

Tampo (Oh, Lord! Not Again!!!)

March 2, 2010 By [JohnM](#)



I am on the receiving end of tampo today. It is not real pleasant around the Miele household this afternoon. For those who do not know what tampo is, when you marry a Filipina, you will quickly learn the meaning of this word, and it is best not to forget it, for your own sanity and domestic harmony. Tampo is, essentially, sulking or pouting, but with a unique Filipino twist: It starts suddenly and for often no apparent reason. For someone with two American ex-wives, I know the difference... There is no Western equivalent. Tampo time is usually silent. Things go very quiet all of a sudden. Brows scrunch up. Plates and other items start being set down noisily. Angry Filipina voices start being heard, outside doors in Tagalog, on cell phones in Ybanag, and so on. Female neighbors or the maid may raise an eyebrow when they see you. Hey! I'm just a stupid Kano here! My friend, your goose is now, officially, cooked. The thing about tampo is that it can often creep up on you and surprise you. "What did I do?" "How would I know that?" Well, my friend, whether you know what caused it or not, you had better figure out why, because until you do, and proper penance and contrition on YOUR part has been served, tampo will continue.

So, aside from the obvious crimes, like cheating or coming home drunk, tampo can be caused by a myriad of factors: tone of voice in an innocent conversation, losing face, or even if it is rainy outside and not sunny. My fellow expats, it is just something that you had better learn to deal with, because, eventually, no matter how lovey-dovey your relationship is, it WILL happen. So, how long does it last? Well, in my case, I'm a pretty good boy. I commit very few serious crimes. So, it usually lasts for a day or so, IF, and only IF, I can figure out what I did. Notice I said "I" did... getting defensive will never help and only serves to lengthen your time in tampo purgatory. So, since I normally am good, it can take a while for me to figure out what caused the tampo to occur in the first place. I've normally done nothing truly obvious, to me at least.

My longest tampo purgatory has been three days... Not a word spoken, English or Ybanag, from the other side. Please take heed, that tampo can last much longer for serious crimes... MUCH longer. So much for the "submissive Asian female" crap that you read about.

So, how do you deal with something like this? Well, I usually hide in my office for a while and either catch up on work or play video games for a while, all the time running down a mental list of things I MAY have done. Then, I try apologizing for things I've mentally selected that I may have done. It is always my fault, such is the nature of tampo: There simply is no defense and you just need to suck it up and be contrite. It is worth noting, however, that if I guess wrong and apologize for the wrong thing, tampo continues and is probably lengthened on account of being so stupid as to not KNOW what I did.

Since my articles appear several weeks after I write them, this tampo time has probably long ended before you read this. See, I already know what my crime was: Speaking disrespectfully last night. I'm already planning my penance. There was an electrical problem at the house, actually quite serious. The main electrical line from the neighbor's house was arcing into our dirty kitchen with a loud "BOOM" every 30 minutes or so. A big problem, and one which, admittedly, is scary... So, I said, "Our house or not, turn everything off and call an electrician." Well, soon, the neighbor women and all the surrounding house maids were in our driveway kibbutzing with Rebecca and speculating as to the cause:

"John, could the house catch fire?"

"I don't know, call an electrician."

"John, could the washing machine cause this?"

"I don't know, call an electrician."

"Could the outlet cause this?"

"I don't know, call an electrician."

"The sparks came from the cement."

"Impossible! Call an electrician."

The conversation then turned to our white lady or other spirit causing the problem.

"John, do you think the white lady is doing this?"

"Rebecca, for the eighth time, I don't know! Call an electrician!"

Usher in my time in tampo!

My stay in tampo purgatory should be short. It may take Bob's flower delivery service to make proper amends. (Which, by the way, is VERY reliable, and a great value for getting out of situations like this! Visit his online store! It has helped me out before, so I speak from personal experience.)

In any event, when this article publishes, and is read by my darling other half, I may spend another night in tampo purgatory... Not certain, but the likelihood is that this situation will occur.



Post Author: JohnM

John Miele is a Citizen of the World, having spent time in many locations around the globe. Currently, he finds himself in Manila, but travels throughout the Philippines. John joined the Live in the Philippines Web Magazine in mid-2008.

Ref.: <http://liveinthephilippines.com/content/tampo-oh-lord-not-again/>

Look more here: <https://aboutphilippines.ph/culture.html>