

# **Filipino Superstitions**

Compiled by Laura B. Corpuz  
[laurabc@bumail.bradley.edu](mailto:laurabc@bumail.bradley.edu)

The Filipino daily way of life is encompassed by countless sayings, proverbs, and beliefs. People tend to work around the superstitions even if they were told they may be committing a sin. Many Filipinos believe in superstitions to avoid any negative consequences. They may be true; they may be not. We hear them from our parents and grandparents, even without scientific findings or logical reasons. Most often they are coincidental and are usually referred to after the effect. Yet, superstitions are interesting components of the chemistry of Filipinos' day in and day out activities. These are carefully observed at holidays and special occasions. Notice the Filipinos residing in other countries carry on the superstitions. "Pamahiin lang iyan," and "Masyado kang mapamahiin" are sometimes heard from the Filipinos who want to deviate from superstitions. Undoubtedly, some of the superstitions are practiced by my friends, including me, to make an occasion a fun one. I don't see any problem with them; superstitions only tell us to be careful with whatever we want to do. I still believe in our Creator and like what Francisco Balagtas Baltazar said,

“Datapuwat sino ang tatarok kaya  
Sa mahal mong lihim, Diyos na Dakila  
Walang nangyayari sa balat ng lupa  
Na ‘di may kagalingang iyong ninanasa.”

Besides, God is all knowing.

## **New Year's Eve/Day**

- \* Fill up your canisters with rice, sugar, flour, salt, etc. on New Year's Eve. You'll live a plenty for the coming year.
- \* Don't eat chicken on New Year's Eve/Day. You'll live like chickens; if they don't scratch on the ground, they won't eat.
- \* Open your windows on New Year's Eve for prosperity during the entire year.
- \* Refrain from borrowing money on New Year's Day if you don't want to be indebted the entire year.
- \* Wear polka dotted clothes on New Year's Day. It's a sign of money.
- \* Businessmen think that good sale on New Year's Day brings luck for the whole year.

\* Toss some coins for the children for good luck.

\* Place coins on the window sill on New Year's Eve and Day for good luck.

\* Keep plenty of cash in your wallet or pockets to have plenty of money for the year.

\* Avoid pouting on New Year's Day so as not to pout all year round.

### **Homes/Structure**

\* Homeowner throws coins on housewarming day to bring luck.

\* Count the steps of the house; make sure it's not 13. This is "bilang Hudás" and it's bad luck.

\* Make sure the master bedroom is constructed so that it faces the east or has a window facing that direction.

\* Open the east window in the morning to let God's grace in.

\* Place some coins in the foundation of the cornerstone; or keep them below the master bedroom. However, don't put them by the doorstep or wealth will go away.

\* Avoid doors that look like thorough fares.

\* When moving into a new home, see to it that rice is brought in first.

\* Have your home blessed for safety and good fortune.

\* Enthroned a statue of Christ the King; Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Immaculate Heart of Mary or have the statue of the Infant Jesus in the house. Make sure they face the door to greet your guests.

\* Toss coins on house warming day for good luck.

\* Friends coming to a new home must enter through the front doors.

\* Don't buy a house that's directly at the T intersection, it's a bad omen signifying that you'll always be pushed.

\* If a shooting star is sighted, there might be a fire. It's good luck if you're able to say tomorrow's day name before the shooting star disappears and a chance to win the "huweteng" game.

\* Hang braided/strands of garlic to drive bad spirit away.

## **Party, Health, Food**

- \* Serve rice noodles on your birthday; it means long life.
- \* When a spoon falls down, it means a female guest is coming. If a fork falls down, it means a male guest is coming.
  - \* When cooking and the stove flame are dancing/singing; expect that guests are coming.
- \* When a cat rubs its face with its paws, look at the direction it's facing; that's where your guests are coming from.
  - \* Don't sing while cooking; you might marry an old man.
- \* Don't take the last piece of food on the platter; you might become an old maid or remain a bachelor.
- \* Don't clean up the dining table until everyone is finished eating. If the last one is still available, (unmarried) he/she may not get married anymore.
- \* Don't wash the food container your neighbor brought over; she may not bring you anymore food later.
- \* When eating is rushed, make sure that the plate used is turned around several times before leaving the dining table, so that the person won't get in an accident.
  - \* Don't eat the food you brought over to the neighbor, you might get skin disease.
  - \* Don't send food home because of spoilage but rather because you want to share.
- \* If you don't want the food on your plate, don't push your plate away. You may lose your food forever.
  - \* Don't eat too many peanuts or you'll grow pimples.
- \* When someone is hiccupping, it means that he/she had stolen some eggs from the neighbors hen nest.
  - \* Don't pick your pimples or they'll spread all over your face.
  - \* Don't peep at people while dressing up; you might get a sty.

