

Hong Kong - Worship of Tin Hau

Tin Hau was the daughter of a local official in Fujian province in the 10th century. She is said to have been knowledgeable and able to heal sicknesses and warn sailors of dangers at sea. When she died, a temple was built in her memory. Later people began to worship her as the goddess of the sea. Tin Hau worship continued and has spread all along the Chinese coastline and into the river waterways, as far as Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

During the Sung, Yuan, Ming and Ching dynasties, governments elevated and exploited the worship of Tin Hau to enhance their own influence. Imperial Mandarins participated in worship and managed temple affairs. Temples sometimes even adjoined government administration buildings. Meanwhile, fishermen built their own temples to Tin Hau and favored her title "Ancestral Mother."

Tin Hau was brought to Hong Kong centuries ago, probably by fishermen. There are many Tin Hau temples along Hong Kong's coastline. In Tin Hau worship, the government, commerce and demonic power come together to form a stronghold.

Titles claimed: Empress of Heaven, Goddess of the Sea, Ancestral Mother.

Prayer Topics



[\[Back to Please Pray for Hong Kong\]](#)

1. May Hong Kong repent of her love of money, greed, witchcraft and of manipulating people or situations for selfish gain.

[\[1 Tim. 6:10\]](#)

2. May the people of Hong Kong seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, laying up treasures in heaven rather than on earth, renouncing association with the great harlot whom God will destroy.

[\[Revelation 17-18\]](#)

[\[Matthew 6:19-21\]](#)

3. May Hong Kong families turn from idolatry to the Lord. May they no longer sacrifice everything for financial gain, provoking the Lord's anger. May the Lord have mercy.

[\[Jeremiah 7:18\]](#)

4. May Hong Kong do justice and not oppress the poor and needy.

[\[Jeremiah 7:5-8,23\]](#)

Thank you for praying for Hong Kong.



Quick Scripture Reference

[\[Back to Prayer Topics\]](#)

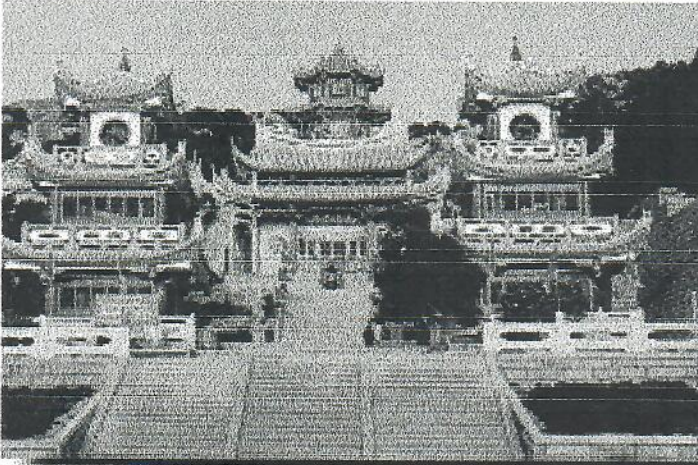
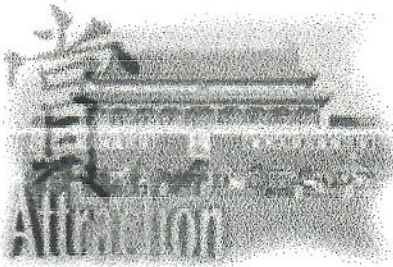
1 Timothy 6:10

**MA-TSU FESTIVAL, PEIKANG, TAIWAN
(1980-81, Third Lunar Month)**

The Queen of Heaven is identified with a number of goddesses, particularly along the southern and southeastern coast of China. She is often identified with Ma-tsu, who is sometimes seen as a hypostasis or incarnation of Avilokiteshvara (Guan Yin). She is essentially the goddess who protects fishing boats, the fisherman, and shipping in general. Like every goddess in China, ultimately, she also brings children. She has vestal goddesses in her train who are the smallpox goddesses, very much like Sitala in Bengal. She is essentially a benign mother figure.

For a deity to be popular in China, he or she has to be functional on many levels. In what is casually called popular religion, one can find deities who go back to Buddhism and Taoism, but who have lost much specificity. They have lost much of their cloistered character and have simply become part of the great pantheon of the people. These figures end up by swamping the Buddhist or Taoist figures out of whom they are theoretically generated. This is not a lower class phenomenon, but is shared by all classes.

