



South Koreans now prefer daughters over sons 南韓準父母偏好弄瓦更勝弄璋

A long-standing preference among South Koreans for sons rather than daughters is changing amid new social trends, according to a survey cited by experts.

Researchers asked couples expecting a child whether they wanted a daughter or a son. Some 38 percent of expectant mothers said they wanted a daughter, 31 percent wanted a son with the remainder **sitting on the fence**.

Among fathers-to-be, 37 percent wanted a daughter and 29 percent a son while the remainder had no preference.

Researchers surveyed 2,078 households before the mothers gave birth from April to July 2008.

They said it marked the first time in South Korea, formerly a strongly patriarchal society, that a preference for baby girls over boys was confirmed in a **nationwide** survey.

"Sons' roles as a means to continue family bloodlines and to support ageing parents are considered less and less valuable," Lee Jeong-Rim, a researcher with the Korea Institute of Childcare and Education, told AFP.

She said there was a growing trend for old people to rely on previously unavailable social safety networks rather than moving in with a son.

"Many parents prefer a baby girl to a baby boy as they believe a daughter will bring them greater happiness and family **unity** than a son," said Lee, who led the 2008 survey.

Other statistics also reflect the declining preference for baby boys.

The ratio of baby boys to girls peaked at 116.5 to 100 in 1990, apparently indicating that female foetuses were aborted.

The ratio has since been falling steadily to 106.4 boys for every 100 girls in 2008, which falls within the international average of 103-107. (AFP)

南韓專家做的一項調查發現，隨著社會趨勢變遷，南韓長久以來重男輕女的價值觀也漸漸改變。

研究學者訪問準父母較偏好兒子還是女兒。約有三成八的準媽媽表示想生女兒，想生兒子的有三成一，其餘的則表示生男生女一樣好。

在準爸爸方面，有三成七的人想生女兒，兩成九想生兒子，其餘的則沒有特別偏好。

研究學者於二〇〇八年四月至七月間，調查了兩千零七十八個準媽媽即將臨盆的家庭。

他們表示，這是南韓全國性調查中首次證實父母偏好女寶寶勝過男寶寶。過去韓國社會存在強烈的重男輕女觀念。

韓國育兒與教育研究所研究員李貞琳（音譯）對法新社表示：「養兒來延續家族血脈及撫養年邁父母的價值觀漸漸淡化。」

她說，老人不搬去和兒子同住，轉而依靠之前所沒有的社會福利制度的情況日益增加。

負責二〇〇八年這項研究的李研究員說：「許多父母都寧願生女兒不願生兒子，因為他們相信女兒比兒子更貼心，而且會讓家庭更有凝聚力。」

其他統計數據也顯示父母對生兒子的偏好逐漸減少。

一九九〇年出生的男女嬰比例達到一一六點五比一百的高峰，顯示有些父母墮掉女胎。

此後男女嬰的比例一路穩定降到二〇〇八年的一〇六點四比一百，落在一〇三到一〇七的國際平均值內。

(法新社/翻譯：袁星塵)

South Korean children smile with tumblers during a year-end campaign to raise funds for the poor in Seoul on Dec. 15, 2009. PHOTO: AFP

二〇〇九年十二月十五日，南韓首爾一場為窮苦人家募款的年終活動上，幼童被雜耍演員逗得呵呵笑。
照片：法新社

TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. long-standing /'lɒŋ'stændɪŋ/ adj.

長久以來的 (chang2 jiu2 yi3 lai2 de5)

例：Ernie is keen to end his long-standing dispute with his neighbors.
(厄尼渴望結束和鄰居間存在已久的爭執。)

2. nationwide /'neɪʃən,waɪd/ adj.

全國性的 (quan2 guo2 xing4 de5)

例：The union is planning a nationwide strike unless its demands are met.
(若要求不被採納，該工會將發起一場全國性罷工行動。)

3. unity /'juːnɪti/ n.

團結 (tuan2 jie2)

例：The players had a new sense of unity following the team meeting.
(那場球隊會議後，球員間有了一股新的凝聚力。)

LANGUAGE POINT 重要片語

sit on the fence
尚未下決定，仍在觀望

Somebody **sits on the fence** if they don't make a clear choice between two distinct options. In the article, a large number of parents-to-be **sat on the fence** when asked their preference for a baby boy or girl.

Example: "Stop **sitting on the fence** and tell us which candidate you'll vote for."

如果說某人「sit on the fence」，就表示他們還沒有在兩個選項間做出明確的決定。上文中提到，一大群準父母被問及偏好男寶寶還是女寶寶時，都表示男孩女孩一樣好。

例如：「別再觀望了，告訴我們你要投給哪個候選人吧。」