

Diplomacy & International Relations Department Hosts “Global Ghost Festival” Exhibition Exploring Cross-Cultural Views of the Supernatural

Campus focus

Every year on October 31st, Halloween brings both children and adults into the streets dressed as ghosts, monsters, and a wide range of characters to enjoy the festive atmosphere. Yet beyond the fun of “becoming ghosts,” how much do we truly understand about the cultural meanings behind them? The Department of Diplomacy and International Relations held an exhibition titled “International Ghost Festivals” from November 12 to 14 at the Black Swan Exhibition Hall, as part of the course “Festival Culture: Respect and Inclusion.” Planned collaboratively by students, the exhibition explores the symbolic role of “ghosts” from a cross-cultural perspective, highlighting the positive values these figures represent in different societies. The goal is to foster cultural exchanges, respect, and inclusiveness.

The exhibition showcases ghost stories from 12 countries: Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, India, Guatemala, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Each display not only presents the appearance and cultural origins of its featured supernatural beings, but also explains how these entities reflect social ethics, notions of justice, and respect for the vulnerable. All descriptions are provided in Chinese, English, and the respective local language, demonstrating Tamkang students’ global awareness and cultural sensitivity.

Global Politics and Economics senior Chiao-Ying Yu, who was responsible for the South Korea section, shared that her team selected the gumiho (nine-tailed fox) as their theme. Unlike ghosts typically associated with fear, the gumiho embodies mystery and allure. To enhance visitor engagement, the team created a DIY area with origami supplies, inviting participants to fold their own fox, symbolizing the diverse interpretations

of “ghosts” across cultures.

Course instructor, Associate Professor Mateus Lee from the Department of Diplomacy and International Relations, expressed that he hopes the exhibition will inspire visitors to understand the cultural meanings of ghosts, appreciate the diversity of beliefs and folk traditions worldwide, and further embrace cultural differences in pursuit of shared human values and a peaceful society.





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