- \* If carabao milk and fruits are parts of a meal; be sure that carabao milk is drank first, before eating sour food/fruits, so you won't have stomach ache.
- \* Don't eat sour fruits while menstruating, you'll have stomach cramps.
  - \* Do not drink coffee; it will retard your growth.
  - \* Do not eat "penoy;" you might end up in the "psychopathic."
- \* If a fish bone is stuck in your mouth, a breach born person has a healing power that removes it.
  - \* Don't sleep with your hair wet; it will affect your eye sight.
- \* Don't shower/bathe while menstruating; heat will go to your head, and your blood pressure will rise.
  - \* Don't shower/bathe after ironing a bunch of clothes; you'll get sick.
- \* Don't just lie down after running; the heat will go straight to your head and will affect your brain.
  - \* Rest your feet before taking a bath; your veins will shrink and you'll have rheumatism.
    - \* Eat cucumbers; they are good for your skin.
- \* Do not eat mangoes if you have skin rashes or chicken pox; this will worsen the itching of your skin.
- \* Do not cut your fingernails and toenails on Fridays; you could have bangnails.
- \* Never open your umbrella in the house; centipedes will fall off the ceiling.

### **Wedding/Marriage/Childbearing**

- \* Lovers must not give rosary or necklace to each other, if it breaks, the relationship might also get broken
  - \* The bride or groom whose candle lasts longer will have a longer life to live.
- \* Bride: When the priest gives the signal "stand up or kneel down", make sure, you make the first move. This is so the husband does not completely rule over you.
- \* Never try on your wedding gown; it's a sign that the wedding may be cancelled.

- \* The Bride and groom shouldn't be traveling to distant places before the wedding; they are accident prone at this time.
- \* "Sukob sa taon" (within same calendar year) marriages among brothers and sisters must be avoided. There will always be life competitions between the two couples.
  - \* If you were the oldest child, avoid marrying another oldest child. Both of you would tend to lead the other that could lead to problems in life. This is true to the youngest child marrying another youngest child. They'll both feel like wanted to be given attention.
  - \* If you were the youngest child, it's best to marry an oldest child. There will be better understanding between the two of you.
- \* It's not good to marry someone who has a mole on the face where tears normally flow.
- \* It's good luck if you marry someone who has a mole on the palms or just below the nostrils.
- \* Don't ever turn down any offer to sponsor a baptismal, confirmation or wedding. It's a blessing.
- \* Don't mend or hem clothes while they are on your body if you don't want to bear a child without an anus.
  - \* Eat makopa if you want your child to have rosy cheeks.
- \* Don't eat "duhat" (blackberry) while attempting to conceive or else your baby will have dark complexion.
  - \* Women with larger hips have an easier time having babies.
    - \* If a pregnant woman's stomach is rounded, she is likely to have a girl; if it's pointed, she's likely to have a boy.
- \* A pregnant woman will have a girl if when seated and tries to stand up, she starts walking with the right foot; if she uses the left foot, she'll have a boy.
  - \* Expectant mothers must not eat twin bananas to avoid having twin babies.
    - \* Apply lipstick on the baby's forehead so that the child won't be "usog."
- \* Do not construct a house if the mother is expecting or trying to get pregnant.

\* Do not eat ginger root when trying to conceive to avoid having a baby with extra finger or toe.

\* If a baby has large earlobes, it means that it will live longer life.

\* To stop the baby from bottle feeding or breast feeding; rub fish bile on the nipple.

\* When an infant or baby comes to your house for the first time give him/her a small bag of rice to take home so that the child won't go hungry.

\* When coming indoors after an afternoon's game/play with a child; mention or call the child's name before entering the house. It's believed that the child's spirit might be left outdoors and this would cause the child to have a sleepless night.

