



teries, historical sites, school grounds, empty plots of land, public parks and jungles. I won't reveal the specific names but in Kedah, these places are located in Sungai Petani, Gurun, Singkir and Bukit Lata Hijau, Baling, to name a few. I go to these places based on intuition," he says.

His research method is simple — using basic equipment such as an audio recorder, a digital camera and a video recorder that has infra-red mode. The first thing he does when he reaches a place is to stand quietly in one spot for about 10 to 15 minutes to feel the emotion of the place.

"Ghost appearances refer to the best way for the ghost to communicate with the living. An established communication does not necessarily mean sightings with the naked eye, but rather that a contact has been established between the two parties. Ghostly voices are considered a form of communication too.

"If there are spirits there, they would usually want to communicate with me. The language they use depends on what language they spoke when they were alive. I can feel their emotions, like if they are happy or sad.

"Once I've sensed them, I would introduce myself and tell them the purpose of my visit. It is very much like entering someone's home. It is polite to tell them what you have brought and what it does so as not to anger them. Show kindness and compassion to them and they will extend you the same."

After a friendly contact has been established, then only will Towonsing set up his equipment.

"I will set up my video camera on a tripod and walk away from it. I will tell the spirits what I would like to accomplish and invite them to participate in my research. Often, these spirits would appear within the first 10 or 20 seconds."

Towonsing discovered that if the spirits can be seen with the naked eye, they would not be able to be caught on camera.

"The spirits would have used a lot of energy to appear in a form visible to our naked eye. I found that every time I tried to capture them in this form, my camera would say error. I suspect that the surge in energy causes the electronic equipment to malfunction. I would tell them that I would like them to appear in a less solid

form such as mist, orbs, supercharged orbs, vortexes, ecto clouds and ecto balls which can be recorded on camera."

The average time spent investigating one place is usually two to three hours. Sometimes, Towonsing will leave after 15 just minutes.

"I will leave when I am satisfied that I have captured enough relevant footage for my research. If I am lucky, the spirits will appear very quickly and I will be able to successfully document them. I want to stress that it is very important that I am 100% focused during the job. I must have a clear mind and not think about the worries or issues of the day, otherwise I will not be able to connect with the spirits," he says.

His research findings of paranormal photos and video clips are posted on his website and is open to anyone who is interested in the existence of ghosts. He claims Malaysian Ghost Research's findings are widely circulated over the Net and some have even been used by commercial TV shows in the US such as *The Maury Show* by The Universal Talk Television LLC.

Throughout his six years of conducting paranormal research, Towonsing has come across some pretty interesting incidents.

"During the early stages, I was always touched, called out to and scared by the ghosts. There was one occasion in Titi Hayun, Yan, where I was with a friend to set up the video camera. A spirit repeatedly asked me if I could capture ghosts on video. I thought it was my friend at first but when I turned back to answer, there was nobody there. He had apparently left me to set up his video at another place.

"On another occasion recently while I was conducting a paranormal video recording in an abandoned cemetery, I realised that there were a few graves that emitted a unique smell.

"I could sense that I was not welcome and started to feel uneasy but after I told them who I was and my purpose there, not only did the spirits accept me but they helped me successfully capture good footage for my research.

"I have had no major problems with them so far because ghosts are somewhat human too, just like you and me. They respond to our personalities and how we treat or react to them so if you don't have any intention of harming them, they most likely will not harm you either," says Towonsing.

One interesting thing of note, Towonsing says, is that many of the places he had visited to document paranormal activities did not have any history of ghosts. In fact, some of the places which were said to be haunted had no paranormal activity at all.

"You can't trust completely when people tell you a place is haunted. You have to investigate it for yourself and conduct documented research. The so-called hauntings are usually just stories without any basis. Maybe they were figments of someone's creative imagination," smiles Towonsing.

Spooky spots

If your life needs a dash of spookiness, here are some places in Malaysia to visit that could do the trick. (Don't say we didn't warn you.)

Highland Towers, Kuala Lumpur

A tragic event took place here when an apartment block collapsed due to a landslide after days of heavy rainfall, killing 48 people. Since then, many claim that the place is haunted. Voices of the dead can be heard at night and ghostly figures are said to have appeared at the scene.

