

# The Philippines - Superstitions and Beliefs



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## **SUPERSTITIONS AND BELIEFS OF THE PHILIPPINES**

As I read the early tabloid this morning, the front page read, *“This is the punishment of God to us.”* According to a survey, many believe that disasters are the wrath of God and a form of punishment to man.

Many Filipinos believed about the wrath of God as punishment for the sins of man in the form of natural disasters (typhoons, floods, landslides, earthquakes, or volcanic eruptions).

According to the survey of Pulse Asia;

- 21% of people at the right age believed about natural disasters are ways of God's punishment
- 14% states that these are part of a natural process while,
- 2% do not know the reasons of these calamities

But a decreased of 23% of people are blaming God on these *mayhems* during the past two years.

One *“sizeable majority”* (63% as of last month, increased from 54% of July, 2008) who believed that the reasons of these disasters are due to man's abuse and exploitative attitudes towards nature. A result from July 1 to July 11 interviews of 1,200 people showed an increase on numbers who are concerned and troubled by climate change. 66% agreed of climate change in their place for the past three years. In the survey last year, only 11% tells that there was minimum change on the climate, 23% has no answer and 58% recounted that there was a great change in the climate.



Philippine beliefs and superstition have grown in number throughout the various regions and provinces in the country. These beliefs have come from the different saying and superstitions of our ancestors that aim to prevent danger from happening or to make a person refrain from doing something in particular. These beliefs are part of our culture, for one derives their beliefs from the influences of what their customs, traditions and culture have dictated to explain certain phenomena or to put a scare in people. Some are practiced primarily because Filipinos believe that there is nothing to lose if they will comply with these beliefs.

### **Superstitions on Health**

- Sleeping after taking a bath during daytime or at night will result in blindness.
- A menstruating woman should not eat sweets lest blood flow stop and cause illness or death.
- Let a dog lick your wounds, and the wounds will be healed.



- Sleeping with wet hair makes one crazy or blind.
- When one is wounded during high tide, much blood will ooze out.
- After circumcision, a boy should not step on a mortar or pestle; otherwise, his organ will grow as big as these.
- When one is sick with smallpox, he must be given all the things he wishes; otherwise he will die.
- The successive birth of four children of the same sex is believed to endanger the life of the parent of the same sex.
- Children are advised not to bite banana leaves, as this is believed to cause tooth decay.
- One should not eat mollusks when he has wounds, otherwise, his wounds will grow big.
- A sick person is always believed to grow worse when the moon is full. If the patient does not recover before one lunar month has elapsed and the moon once more assumes this phase, the case is considered hopeless.

- Taking a bath at night will cause anemia or low blood pressure.
- Taking a bath on New Year's Day and/or Good Friday will cause one to get sick.
- If the family is eating and a member arrives, he is not permitted to join the others in the meal, for if this rule is violated and a member of the household becomes ill, the others may become ill too.
- Menstruating girls should not eat papaya to avoid whitish blood, nor liver or blood, as they will cause a strong flow.
- Asthma can be cured by putting a cat near the throat and the chest and at the same time reciting a prayer.
- Sore eyes can be cured by washing the eyes with the first urine early in the morning.
- A child who plays with fallen unripe coconuts will suffer body swelling.
- Parents who despise ugly children will bear an ugly child.
- Parents who despise or laugh at twins will have twins.

### **Superstitions on Body Marks and Shape**

- A person with a mole on his foot is a born adventurer.
- A person with a mole on his face will be successful in business.
- A person with a mole on the center of her nose will be rich but unhappy.
- A person with a mole close to his eye is attractive to the opposite sex.
- A mole on the hand signifies wealth or thievery.
- A mole on one's back is a sign of laziness.
- A person with big ears will have a long life.
- Women with wide hips will bear many children.
- People with naturally curly hair are moody or ill-tempered.
- People with eyebrows that almost meet easily get jealous.
- Men with hairy chests are playboys.
- A person with lines running from the palm of his hand to his fingers is successful in business.
- People whose teeth are spaced far apart are liars.

## Superstitions on Wedding

- Brides shouldn't try on their wedding dress before the wedding day or the wedding will not push through.



- Knives and other sharp and pointed objects are said to be a bad choice for wedding gifts for this will lead to a broken marriage.
- Giving an *arinola* (chamber pot) as wedding gift is believed to bring good luck to newlyweds.



- Altar-bound couples are accident-prone and therefore must avoid long drives or traveling before their wedding day for safety.
- The groom who sits ahead of his bride during the wedding ceremony will be a hen-pecked husband.
- Rains during the wedding means prosperity and happiness for the newlyweds.
- A flame extinguished on one of the wedding candles means the one whose candle was extinguished will die ahead of the other.