When the Queen of Heaven is identified with Avalokiteshvara, she is identified with the feminine aspect of Avilokiteshvara and not with the older, monastic deity of the 6th, 7th, 8th centuries in China. She is seen as one of the great deities. In fact, along the southeastern coastal area, she is the greatest divine mother.



Mazu Temple is on Meizhou Island governed by Putian City, facing Tazhong City of the Taiwan Province across the straits. It is said Mazu was a girl originally named Lin Mo (960-987) who had saved a large number of fishermen and vessels in seastorms in her short lifetime. After her death, a temple was erected in

her honour. She is worshipped as the goddess of the sea and also known as Tianhou or Heavenly Empress. The temple was first built in 987 during Emperor Yongxi's reign of the Song Dynasty and was expanded several occasions later. Mazu is the most popular deity along the coasts of China, as well as in all Chinese communities all over Southeast Asia. There are over 1,000 Mazu temples across the world. But the one in Meizhou is regarded as the ancestor of all the Mazu temples and is why it attracts many worshippers.

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China Scrapbook for August 28, 1999-- Meizhou Bay and Goddess Mazu

by Zhao Jianfu [click to listen](#)

Meizhou Bay boasts a superb natural harbor on China's southeast coast in Fujian Province, only about 70 nautical miles from Taiwan. Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the father of China's democratic revolution, envisioned it as evolving into one of the largest ports in eastern China.

The fame of Meizhou Bay can be traced far back in time and legend to Mazu, the goddess of seafarers. Lin Moniang, who was later deified and became known as Mazu, was born on the 23rd day of the third month of the year 960 in a small village on Meizhou Bay. As she grew up, she became proficient in medicine and was ever ready to come to the aid of others. An exceptional swimmer, she often helped rescue victims of perils at sea. This generous and talented young woman met her own premature end when she was only 28 years old. However, she was so virtuous during her brief life that the local people began to worship her as a goddess.

The Temple of the Heavenly Queen near the bay is the ancestral temple of the Lin family. The family tree and biographical information on Lin Moniang and her parents are displayed here. Built during the Song Dynasty, one thousand years ago, the temple still holds a gilded statue of Mazu and other precious articles dating back to Song times.

From Wenjia Dock, you can take a boat to Meizhou Island, only 20 minutes away. The Temple of Mazu is on the north side of the island. Shortly after Lin Moniang's death, local fishermen and merchants collected money to have a small temple built here in honor of the virtuous woman. They hoped that she would protect them at sea. Legend has it that the goddess frequently appeared to save those in peril, thus inspiring the emperor to order a large temple be built in homage to her.

During the Ming Dynasty more than 500 years ago, an exalted sea captain named Zheng completed seven sea expeditions to more than 30 countries in Asia and Africa. It became known that Zheng had visited the Mazu Temple to ask for Mazu's blessing. Afterwards, Meizhou Bay was recognized as a safe harbor and convenient stop for marine supplies on the main north-south sea route. It later evolved as a holy site for seafarers.

The Mazu Temple hillside complex measures 10-thousand square meters. Its 35 buildings form a magnificent and solemn attraction. Starting from the foot of the hill, visitors can ramble through an ornate archway, gate tower, drum and bell towers, and the Chaotian Pavilion. To the west are sleeping quarters, dressing rooms and the Temple of the Holy Parents. Guanyin Hall is on the east. A gigantic stone statue of Mazu holds a ruyi, an S-shaped symbol of good luck, and gazes from the hilltop toward a vast seascape. The distance from the entrance of the temple to the statue is 323 meters, the same numbers associated with Mazu's birthday: third month, 23rd day.

The temple attracts many tourists and pilgrims, especially on the goddess's birthday and on the anniversary of her death in September. A large segment of the visitors is from Taiwan.

Historic Meizhou Island, only some 14 square kilometers in size, has a population of 30-thousand. It is also known for its scenic beauty, and in 1992, was designated as a national holiday resort.

The Eweishan Scenic Area, acclaimed for its rocky coast, is at the southern end of the island. Here visitors can find nature's sculptures -- rocks eroded by wind and water; many are reminiscent of animals.

<http://www.cri.com.cn/english/features/scrap/scrap990828.htm>

The cultural tradition and history of the Mazu Temple are juxtaposed with the modern development along Meizhou Bay. A new wharf is being built to handle boat traffic between Taiwan and the mainland, an easy trip across the Straits. Meizhou Bay's deep water and temperate climate are ideal for all-weather port.

