

Newborn in the home: fatigue and disorganization or pampered care?

Lu Feiran

For the birth of her second child, Shanghai resident Lisa Renstroem decided to hire a Chinese *yuesao* to shepherd her and her newborn through the first month. She reckons it was the best decision she's ever made.

The term *yuesao* (月嫂) refers to women who take care of mother and newborn during the traditional monthlong confinement period called *yuezi* (月子). The all-encompassing care they give is called *zuo yuezi* (坐月子), or literally "sitting the moon."

Renstroem, a US native married to a Swede, said she first heard about traditional Chinese confinement while living in Hong Kong.

"I heard from foreign friends who had hired confinement nannies when they delivered," she said. "I knew that they would come live with you and your family for at least one month, taking on responsibility for care of the newborn and new mom. It sounded amazing."

Renstroem hired a *yuesao* named Naya, originally from Anhui Province, who stayed with the family for 28 days at a cost of 17,000 yuan (US\$2,378).

Among the mollycoddling services, she made Renstroem various kinds of vegetable soup, which always included wolfberries because they are considered restorative in traditional Chinese medicine. While the concept of special care in the month following birth is relatively unknown



Noodle soup Naya made for Renstroem during her confinement contained chicken, green vegetables, fungi, carrots, wolfberries and spinach noodles. — Ti Gong

in the West, foreigners living in China are increasingly embracing its virtues.

Hong Kong resident Taylor Richard, a Canadian native living in Hong Kong, recently shared on YouTube her experience with a *yuesao* named Carol Chan.

The video, entitled "I Tried Chinese Confinement After Giving Birth," attracted more than 3.1 million viewers, and the comments section drew more than 6,500 mostly positive responses.

"Girl, if I had had this kind of phenomenal postpartum care, my experience would have been completely different," commented one foreign netizen. "America treats mothers like dirt. It made me cry watching this."

The video was so popular and Chan's reputation so manifest that Chan found a



— Hellorf