The Ghost Festival

In the Chinese culture, the Ghost Festival is every July of the lunisolar calendar. During this month, my family worships our ancestors by offering vegetarian meals. Then, we burn incense and joss paper, which are a paper form of goods like clothing, gold, houses, and people. On the 14th, ghosts and spirits of all kinds come out from the lower realm. My mother and grandmother are the most superstitious about it. When I was younger, they often told us not to go out late, don’t speak to strangers, and stay away from areas where people are doing rituals.

There are two types of spirits--the good one and the bad one. The good ones are the deceased ancestors that do no harm to the living. Family and relatives for good luck often worship these ancestors. On the other hand, the bad spirits are the ones who never reincarnated and are looking for a living body to possess. That way, they can complete an unfinished task or take revenge on something from their last life. These spirits are invisible in the daytime but visible at night. Thus, if you go out late at night, you might encounter a harmful spirit that wants to possess you. It might even take the form of an attractive man or woman to seduce the opposite sex and possess the person.

Although I’ve never encountered a ghost or spirit, I do believe in ghosts. They say that if you don’t believe in ghosts, you will encounter them. Even many Chinese horror films put an emphasis on that belief.

—Mandy Mei