

MOVING VIOLATIONS

by Jondie Laico

Most people know of the following: Don't walk under a ladder. Don't step on cracks in the street. If you drop a fork while eating, you will have a male visitor; if a spoon, a female visitor. Turn your plate when somebody is leaving the house. Eat noodles on your birthday for longer life, but you mustn't cut them, etc., etc. We all have our own superstitions, traditions, or beliefs, whatever you want to call them. We just moved to a new house and many people we knew "helpfully" contributed a lot of them. And I'm not just talking about *feng shui*. Luckily I was spared meeting a feng shui "expert", even though many people fancy themselves as such. A lot of the following traditions are known to most of you but I'm sure that there are still some that aren't. Firstly, I was fortunate enough that the lot we were going to build the house on faced east, toward the rising sun. Of course it wasn't by accident. It was planned that way many years ago when it was bought. And of course, it is not directly at the end of a street. (I wonder how cul-de-sacs are classified). We wanted to build the house as soon as possible last year but our architect stressed that we could only start construction before November, as that is already the end of the year. Preferably it should be at the start of a year. The point became moot when City Hall red tape intervened and our building permits took months to be approved, well beyond December. Construction also had to start after the new moon but before the full moon. Well, at least the first shovelful of dirt was moved on time. Each of the posts that make up the foundation of our house has a coin, a religious medallion, "Agnus Dei", and *kinason* (a shell with seven holes, although only three are really required) at the base. We dropped these in as the concrete was poured. As construction went on, I thought that we had heard of the last of these traditions and so far we had complied with every one. However, as the time to move in drew near many, many more "suggestions" were offered, some of them given almost as rules. Let me enumerate them first and tell you how we did after.

1. It is preferred that you move before 4 or 6 AM (sunrise), but definitely before 12 PM. This has to be between the new moon and full moon.
2. When first entering the house, all the doors must be entered by members of the household simultaneously.
3. There is a specific sequence for bringing goods into the house: the rice must come first followed by the oil, then the salt and the other condiments. The containers for these must be full to the brim.
4. The refrigerator and the cupboards must be fully stocked.

5. You cannot receive visitors for at least three days.
6. You cannot go to the store for three days.
7. On the day we moved, somebody told us to kill and eat a white chicken (cooked, of course).

Here's how it actually went:

1. The new moon was on October 28, the full moon on November 14. We moved November 1 (a work holiday). The moving van came to get our stuff at 10:30 AM. Luckily it still made it to the new house by 11:50 AM. We just squeaked by, there. I guess there is a silver lining to not having any furniture.
2. We have four entrances to the house but only the front door was accessible and I entered the house alone, hours before the moving van came. I think we failed that one.
3. The rice, oil, salt and other condiments were all together in one bag when they were brought in. I didn't see it, but I'd like to think the bag was turned in such a way that the rice came in first. And the containers were full. So let's just say we got that one right. I brought in toilet paper the day before we moved in. Some people can live without rice, but not toilet paper.
4. Our kitchen wasn't finished, so there were no cupboards yet and no functioning refrigerator. We were able to turn on the fridge later in the day and put in a tray of cannelloni someone had given us. We failed this one, too.
5. We almost got a visit from Mayleen's aunt and uncle but they refused to get out of their vehicle because "You're not supposed to have visitors". But Mayleen's parents came and looked around the house. They reasoned that since they helped us build the house they're not really visitors. Aunt and uncle say "Nice try, but no cigar." They count. So I guess we failed another one.
6. How can you stock up on food when you don't have cupboards? We went to the store every day. We failed a fourth one.
7. I like to eat chicken just as much as the next guy but I'm not in the habit of doing live sacrifices. So we failed one more. Actually, I was willing to try, but as most of you know, the native "Texas" is not white. Furthermore, there were no cockfights that day. So, we did think about it but like the others, there were forces beyond our control.

Two out of seven. We started out great but sputtered in the end. Luckily, I don't believe in these superstitions. Nevertheless, it's better to play safe. Don't tempt fate. For those of you planning to move soon, I offer these "helpful tips" for a more favorable fortune. Let me know how well you do.

