

How Do Taiwanese Parents Go About Giving Their Baby A Name?

台灣父母如何替他們的小孩取名字?

Under Western influence, many Taiwanese parents not only give their baby a Chinese name but also an English one. The English name is often chosen before the baby is born. On the contrary, Taiwanese parents spend a long time choosing their child's Chinese name, because it is believed that a person's Chinese name determines his/her future and destiny.

在西方文化的影響下，台灣父母現在除了中文名字外，也會給小孩取英文名字。大多數的英文名字，都會在小孩出生之前就選好。相反的，台灣父母會花相當長的時間來選擇小孩的中文名字，因為他們相信一個人的中文名字將會對他/她的未來及命運有決定性的影響。

A typical Chinese name has three words, the first character being the family name, and a given name with at most two syllables/ characters: one character indicates the personal name and the other shows the child's generation order within the family. Therefore, it is possible for the relatives to know the relationships between the families by just looking at their name.

典型的中文名大多有三個字，第一個字是家族姓氏，另外兩個字有其象徵的意義，其中一個字為個人特有的名字，另一個可能為家族族譜的排行。因此有可能光看名字就可以方便讓親戚了解她們彼此之前的輩分及關係。

When naming a child, parents have to take into consideration the newborn baby's Eight Characters (八字 Ba Zi), four pairs of numbers indicating the year, month, day and hour of birth, and also the basic Five Principal Elements (五行 Wu Xing): metal, wood, water, fire and earth.

當替小孩命名的時候，父母必須考慮到小孩的八字，包含小孩的生年、生月、生日及生辰四個構面，還要考慮基本的五行:金、木、水、火、土。

If a baby's Eight Characters show he/she lacks water, for example, then the name needs to contain a word like river, lake, tide, sea, stream, rain or any word associated with water. If he/ she lacks metal, then the name ought to include a word like gold, silver, iron or steel.

舉例來說:如果小孩的八字顯示缺水，那麼名字就必須選擇像是河、湖、潮汐、海、溪流、雨或是任何與水有關的字眼。如果他/她缺金，那麼名字就必須找含金、銀、鐵、鋼等金屬字。

Another factor to take into account is the total number of strokes of a name because it also has a lot to do with the baby's fate.

另外一個就是名字的總筆畫，因為據說筆畫也會影響寶寶的運勢。

Traditionally a nickname will be used until the family comes up with a formal Chinese name.

傳統上小名會用到正式中文名字出來為止。

It has to sound beautiful as well.

當然，名字也要唸起來好聽。

As you can see, it is quite a task to come up with two desirable characters for a baby's given name; matching the time the baby was born, the elements, the strokes, and the beautiful sound of the characters!

正如上述你所讀到的，替小孩取名事件不簡單的差事，要考慮生日時辰，天地間的五行元素，筆畫以及讀音是否好聽!