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## Unique hairstyle tribute to Mazu



Hairdressers fashioning the 'Mazu hairstyle' during the live demonstration held in conjunction with the upcoming Mazu Festival

TO celebrate the upcoming 1,059th birthday of Goddess Mazu, a hairstyle demonstration was organised by the Selangor and Federal Territory Hainan Association at Thean Hou Temple in Kuala Lumpur.

Dubbed the Goddess of the Sea, Mazu is worshipped by Chinese around the world as the protector of sailors and fishermen.

The grand ceremony will be held at SJK (C) Jinjang Utara in Kuala Lumpur tomorrow.

According to the association's president

Dr Tang Chai Yoong, the highlight of this year's celebration would be 48 women dressed in traditional Meizhou costumes while sporting sailboat-shaped hairstyles to honour the goddess.

The "Meizhou Mazu chignon hairstyle" is part of the Mazu's customary beliefs that were inscribed on Unesco's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list in 2009.

It is a unique part of Mazu culture originating from Meizhou Island in Fujian, China.



**Wong (third from left) and Dr Tang (fifth from left) with the models after the Mazu hairstyle live demonstration.**

"This is the first time the Mazu hairstyle will be showcased outside of China, so we are extremely proud to have this as a milestone at this iconic temple," Dr Tang said.

He added that some 1,000 devotees were expected for the 4.3km-long parade around the Kampung Baru Jinjang Utara area.

"Through this celebration, Mazu's core values of morality, benevolence and compassion could be further spread to society," said Dr Tang.

"Although this event is to commemorate Mazu, a series of multifaceted cultural performances from other ethnicities will also be showcased during the celebrations," said Hainan Association secretary-general Wong Liang Yew.

The performances will include a lion dance from Kun Seng Keng Kuala Lumpur, acrobatics, cultural dances by the three major races in Malaysia, a Chinese orchestra and more.

Thirty-six students from Kajang's SMJK Yu Hua will pay tribute to Mazu by performing the "Ba Yi Wu", which means "Eight Row Dance" in Chinese.

To prepare for the event, the association invited three master hairdressers from the Meizhou Mazu Temple to give lessons to locals.



One of the hairstylists at the demonstration was Jesse Kuah, who has 35 years of hairdressing experience under her belt.

"I learned the delicate Mazu hairstyle technique from the two classes," said Kuah, admitting she was nervous about displaying her skills during the live demonstration.

The unique hairstyle resembles a sailboat; with the chignon as the sail, tucked comb as the oar and a hairband as the rope.

According to Chinese folklore, these details symbolise a smooth voyage and safe homecoming for seafarers.

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