

Taboos and traditions rife among Tainan aquafarmers

魚塭養殖 禁忌一籬筐



Tainan's highly developed aquaculture industry was once the home of Taiwan's so-called "tiger shrimp kingdom." But running a profitable tiger shrimp farm is fraught with difficulties, so a **proliferation** of unusual taboos and customs have sprung up among shrimp farmers. One of the most common is a prohibition on visiting other farmers' farms.

While shrimp farming taboos vary from farm to farm, some are widespread such as the bans on families in mourning, funeral planners and women.

Yet this is just **the tip of the iceberg**. Some farmers use incense to purify their pools after receiving visitors, while others obtain charms from temples to bring good luck and keep the water pure. Some go even further and believe they should raise "fierce fish" in order to restrain **divine** "shrimp soldiers and crab generals" in the water.

Tsai Ching-nan, 63, a shrimp farmer who raises white shrimps and milk fish in Siangong Borough of Tainan City says that he always practices such customs, adding that it is important to believe in divinity. He does not like others to visit his farm, and

nor does he like to visit others' farms.

According to Lee Chin-hsing, a shrimp farmer in his 40s, one accident is a coincidence, but five accidents are not. He says he once invested almost NT\$1 million in his farm, but his shrimp died within three days. After suffering such losses, he says he has no choice but to practice these strange shrimp customs.

Funerals, women who are menstruating and mothers who have given birth within the previous month are considered bad luck. And as far as Lee is concerned, he doesn't like his own wife to inquire about goings-on at the farm.

However, Lin Mei-fang, a female shrimp farmer, laughs at the so-called women taboo. She says that women are working at many of the farms now. Without their help, over half of the farms would close down.

Wang Kuang-jung, who is also in his 40s, says that Tainan's cultivation of tiger shrimps actually reached its climax about 20 years ago. Since then, cultivation has become more difficult, sparking new traditions that previous generations of farmers didn't have. He recalls one eye-opening experience when he

sold a **batch** of juvenile shrimp to a customer. Before the customer would allow the shrimp into his farm, he set up an altar and censer to purify the shrimp.

Wang says that he does not really believe in the taboos and customs but respects those of others. He does not enter others' farms unless he is invited, saying that this is the basic courtesy a shrimp farmer should have. Not to mention that this can avoid others from blaming their failure on his visit.

(LIBERTY TIMES, TRANSLATED BY EDDY CHANG)



南沿海養殖業發達，過去曾是台灣草蝦王國的主要養殖基地之一，由於草蝦、石斑等高經濟魚種，魚苗復育及養殖不易，為了能養成功，漁民便形成了各種禁忌，迄今仍牢不可破，不隨便造訪他人魚塭，也成了漁民之間共同默契。

漁民的養殖禁忌可說千奇百怪，也依每個人的喜好而有程度上的不同，但其中以禁止家有喪事、引喪者及女人靠近魚塭最為普遍，這幾乎也是漁民們的共識。

有的漁民則更誇張，只要有人到過了魚塭，就會以「淨香」將整個魚塭淨過一遍；有的則會到廟裡要神符，以符水淨化，趨吉避兇；有的則認為養魚要兇、有霸氣，才能鎮住「蝦兵蟹將」。

在顯宮以飼養白蝦、虱目魚為主的漁民蔡清男，今年六十三歲，絕對奉行養殖禁忌。他說，不要不信邪，他不喜別人隨便造訪他的魚塭，而他也不會隨便去參觀別人的魚塭。

五年級生的漁民李進興也說，一次是巧合，三、五次就不叫巧合了。過去，他曾經投資九十餘萬元，蝦苗只放養三天就泡湯了，損失慘重，不得不相信有禁忌。

他說，除了碰觸喪事外，女人月事來臨，或是進入人家坐月子的房間，有的人就會忌諱，而他自己則不喜歡妻子對魚塭的事問東問西。

然而，身為女性漁民的林美芳則對女人的禁忌嗤之以鼻。她說，現在很多魚塭都是女人在幫忙，沒有女人大半的魚塭恐得休養了。

同是五年級的漁民王光榮則說，台南草蝦養殖的全盛時期，大約是二十年前的事情了，後來愈來愈難養，各種老一輩沒有的禁忌紛紛出籠，當時他從事蝦魚苗養殖，曾賣了一批蝦苗給一名客戶，結果對方設壇，以香爐逐一為蝦苗過爐淨化，才讓蝦苗進塭，讓他大開眼界。

他說，他不相信禁忌，但尊重別人的禁忌，除非受邀請，否則不入他人魚塭，這是身為漁民應有的禮節，同時也避免他人養殖失敗成了替死鬼。

(自由時報記者蔡文居攝)

Left: Workers tend the nets on a fish farm in the Annan district of Tainan City in this undated photo.

Below: An undated aerial picture of aquaculture farms in Tainan's coastal area.

PHOTOS: TSAI WEN-CHU, TAIPEI TIMES

左圖：這張未註明拍攝日期的照片中，安南區某魚塭的工人在整理魚網。

下圖：一張未註明日期的台南沿海魚塭空照圖。

照片：自由時報記者蔡文居攝

TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. **proliferation** /prəˌlɪfə'reɪʃən/ n.
激增 (ji1 zeng1)

例：There has been a proliferation of horror movies this year.
(今年有很多恐怖片上映。)

2. **divine** /dɪˈvaɪn/ adj.
神性的 (shen2 xing4 de5)

例：According to most religions, the universe was created by a divine being.
(大部分宗教都相信宇宙是一神所創。)

3. **batch** /bætʃ/ n.
一批 (yi4 pi1)

例：The latest batch of games will be arriving soon.
(最後一批遊戲不久後將到貨。)



IDIOM POINT 重要片語

the tip of the iceberg
冰山一角

Something that is **the tip of the iceberg** is just a small part of a larger issue, in the same way that real icebergs have 90 percent of their mass hidden under water.

Example: "You might think it's OK to let people arrive late to class, but to me that's just **the tip of the iceberg**."

若說某事是「**the tip of the iceberg**」，就表示這件事只是更大議題中的一小部份而已。這個片語源於真正的冰山，因為冰山有百分之九十的體積都隱藏在水底。

例如：「你可能覺得學生上課遲到沒什麼，但在我看來，那只是冰山一角罷了。」