



10 Filipino Superstitious Beliefs during Wakes

To have lived in an archipelagic country who boasts not only distinct cultures but mind boggling mysteries has probably opened our minds to test some mere probabilities. And when it has been heard to be probable – we consider it, adopt it until it is being passed through from generations to generations. This is probably the case with Filipino superstitious beliefs – just because you’ve learned or in most cases have heard that something is prohibited somewhere for whatever reason, you’d apply it as well.

You can justify that during wakes. When someone visits and noticed that you did something which he/she may have heard to be improper – they’d tell you that and you’d just nod and say, “Really? But why?” and what’s worse is that the response you are likely to get is a brow-raising “Because that’s what they all say!?” But did you even bother to confirm to whether it is authentic or not? The answer is a big No! You are likely to fall on the booby-trap and just believe it for whatever reason. But really, why is that? It could be answered in psychology or perhaps by Filipino idiosyncrasy. But I believe, we most of the time just fall for it simply because that’s what they ALL say! (I hope you get what I meant) But in case you did not just read on.

We are deluded upon thinking that something is right or is probable because of the word “ALL”. Accept it or not but we Filipinos have this “Stick-where-most-people-are” mentality. Then the next time you’d encounter people doing what you did which is allegedly improper during some occasion you’d inform them as well. Just like rumours and hearsays, it is being passed, it goes in waves, travels from miles and miles and the result is viral.

We Filipinos have a lot of superstitious beliefs during some important events in our life. Most if not all of it has something to do with death, the dead and even sometimes with the living dead. These beliefs are mostly being noted during wakes. And with wakes lasting at most 9 days, there are so many things to watch about because it has been considered to be written under the “Don’ts” list from back then.

And since my “Tatay” (What I call my Grandpa) just passed away. And as of typing this I’m actually the only person with eyes wide open looking after the lies of my grandfather lying comfortably on the usual white with simple strokes of gold casket.

I have listed down 10 Filipino Superstitious Beliefs during Wakes. (Read on Below!)

1. **Bawal Maligo (Taking a Bath is Prohibited)** – this is actually the most common to all. I would assume that every Filipino knows this one and that’s precisely why it’s first on my list. The reason behind this, according to my Mom is “I don’t know”.LOL. But if I’ve guess it right – it’s because most of people who are present during wakes does not get any decent sleep at all. And

when you don't get enough sleep – you won't be allowed to take a bath because it will cause eye damage or any other health concerns. This belief usually takes place in a traditional setting of a Filipino wake – when it's held just inside the house. Today, the modernized version of wakes is usually held in a funeral house or chapel. And every family member will have the chance to skip the superstition. Therefore they will have the chance to get a bath because the lies of their loved one are not inside their house. This may depend also if they will take turns, sleep before taking a bath and all.

2. **Bawal Ang Nakapula (Wearing Red is prohibited)** – we Filipinos believes that every colour has its own meaning. During wakes or burials we usually flaunt our grievance by wearing black and acceptance for white. And wearing brightly-colored clothing during wakes is considered to be flaunting the otherwise. When I asked my Grandma about this she didn't actually knew it. She said its okay people can't do anything with what color of shirt you're wearing. *We live in a democratic country anyway* Well I was told by someone from way back high school not to wear RED because it's a sign of happiness. I was already at the wake when they told me about it and so I immediately went back home and changed. (See? I was right we easily fall into these stuffs).Haha! But I further seek for answers and I asked my Auntie about it and she said my initial assumptions were right wearing brightly colored shirts might say you're actually happy than sad.
3. **Bawal Magpasalamat (Saying thank you is prohibited)** – this is the most puzzling one. Well I respond "thanks" to everyone who says their condolences for our family. But I didn't know that it's somewhat not right to say thank you in response. Well in a way, for some reasons, I've had doubts upon saying thanks or even liking every comment on facebook extending their sincerest condolence for me and my family. It could have been caused by having heard this one before. Now I'm baffled. When you say Thank You to someone who says their sincerest condolence to you – is it like saying you're sort of happy? And if you don't say Thank You wouldn't it be so rude of you? Looking back, the "Thank You" I said to everyone has now sounded as if I owe them something or just like the ordinary thanks which is the result of happiness. But if you are to say Thank You for Coming or Thank You for the Support –then I don't see anything wrong with that. So to all that I've just responded with a simple yet thought-provoking phrase "Thank you", allow me to continue "Thank you for the care and support".
4. **Bawal kumain ng Gulay(No to Vegies)** – I'm not sure how this thing applies with vegetarians but since most Filipinos are not of that type, then this applies to most. It's actually the 2nd day of my Grandpa's wake today and since the other night, all we kept eating was meat either souped or fried for the main and side dishes. When I ask my Mom about it she said that it's because if you cook veggies especially leafy and vine-y vegetables, you would have to tear them out of their stems and all that. And the same thing would reflect on your family, if you do so – your family will also be torn apart, each family member will die one by one.
5. **Bawal Magwalis (Sweeping the Floor is Prohibited)** – There's nothing wrong with weeping. But there's definitely something wrong with sweeping. The reason behind this is just the same as #4; if you try to sweep according to the elders, your family will get swept also. In other words, all of you will die at the same time if you insist.