There is also a story about a taxi driver who picked up a woman passenger in the middle of the night and dropped her off. She left behind a bag supposedly filled with blood.

Karak Highway

The stretch of highway from Gombak to Raub is infamous for ghost stories because of the many accidents and landslides that have occurred here. Drivers are advised not to look in their rear view mirrors when using the highway at night and never stop for hitchhikers.

Many late-night drivers have tales to tell of cars stalling mysteriously at deserted stretches and seeing a beautiful lady in a white or red dress trying to thumb a ride.

Motorcyclists have felt something heavy behind them as though they had a pillion rider.

The Deadly Junction Georgetown, Penang

The T-junction located beside the Union High School. It is said that if you ever drive through this lonely road late at night, your car will go out of control and crash. Many accidents have occurred here already.

There is also a tree beside the road which looks like a lady carrying a child. Legend has it that this "lady" was once a *bomoh* (witch doctor) who kidnapped her sister's son.

Somehow, they never again appeared anywhere other than being seen occasionally beside this road.

St Michael's Institution, Ipoh

This Catholic school was used by the Japanese as their headquarters during World War II. The building had many tunnels which were said to be used by the Japanese to torture prisoners and to store food.

Most of the sightings occurred in the Chapel on the fourth floor where a Christian brother in a black robe without a head is usually seen holding prayer beads.

Malay College Kuala Kangsar, Perak

This school is said to have been a Japanese Occupation camp during World War II. Executions and torture of the prisoners took place here during that time.

Students would sometimes be awakened by a presence that loomed above them. A marching platoon can sometimes be heard in the field, and the sound of chains being dragged can be heard through the campus corridors.

A tree on the campus reflects a shadow of a man hanging from the tree.

Victoria Institution, Kuala Lumpur

A boy's school that was turned into a Japanese base during the Occupation. Many British soldiers and locals were brutally tortured to death in the basement and buildings on the campus. It is said that apparitions are common in the day as well as night, and that there have been many cases of spirits possessing students.

The possessed boys would behave strangely, even violently, posing a threat to other students and teachers, only to snap out of it a few hours later and remember nothing.

Even if they are forcibly restrained, their bruises would disappear when they return to normal.

□ **Source:** <http://theshadowlands.net/places/malaysia.htm>



Far left: The hopping *hantu pocong*; (left) Karak Highway is said to be haunted. — S. S. KANESAN & NORMIMIE DIUN/The Star

Local lore

Here are a few popular Malaysian ghosts that you might meet when you go ghost hunting.

Pontianak

The local version of the Western vampire, the *pontianak* is said to be the spirit of a woman who died during childbirth.

She is usually dressed in white and very beautiful with flowing black hair. She comes out at night in search of men or pregnant women. Sometimes, she will even rip out the fetus and eat it.

Toyol

These are ghosts of children that people adopt to steal money. It is believed that these spirits are kept and preserved in a jar. They must be fed with blood and sweets every day.

Hantu Jepun

It roughly translates to Japanese ghost. These ghosts are often seen marching headless in World War II army attire carrying samurai swords. Most of the time, only their footsteps can be heard.



Orang minyak (oily men)

According to legend, Satan offered to grant worldly rewards to the *orang minyak* if they raped 21 virgin girls within seven days and

worshipped him as God.

The *orang minyak* douses themselves with oil and ran around naked. Although the *orang minyak* is believed to be human, there are countless stories of them being related to the supernatural world.

Orang halus (invisible people)

These spirits usually cannot be encountered unless one is purified by cleansing the body and wearing clean clothes. They live in the jungles and are conversant in Malay.

Orang bunian

They are said to inhabit jungles and are similar to elves except that they are invisible to most people. They are good ghosts or *jinn* (genie) that love to help humans in trouble or in need.

Hantu pocong

These corpses, wrapped in white shrouds similar to those used in Muslim burials, are said to be restless ghosts that can't cross over. They are usually spotted jumping around in their shrouds.

Hungry ghosts

Taoists believe that hungry ghosts are ghosts of people who fail to acquire everything they need to survive in their afterlife. If a ghost passes on, but does not have enough food, water, shelter etc, it will roam the realm between the living and the dead.

□ **Source:** <http://www.spookycorner.com/34/malaysia-urban-legends-types-of-malay-ghosts/>