- Throwing rice confetti at the newlyweds will bring them prosperity all their life.
- The groom must arrive before the bride at the church to avoid bad luck.
- Breaking something during the reception brings good luck to the newlyweds.
- The bride should step on the groom's foot while walking towards the altar if she wants him to agree to her every whim.
- A bride who wears pearls on her wedding will be an unhappy wife experiencing many heartaches and tears.



- Dropping the wedding ring or the veil during the ceremony spells unhappiness for the couple.
- The member of the couple stands first after the ceremony will die ahead of the other.
- A bride who cries during the wedding will bring bad luck to the marriage.
- It is bad omen for the newlywed couple if their parents cry during the wedding.
- Upon entering their new home, the couple should go up the stairs alongside each other so that neither one will dominate the other.
- An unwed girl who follows the footprints of a newlywed couple will marry soon.

- If a woman is widowed during the new moon, she will marry again.
- A person who habitually sits at the head of the table during meals will never marry.

### **Superstitions on Pregnancy**

- All windows and doors should be wide open for the laboring mother's easy delivery.
- Pregnant women should avoid witnessing an eclipse, so that when born their babies would not have the habit of winking the eyes abnormally.
- An expectant mother should not act as sponsor in a baptismal ceremony to avoid difficulty in delivering her baby or to avoid the death of the fetus or of the newly baptized child.
- Sitting on the threshold of the house by a pregnant woman will result in a difficult delivery.
- Taking pictures of a pregnant woman will cause an abortion or a difficult delivery.



- An expectant mother should have her house neither constructed nor remodeled to avoid difficulty in delivering her baby.
- Do not partake of the food being eaten by an expecting mother. If you do, you will either become sleepy or will feel drowsy or sick.
- The new mother should avoid itchy or scratchy foods like *gabi*, and round fruits or root crops such as citrus, *ube*, *tugui*, and coconut for three weeks so her inner organs can return to normal.
- Do not leave the ladle on top or inside of the rice kettle, but set it aside until more rice is needed. This is done so that childbirth will not be difficult.
- A visitor must not sit or stand on the ladder or at the door, but come inside so that delivery will not be hard.
- The mother should not eat shellfish. These are slippery and if they are taken from the brook, the baby may be expelled from the womb.

- An expectant mother should not eat fish from pointed shells lest the baby have too much mucus or drool too much.
- A pregnant woman is not allowed to cut her hair; she will give birth to a bald baby.
- Pregnant women should not cry because they will suffer a difficult birth, and the baby will become sensitive and a crybaby.
- Miscarriages only occur during the odd-numbered months of pregnancy.
- Taking a bath before delivery will hasten the birth of the baby, as well as of the placenta.
- An expectant mother should not participate in funeral activities. Doing so would endanger the mother and the baby during delivery. If a pregnant woman wears clothes which were hung overnight, the fetus will be affected.
- It is believed that when denied the food a pregnant mother likes, her child will salivate profusely and will be prone to vomiting.
- A pregnant woman should eat all the food on her plate, so that when she delivers, everything will come out, leaving her womb clean.
- A comb is submerged in coconut milk with sugar to make the mother's breast full of milk.



### **Superstitions on Death**

- A lingering black butterfly is a sign that one of your relatives just died.
- A falling spider that lands on you is an omen that someone close to you will die.
- Do not form groups of three or thirteen, or one of you will die.



- If a person dream of having his teeth pulled out, this mean that family member will die.
- Sometimes the soul temporarily leaves the body while in a deep sleep. Rousing a person at this time might kill him.
- When a tree that was planted upon the birth of a child dies, the child will also die.
- It is said that the soul of the deceased returns on the third, the fifth, and the seventh days after death.
- A coffin should be built to fit the corpse; otherwise, a family member of the deceased will soon die.
- Tears must not fall on the dead or on the coffin; this will make the dead person's journey to the next world a difficult one.



- If someone sneezes at a wake, pinch him lest he join the dead.
- During a wake, never see your visitors off at the door of the chapel or funeral parlor.
- A widow who caresses her dead husband's face will surely remarry.
- Do not sweep the house until after the burial.
- Always carry the coffin out of the house, church or funeral parlor head first. This prevents the soul of the dead from coming back.

- During the funeral march, a man whose wife is pregnant should not carry the casket. Before going home, he should light up a cigarette from a fire at the cemetery gate in order to shake off the spirits of the dead.
- Digging a hole larger than the coffin will cause an immediate relative to join the deceased in the grave.
- After the coffin has been lowered to the grave, all family members should take a handful of soil, spit on it and throw it in the grave. Doing so will not only bury any evil left behind by the deceased, but also lessen the burden of grief on the family as well.
- After the funeral service, do not go home directly so that the spirit of the dead person will not follow you to your house.
- Never let a child step over an open grave lest the spirit of the dead visit that child.



- Give away your black dresses after one year of mourning to prevent another death in the family.

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