Seafaring activities here date back to the mid-sixth century. By the 11th century, Meizhou Bay's commercial port had become prosperous and overflowing with merchant ships. Sun Yat-sen planned to develop the harbor into one of eastern China's six largest ports. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to see his plans carried out. It was not until the late 1980s that construction of the harbor began. According to port authorities, the bay has four navigable channels and space for more than 50 deep-water berths capable of handling 50- to 100-thousand-ton ships. The port is now bustling with trade involving more than 40 other ports in some 30 countries and territories.

The time has come to conclude today's edition of China Scrapbook.



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The Smile Of Goddess Ma Tsu

As a surveyor, I traveled to all kinds of places. One unforgettable experience I had was the smile of the Goddess Ma-tsu in Liu-chia in Southern Taiwan. There is a famous dam there called Coral Lake Dam.

My co-workers, Mr. Chang and Mr. Huang, and I were assigned to survey there. While I was there my Spirit Master, San-shan-chiu-hou, was with me. He taught me every night.

I remember it was winter and the weather was freezing. I'd be awakened at midnight by my Spirit Master to get up and go out. The teachings he had for me were to be learned in the cemetery. I remember those cold winter nights. The sky was often clear with brightly shining stars. I remember the white tombstones lined in rows.

My Spirit Master taught me a method for calling on and commanding the spirits by using the mudras and chanting. It was part of my training to learn black magic so that I would have a complete education. It was not intended that I would ever use this knowledge, but knowing about it was necessary.

He said, "This technique is not usually taught by traditional schools. However, in the future you are going to teach the dharma and so it is good to know the techniques of all schools. Great Wisdom encompasses all the dharma in the universe. The heart of Great Wisdom shines everywhere and is beyond imagination. The unrighteous methods cannot affect you and in the future you will also learn Buddha's dharma. Then you will encompass all three religions: Christianity, Taoism and Buddhism."

One evening Mr. Huang and I wandered downtown. Mr. Huang got a haircut and then we stopped by a small temple near a market. The sign on the temple read: Liu-chua Buddhist Chanting Group." We entered. In a room to the left people were chanting. I closed my palms and bowed to the Bodhisattva statue in the center room. As I raised my head I saw a colourful cloud in the sky. A goddess with a smiling face descended from it, standing on a pair of beautiful lotus flowers. She wore wonderful, colorful robes and a hat with a nine-dragon design. With a gentle smile she said, "Lian Shen, how have you been?"

"Bodhisattva, do you know me?"

"Yes, I have visited the Yu-Huang Temple in Tai-Chung and I have visited your altar. Don't you remember?"

As a matter of fact, I didn't remember. There are so many deities in the universe. Each deity has his or her own responsibility. I have met many of them, but I really had forgotten that this Goddess, Ma-tsu, had visited me. I replied, "Honorable Bodhisattva, please forgive me, I really don't remember. "

"It's all right that you don't remember. I have a request to make."

"Please instruct me."

She continued, "The resident priest of this temple has been sick. I'd like to ask you to write a Fu (paper charm) to cure him. After you have written it, give it to the people of the temple and come back tomorrow. You will be surprised at the results."

She disappeared.

I walked straight to the altar, drew the Fu and energized it. I gave it to the people who were chanting, explaining to an old man what had happened. He didn't say anything, but some of the women there were curious.

"Are you a medium?" one of them asked.

"I come from Tai-Chung. I am not a medium. The goddess I saw told me to come back tomorrow," I answered.

"Fine. Leave the Fu here. Come tomorrow," the old man muttered.

Mr Huang and I left the temple.

"They don't believe you," he said. "Why bother with it?"

"Can't blame them. If I hadn't met the blue-dressed lady, if I hadn't learned all these things from my Spirit Master, I'd never believe any of this either!"

Huang and I returned to the temple the next evening. As we stepped in, the resident priest and a group of women came forward to greet us.

"Your Fu was very effective! I've been ill for over two months and now I'm up and out of bed," the priest said. "This is a wonderful recovery. The burden is lifted. Thanks to Bodhisattva and thanks to you too. "

Relieved, I bowed to the Bodhisattva and turned to leave.

"Sir," said one woman standing nearby, "can you help me with a Fu for my young son? He has been ill for a long time. He has been taking medicine which has helped, but the illness comes back again and again. Also, my mother has been coughing for a long time. Can you help?"

"I ask you sir, please give me a Fu also," said another woman.

The women had drawn close around me now, each asking for help.