\* Wrap the newly born baby's umbilical cord, paper and pencil in a plastic bag; throw the bag in the river and watch what happens. If it goes far, it means that the child will go to distant places and if it's caught by twigs in the water the child may only stay in its hometown/country.

### **Intelligence/Education**

\* Don't sit on your books or you'll get dumb.

\* Carry books on your head; you'll get smart.

\* Use your book as a pillow; you'll get smart.

\* Press the book or notebook on your forehead; it helps you in memorizing its contents.

\* Wide forehead signifies intelligence.

\* If you want your child to be intelligent, have an intelligent person give your baby its first haircut; then keep some in a bible, dictionary or a book.

### **Dead, Death, and Dying**

\* When a dog is howling, making a spooky cry, it means that death is coming to someone.

- \* A beautiful flower or candle scent smelled in a home after a death of a beloved, means there's a spirit of the dead visiting who wants the relatives to know he/she's around. Pray for his/her soul.
- \* When someone is dying, say "JESUS" out loud so the dying person will hear it and repeat the word for his salvation.
- \* If a pregnant woman is a close relative of the dead, make sure that she leaves the house first before the body is taken to be buried. She might have a difficult time delivering the baby if she doesn't. (Many visitations are held in homes, and from there the dead are taken to the cemetery.)
- \* When sending a rosary with the corpse; cut it into pieces. This is believed to hinder anymore tragedy in the family.
- \* Take the shoes off the corpse; to lessen the spirit's weight in its journey to heaven.
- \* If the dead person is a mother/father to an infant or a little child, pick up the child and pass him or her over the coffin, so the spirit won't appear to the child.
- \* A succor asked of the dead is very powerful.
- \* Don't carry your hands on top of your head; one of your parents might die.
- \* When you are dreaming and a dead person asks you to come along with him/her, DON'T go.
- \* It's a bad omen if you dream of riding in a boat.
- \* If you dreamt of yourself dying; bite the trunk of the tree in your backyard so that bad omen would go to the tree instead of to you.
- \* If someone dreamt of loosing a tooth, it means that someone in the family might be dying.
- \* When the funeral procession is passing by your house, awaken the person sleeping; otherwise he/she may be the next one to die.
- \* If a butterfly comes fluttering around inside someone's house, it means that the spirit of a loved one that had passed away is visiting or reminding the family to pray for the dead; it may also be a reminder that a death anniversary is coming soon.
- \* Dress all infants in bright red when someone in the family dies so that the spirit of the dead does not appear to the child.

## **Money/Gift Giving/Receiving**

- \* When giving a purse/wallet as a gift, put some coins/notes in it.
- \* When transferring contents from an old purse/wallet to a new one, do not invert purse/wallet. It might run empty.
- \* Never leave a purse on the floor; always set it on something, or your budget might run low.
- \* It's good to be discrete about your finances but never say "I have no money," or else you might lose money and will really NOT have any money.
  - \* 99 centavos is not a peso. 99 cents is not a dollar.
- \* Don't accept footwear from a friend; he/she might be stepping on your toes later.
  - \* Don't accept knives as gift; offer a small amount of money.

## **Moles**

- \* A birth mark around the eye means you are appealing to guys.
  - \* A birth mark on the chest means you are a true lover.
- \* If someone has a mole on the sole of the foot, it means that person loves to walk all the time.
- \* If someone has a mole on his back, it means that the person wants to lie around and be plain lazy.
  - \* A mole on the eyebrows means good luck in business.
    - \* A mole on the palm means good luck.

## **Other Beliefs**

- \* Don't play with spiders; you'll have a difficult time in life
  - \* Never discard dirty, old clothes; wash them first.
- \* Don't sweep the ground at dusk; the Virgin Mary is taking a walk and might catch the dust in her eyes.

\*It's a bad luck to meet a black cat on a Friday morning.

\* Breaking a mirror or glass is a bad omen.

\* Having a disabled or handicapped child is your luck; caring for the child will give you more fortune.

\* When you bit your lip/tongue, it means you're the subject of a conversation.

\* When your nose itches, it means that someone is kissing your photo.

\* Pull an eyelash to cure a sty.

\* When thundering or lighting, recite this “Sancta Maria, Mater Christi, Sanctifica, Salve me.”

Ref.: <http://hagonoy-bahay-kubo.blogspot.com/2008/03/filipino-superstitions.html>

Copyright © 1990 All Rights Reserved