

Filipino Superstitions

Early immigrant Filipinos were known to be very superstitious. Dreams have meanings. Certain things that you do at a certain time have meaning. For example, to whistle at night could cause the wind to become stronger. To play with your food could cause you to have a stomach-ache. To have a black-and-blue mark on any part of the body without knowing how it was caused means that a spirit has touched you. To find a moth in your house means that a spirit is present. To keep spirits away from your home, one could have a piece of garlic and salt on the window sill. Filipinos believe that spirits called aswangs can possess a person and cause illness. Many Filipinos blame spirits for making people sick and they sometimes depend on faith healers to cure the person, rather than calling a medical doctor. One method of curing aches and pains is called hilot, which is a way of massaging certain parts of the body to take away the pain.

It is said that if a person dies, all of the house windows should be opened because the open windows would allow the deceased to depart. The Filipinos will make a fire until the deceased body is returned to the family from wherever he may be for instance from the hospital. When the family has the body, the body is positioned in a way that is facing the door. The feet is faced toward the door so it will allow the spirit to depart easily. The Filipinos say don't go to bed with your feet facing to the door because it is like you are asking to die.

There are old time funeral directors that have said that when the casket leaves the house, a person of the family would cut off a chicken's head and throw it at the feet of the deceased person. It is said that if you slaughter an animal, it will help the person go to heaven. One director remembers how families have thrown dishes at his feet. Maybe it meant that the evil spirits are scared of the sound.

After a funeral, the Catholic Filipinos have a novena. Novena is nine nights of prayer for the deceased. On the fourth or ninth night the spirit returns. Food is left on the steps of the house for the spirit to return. It is said that if the people make a joyful atmosphere it will make the deceased go on to its journey to the new world. Filipinos bury their deceased in mahogany coffins. They pack clothes, their favorite hat, wallet, eyeglasses, dentures, and family pictures.

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