



Superstition and its history

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As the year 2012 comes to an end, people tend to remember several superstitious beliefs. Superstitious beliefs are deeply rooted in our society. Superstition is mainly based on the concept of cause and effect. It states that certain forces can cause things to happen. ...The forces that people often link to events are omens, astrology, witchcraft, and luck. According to superstitious people, such forces are not controlled by natural elements and they can literally change human existence.

Various superstitious beliefs can be linked back from thousands of years. During the 18th century, philosophers based their religion according to superstitious miracles and revelations which are based on the occult. Because of such beliefs, the 18th century has been considered as the Age of Enlightenment. Some of the beliefs in the Christian and Catholic doctrine are also based on superstitious beliefs. Most people used superstitious beliefs and practices in order to create their religion. One of which is the Voodoo belief.

Superstitious beliefs become apparent during the 15th century. The word came from the Latin *superstitio*, which means to stand over or upon. The true Latin meaning of the word is unclear and several types of possibilities have been made. The Greek and the Roman legions firmly believed in the supernatural. They modeled their religion according to deities, gods, and superstitious events. Before making decisions, their leaders will first look for signs and omens from oracles and then they will base their conclusions according to the signs. They tend to follow the prophecies and the signs since not following such omens can actually lead to destruction, defeat, and death.

The superstitions of people can also be seen in Japan and in other countries. In China, they tend to follow everything according to the concept of the Feng Shui, a belief which is based on the natural power of the yin and the yang. Architecture, agriculture, medicine, and religious affairs were all based on Feng Shui. In Japan, luck and prosperity can also be achieved through appeasing various deities and following certain customs. Through shrines and religious seals, they believe that spiritual beings are appeased and that such metaphysical beings can grant people with various blessings.

Nowadays, people incorporate superstitious beliefs to luck, prophecy, and spiritualism. Some individuals believe that luck and calamities can be controlled through adhering through some ritualistic beliefs. For instance, some believe that throwing a grain of salt at one's back can actually be good luck while seeing a black cat can be considered as bad luck. In some countries, people believe that breaking a glass can be 7 years bad luck while in others such things can actually lead to a better life.

Questions:

- 1) What are some superstitious beliefs that you know?
- 2) Do you believe in superstition?
- 3) What is Feng Shui?
- 4) What is the Latin word for superstition?
- 5) Do you believe in luck? Why?