I knelt in front of the figure of Ma-tsu. She appeared before me, though not as clearly as before.

"Lian Shen, now it's time for you to get busy. Go ahead. I will help you," she said.

I began to write the Fuses for each one.

Later, I learned that the Fuses were very effective. I was at the temple for a third evening and many more

people were there. The word had spread that a young man with divine power had arrived. The whole town had heard that the Fu could cure everything.

I continued to write them for people and until midnight, every night I did divine readings to answer questions for people. They offered money to me and taxi rides, but I refused. This was the work of God and not my work.

"Sir, if you don't accept my money, you do not honour me," one lady said.

I'm sorry. I really do this for the Goddess Ma-tsu. It is to her credit, not mine. That is why I cannot accept your offer."

While I was there, I got to know the two entities who guard Ma-tsu, Thousand Mile Eye and Thousand Mile Ear. The names were conferred upon them because of their divine abilities to see and to hear.

I had seen dozens and dozens of people during those days in Liu-chia.

When it was time for me to leave, hundreds of people were at the train station to see me off.

The most wonderful experience I had, however, was the unforgettable smile of the goddess, Ma-tsu.

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Conversation At Feng-Lin Temple

Feng-Lin Temple is in a village near Kao-hsiung Harbour by the ocean. I love the ocean and I often stroll on beaches at sunset, watching the horizon that connects the ocean to heaven. I meditate on every wave. Life is much like the ocean-up and down, in the constant motion.

One evening at sunset, I felt as I was gazing, my heart merge and become one with the great golden red expanse of the sky and the ocean.

Then the sky became darker and the wind blew strongly, making the waves larger. It seemed I was the only one who existed in the world.

I was about to leave the beach when I noticed a lantern waving in the ocean, appearing and disappearing with the waves. As it drifted closer, I saw that the lantern led the way for two guardian spirits walking on the water in front of a chair. Over it gleamed the words: "The Holy Mother of Feng-Lin Temple." After a moment, both the chair and the guardians disappeared.

The next day I asked a villager if there was a temple called Feng-Lin in the village.

"Yes," an old man answered, "there's the Feng-Lin Temple where they worship the goddess Ma-tsu."

That evening I went to the Feng-Lin Temple. I had a habit of worshipping in the temple of every place I visited regardless of the size or the kind. I lit incense and bowed to the Holy Mother.

I heard her voice say, "Devotee, have you already achieved the ability of divine healing?"

"Yes, I have come to ask the Bodhisattva for knowledge."

"What would you like to know?"

"I'd like to know the way to stay in good health."

The Holy Mother Ma-tsu answered: "Pay attention to what you eat. The five tastes are acrid, sour, salty, sweet and bitter. These five tastes are to adjust the Ch'i of Yin and Yang. It is necessary to have them all in daily life, yet it is important to be moderate. Without moderation the five elements in your body will be out of balance. Then one gets sick. If you use the five tastes in moderation, they will be good for you. People in ancient times didn't cook very much. That's why they lived longer. When man discovered fire and complicated his diet, all six emotions were aroused. This covered up their spiritual awareness. Here is the important key to health, dear one. Are you listening?"

"I am, Holy Mother Ma-tsu."

"The food you eat should be whole and simple and balanced. Most people know this already. However, the key to health is not food, but thought. When thoughts are pure and whole, health is assured. You are what you think, not what you eat."

"Oh, yes, I see."

"Hmmm," she continued, "I see red, gold and white light emanating from your face. You must be a very spiritually evolved soul. I also see the God of Virtue following you. May I ask where you received your spiritual training?"

"Bodhisattva, my name is Lian Shen. I was originally a Christian. Later I took a divine decree from the Golden Mother to learn from Master San-shan-chiu-hou and from Master Ching-chen. I have come to this place on a surveying assignment. Yesterday I saw you making an inspection of the ocean. This is why I came to visit and worship you."

"I do not know Master San-shan-chiu-hou, but I have heard that Master Ch'ing-chen is a pure-hearted Taoist. Very good, very good."

"Bodhisattva, Master San-shan-chiu-hou is not a person, he is a spiritual entity. I call him my Spirit Master. He is a celestial being in the formless realm."

"Forgive my ignorance. Lian Shen, if you have time, please visit often."

Later, when I worshipped the Golden Mother in my home shrine, I sent a Fu to notify the deities in all ten quarters of the world. The Holy Mother of the Feng-lin Temple came to visit along with many other deities.

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