



Forum: Gossip ĭ¼ê-è•Šĭ¼‰

Topic: Ghost month

Subject: Re: Ghost month

Posted by: EastCoast

Posted on: 2006/7/6 23:00:05

Booooooooo, I did not remember what ghost month was so I had to look it up. ha ha.... this is from Lonely Planet

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Ghost Month, Taiwan

Western societies have always had a prickly relationship with ghosts and revenants; give your average Judeo-Christian a whiff of paranormal ectoplasm and they'll be off banishing, busting, exorcising and channelling.

It's as if the presence of a not-quite-dead soul brings out the worst in an orderly Calvinistic heart. The reason for this is that, for a start, it makes a mockery of that neat life-is-life-and-death-is-death thing; and for another it gives rise to soppy tear-jerkers starring Demi Moore and Patrick Swayze.

Eastern religions are a little more sanguine and pragmatic about the whole deal (and, on the whole, also don't make films with either Demi Moore or Patrick Swayze). Rather than banishing the spirits they try to appease them by inviting them temporarily into the world of the living. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Taiwan during Ghost Month. On the first day of the seventh lunar month, 'Open Day' in hell is held, the gates to the underworld are opened and the spirits are allowed to cross over into the living world.

Not only do the Taiwanese accept these hauntings with admirable equanimity, they actually give their ethereal guests the full VIP 5-star treatment. At the Chung Yuan Festival (about halfway through the month), huge banquet tables are set out in temple courtyards and mountains of fish, vegetables, meat and other delicacies are offered as sacrifice; hanging lanterns are erected to guide the ghosts to the table; non-stop operas entertain during dinner and fake money is burnt so that guests have a bit of pocket-money to spend when they return to hell.

This hospitality is not entirely altruistic - it's insurance against paranormal acts of retribution. Other do's and don'ts to be observed during ghost month include the following: weddings, special plans, business deals and outings should be put on hold till the end of the month; no whistling, whistling is not a good idea, whistling will lead the ghost straight to your home; talking ill of the dead (even if it's true) will just bring tears and heartache; special care should be taken when walking along riverbanks where a water ghost can easily steal a living spirit; and adding to the numbers by burying the dead is, unfortunately, not a good idea. On the 30th day of the month, the gates of hell are closed again and the ghosts return to the other side