnant patients said that a feng shui geomancer had told her that if she wanted a boy, she had to place it with its reverse side facing up, while if she wanted a girl, she had to lay it with its right side facing up and that the man should sleep on the left side of the bed while the women should sleep on the right side of the bed. Obstetricians and gynaecologists have heard of countless numbers of superstitious **prescriptions** that are supposed to help women conceive.

Qualified gynecologist and former director of the Chinese Medical Department at Hsinchu General Hospital Dr Tseng Ching-huei said that one woman suffering from infertility had heard that her friend had given birth to a few babies in her house and that a feng shui master had told her that the position of that house was good and advised her to "borrow the feng shui" from there by moving in to live there. After swapping houses for half a year, she also became pregnant.

Lin also said that many infertile women became pregnant after heeding advice on changing the layout and decoration of their home from a feng shui master and that some had even become pregnant after going to a certain place to take a special "give birth to a son" bath or by changing their bedroom doors and the position their bed is placed. Despite the proliferation of miracle cures for infertility, doctors still believe that modern medical science is the only way to substantially increase the success rate of becoming pregnant.

(LIBERTY TIMES, TRANSLATED BY DREW CAMERON)

**新**竹醫界近日流傳，不少不孕症或結婚久未懷孕的夫妻，將動土典禮的鏟子放在床下，居然奇蹟「產子」，很多婦產科醫師也證實患者的確談到這些消息，但醫界認為這應歸功於現代生殖醫學的進步，提高了懷孕機率。

新竹市一名吳姓婦人，因不孕症結婚多年沒有懷孕，開始打排卵針，後來得知朋友林婦也因不孕症，向人借了一把曾經在動土典禮使用過的鏟子，放在床下，居然懷孕成功，於是情商出借。

果不其然，吳婦把鏟子放在床下約半年，也成功懷孕，林婦生下男孩後，她也順利產下一個胖兒子。吳婦說，原本要將鏟子歸還林婦，但立即被想生子的同事借走，事後她才知道，至少已經有五對借過這把鏟子的夫妻成功懷孕，生下四男一女。

國泰醫院新竹分院生殖醫學中心主任林正凱說，他的確聽過幾位前去求子的婦女談到這些事情，他原本不是很相信這種非科學的方法，但隨著「成功」案例越來越多，他甚至考慮要「統計」臨床實驗成功的案例數字。

有醫師好奇問產婦，鏟子放床下要怎麼擺？一名求診孕婦說，經請示風水地理師得知想生男就要反面朝上，想生女則正面朝上，男睡床左側、女睡右側。

婦產科醫師聽過的求子「偏方」不勝枚舉。

兼具婦產科醫師資格的前衛生署新竹醫院中醫科主任曾慶暉醫師說，有一名不孕患者告訴他，得知朋友家連續生了好幾胎，風水師說當地地理好，勸她「借風水」搬進住，結果她與對方換屋住了半年，果然成功懷孕。

林正凱醫師也說，不少患者的家中陳設、擺設聽風水先生建議改善後，就成功懷孕；甚至有到某地泡「生男湯」，或換過門面、臥床位置等。然而無論如何，醫師還是認為藉由現代醫學科技，才能實質地提高懷孕的成功率。

(自由時報記者蔡彰盛攝)

**Above: Hsinchu Mayor Lin Jung-tzer and other officials dig up earth during a ceremony aimed at appeasing the Earth God before construction began at a building site in Hsinchu County on June 27, 2009.**

PHOTO: TSAI CHANG-SHENG, LIBERTY TIMES

上圖：六月二十七日，新竹市長林政則與幾位官員在新竹縣某工地的動土典禮上開鏟。

照片：自由時報記者蔡彰盛攝

### TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. **ceremonial** /,sɛrə'mɒniəl/ adj.

儀式的 (yí2 shí4 de5)

例：The chief of the tribe arrived at the meeting in full ceremonial clothing.  
(這個部落的酋長穿著全套正式服裝出席那場會議。)

2. **prescription** /prɪ'skrɪpʃən/ n.

處方 (chū3 fāng1)

例：According to the prescription, you have to take two tablets three times per day.  
(根據處方上的指示，你每天要吃三次藥，一次兩顆。)

### IDIOM POINT 重要片語

**a bun in the oven**  
懷孕

If a woman has a **bun in the oven**, she is pregnant. Example: "Sonia was shocked to learn that her younger sister had a **bun in the oven**, and would be giving birth in a few months time.

若說一名婦女「has a bun in the oven」，意思就是她懷孕了。例如：「蘇妮亞聽到自己的妹妹已經懷孕，而且幾個月後就要生產的消息時大吃一驚」。