6. **Bawal ang Chicken! (No Chicken Meal)** – If you thought what I meant about chicken is that nobody's allowed to chicken out when you see ghosts, then you're right. But that doesn't have anything to do in this pinoy superstition I'm going to talk about here at #6. Or maybe perhaps just a little bit. From the subtitle itself, it's pretty obvious that this is one of the prohibited foods to eat during wakes. Aside from veggies, you're also not allowed to eat chicken. I asked, again, my Grandma about it and had an "I don't know" response in return. Nobody in the family even knows why? But they are moved to have believed in it – and that there's nothing wrong with following what was told by our ancestors than regret in the end. After a few queries and analysis, it is believed that if you eat chicken you'd be able to see ghosts. Why? because chicken's are the only edible animals who could allegedly see ghosts.
7. **Hindi Pwedeng Walang Hindi Gising (There should always be someone AWAKE in the family!)** – Sabi nga ni Kuya Germs, "Walang Tulugan". Lintik na! There should always be someone who looks after the lies of the deceased. They believe that when nobody looks after it, the dead will rise up and will get eaten by a zombie-like monster, and will be replaced by a banana trunk inside the coffin!! I think they call it bal-bal or something.
8. **Dapat Hawakan ang Kabaong (You should have touched the coffin before you leave the wake)** – This mostly apply to the visitors (or echoseros – mga taong nakikikape at biskwit lang). Sorry I don't have an English translation for the tagalong slang "echosero" but they come in different meanings anyway. And if you happen to visit the wake, you should have been able to touch the coffin or otherwise the soul will follow you. This actually has another requirement. If you leave and the soul is following you because you did not touch the coffin – you have to go to some other place than going directly at home. That way you can lose the souls track on you and you will be able to prevent him/her from getting the soul of one of your love ones
9. **Pag may bumahing kurutin agad** – My cousin has only told me of this. Thanks, Darling! She said that during the wake of her cousin (mother's side) when she sneezed in front of the coffin she got pinched by her Aunt. Because it is believed that when someone sneezes you should pinch them or else they will be the next one to die.
10. **Ang kaluluwa raw ng isang tao ay bumabalik sa ikatlong araw matapos siyang mamatay.** (The soul of the deceased returns on the third day after death.) – Today is actually the third day after my Tatay's death. I'm actually looking forward to feel his ghostly presence today. So as I could promise him that, I will take good care of grandma now that she's alone. I'm not really scared of ghost, at least not yet. But to see or for the very least just to feel my grandpa's presence is somewhat rewarding already and a remarkable experience.

This is not the first time that I have learned about these stuffs. And I assume, the one who's reading this knows quite some few of them too. This list is open for any additional Pinoy superstition you knew and might just want to share – so just jump over the comments section below because I'd like to hear what you have to say!

Ref.: <http://www.markable.me/2010/11/10-filipino-superstitious-beliefs.html>