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## Superstition, the Root of Fear and Tool of Crime

I GUESS I AM NOT the only one who has queried superstitions inherited from parents, superstitions that have been handed down from generation to generation.

I wonder how many young people have felt frustrated when their parents insisted in choosing the “lucky” date for their children’s marriages and all the rigmarole (i.e. list of troublesome activities) they must carry out to ensure a successful marriage – which may in fact not be successful. Of course, if the young couple themselves believe in those superstitions, that is their own choice.

A young lady I know was angry when her mother arranged a marriage for her with a man she had never met. Her mother slapped her when she tried to avoid all the traditional customs before and after the marriage, but eventually she complied, because she loved her mother. Fortunately, in this case, the bride found her husband very kind and she eventually fell in love with him. Nevertheless, she still rebels against the superstitious customs of her home village. Some marriages based on superstition are not so fortunate, and remain loveless, meaningless, or they may result in divorce.

People who travel abroad or emigrate are more likely to

reject their old superstitions when they realize that superstitions on what is “good luck” or “bad luck” vary from country to country. How can anyone know which of the varying superstitions are right? My own belief is that none are right.

Worst of all, superstition is often used by criminals to cheat others. How many elderly people in Hong Kong have been cheated of their life’s savings by crooks who play upon the superstitious fears of others? Can you remember how several women were persuaded by a robber to withdraw their savings from the bank, wrap them up in parcels, and place them in a heap on the floor of a house? The crook gave them each a drink, and told them to lie down on the floor and close their eyes, promising that he would perform some magic that would solve all their family problems. He had laced a killer drug into the drinks and the women all died. The crook of course picked up the parcels of money and disappeared.

Were the women foolish? Yes, of course. But fear is the root of superstition. Fear influences some people to listen to foolish or even evil advice. Isn’t it better for all of us to face reality and break the chains of superstition, so that we feel free, self-confident, and not always worried about “luck”?