

In every corner of Bangkok, spirits need a home and maybe a strawberry Fanta

In every crowded corner of Bangkok, whether by a tin-roofed *shack*, a glass-plated *skyscraper* or a marble-pillared government hall, there are said to be spirits who need *placating*.

shack 棚屋

skyscraper 摩天大楼

placate 抚慰; 怀柔

placatory 抚慰的; 怀柔的

The spirits also require spirit houses, which look like dollhouses mounted on *pedestals*. These range from a few pieces of plywood hammered together to create a miniature *bungalow* to *gilded* structures with *ornate spires* that cost tens of thousands of dollars.

pedestal 基座

bungalow 小屋; 平房

gilded 镀金的; 富有的

ornate 华丽的; 装饰的

spire 尖顶; 尖塔

Myanmar 缅甸

Spirit houses are common throughout Thailand, *Myanmar* and Cambodia, although the architecture differs by country. While not everyone believes, the practice is widely respected, and the houses are an ordinary and integrated part of Bangkok's cityscape, like church spires in an American town.

In their houses, many spirit *figurines* come with entourages of servants, dancers and bestiary. There are the elephants and tigers that are native to Thailand, but also zebras. No one seems to know for certain why zebras, although some theorize it has to do with the safety associated with zebra-striped pedestrian crossings.

figurine 雕像

sustenance 支持; 生计

All these spirits expect *sustenance*, like a bunch of bananas, a cooling coconut or a *mound* of *sticky rice*. The offerings are usually placed at the front of the spirit houses in the morning by homeowners or building staff members, along with *incense* and garlands of marigolds and jasmine.

mound 堆; 高地

sticky rice 糯米

incense 香; 奉承

garland 花环

jasmine 茉莉

Kuman Thong, a young boy with a topknot and pantaloons, is one of the more popular spirits. Like many spirits, Kuman Thong favors certain brands, and he is especially fond of strawberry Fanta, according to Nongrak, a self-employed spirit communicator.

"Red is a nicer color than the brown of Pepsi, " she said.