

Chinese Cultural Symbols in Thailand: A Study of Mazu Belief
in the Chinese Community in Bangkok Chinatown



An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts in Southeast Asian Studies

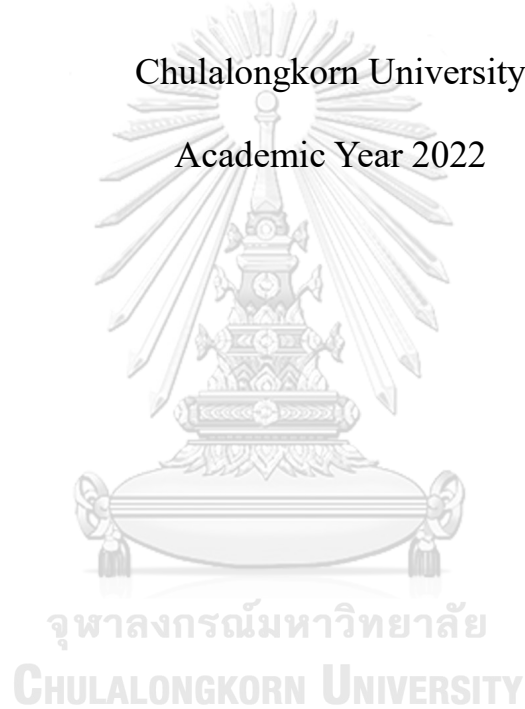
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Belief in the Chinese Community in Bangkok
Chinatown
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Accepted by the GRADUATE SCHOOL, Chulalongkorn University in
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ชุดนิทรรศานนท์

ชาวจีนโพ้นทะเลที่อาศัยอยู่ทั่วโลกเป็นกลุ่มสังคมที่มีลักษณะเฉพาะและกว้างขวางใน การ พัฒนา ประวัติศาสตร์ของมนุษยยุคใหม่ ในขณะแสวงหาความอยู่รอดและการพัฒนาในดินแดนต่างแดน พวกเขาได้เผยแพร่วัฒนธรรมจีนไปทั่วโลก ผสมผสานวัฒนธรรมจีน วัฒนธรรมดินแดน และวัฒนธรรมอื่น ๆ อย่างสร้างสรรค์ ก่อให้เกิดวัฒนธรรมที่โดดเด่นของชาวจีนโพ้นทะเล เนื่องจากสภาพแวดล้อมทางประวัติศาสตร์ สภาพทางภูมิศาสตร์ และปัจจัยเบื้องหลังของคาร์มินาคัมปีจจุบัน เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้มีจำนวนชาวจีนโพ้นทะเลมากที่สุดในโลก ในหมู่พวกเขา ชาวจีนโพ้นทะเลที่อาศัยอยู่ในประเทศไทยได้รวมเข้ากับกระแสหลักทางเศรษฐกิจ การเมือง และวัฒนธรรมของพวกเขา มาช้านาน วัฒนธรรมจีนจำนวนมากที่รับมาจากชาวจีนโพ้นทะเลได้หลอมรวมเป็นส่วนสำคัญของวัฒนธรรมไทยในปัจจุบัน ในหมู่พวกเขา ประเพณีความเชื่อของ Mazu ได้กลายเป็นสัญลักษณ์ของวัฒนธรรมจีนในประเทศไทยเนื่องจากอิทธิพลของพวกเขาในหัวใจของชาวจีนโพ้นทะเลและความมีชีวิตชีวาของวัฒนธรรมจีนที่เรไรจอยในวันวัฒนธรรมประเพณี สาขาวิชา เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา ลายมือชื่อนิสิต

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Tongtong Xu : Chinese Cultural Symbols in Thailand: A Study of Mazu Belief in the Chinese Community in Bangkok Chinatown. Advisor: Professor Dr. SUNAIT CHUTINTARANOND

The overseas Chinese living around the world constitute a unique and far-reaching social group in the development of modern human history. While seeking survival and development in foreign lands, they also spread Chinese culture to the world, creatively integrating Chinese culture, territorial culture, and other cultures, forming a distinctive culture of overseas Chinese. Due to the historical environment, geographical conditions, and background factors of transportation, Southeast Asia now has the largest number of overseas Chinese in the world. Among them, overseas Chinese living in Thailand have long been integrated into the mainstream of their economy, politics, and culture. Many Chinese cultures brought by overseas Chinese have merged into an important part of Thai culture today. Among them, Mazu belief customs have become the symbol of Chinese culture in Thailand due to their influence in the hearts of overseas Chinese and the vitality of Chinese culture contained in Mazu belief customs culture.

Mazu or Matsu is a Chinese sea goddess also known by several other names and titles. She is the deified form of the legendary figure Lin Mo or Lin Moniang, a Fujian shamaness whose life span is traditionally dated from 960 to 987. Revered after her death as a tutelary deity of seafarers, including fishermen and sailors, her worship spread throughout China's coastal regions and overseas Chinese communities throughout Southeast Asia and overseas, where some Mazuist temples. She was thought to roam the seas, protecting her believers through miraculous interventions.

Mazu belief spread from the southeast coast of China to all parts of the world, and spread throughout the areas inhabited by Chinese. It can be said that wherever there are Chinese people living together, there is Mazu Temple. Mazu

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I had been in Thailand for a year. This is a very special year for me. Many people have come towards me this year, and they are about to leave in a hurry. Interleaved with me briefly in the long river of time, leaving many good memories. This is the most exciting chapter in my hot youth.

Thanks to the professors and staff of Chulalongkorn University Graduate School for their help in my studies. Thanks to my family for their support and dedication during my study. Thanks to my friends in China for making my life full of sunshine and fun. Thanks to the friends I met in Thailand, the days in Thailand have become extraordinarily shining because of you.

Thank you for your hard work this year. I hope that in the future I can explore the world and love the world at the same time.

Thank you for all the experiences, thank you for all the encounters. The sky is high and the sea is wide, and everything will be good. You may be out of my sight, but never out of my mind.

When writing this text, my student life has also entered the countdown. If you have wine, please have a drink with me, drink to respect the vicissitudes of time, youth shines.

轻舟已过万重山.

When the sky is full of orange rays, I will say goodbye with a smile.

If you don't like to say goodbye, use Chinese “再见”.

Our story is not over yet.

This article is dedicate to my fiery 24 and 25 years old.

Tongtong Xu



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
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1.Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Religion and its related ethnic groups are social and historical phenomena that commonly exist in human societies both at home and abroad. Different nations and countries have their own religions. It is an inevitable phenomenon that there are differences between nations in politics, economy, ideology, culture, language, customs and habits; Fusions and contradictions, arising from various aspects of religion and social life, also abound. Culture is indispensable as a way of group thinking, emotion and belief, a way of abstract and practical behavior, a standardized cognitive orientation, and a mechanism for regulating and regulating behavior. Ethnicity and culture are mutually restricted and interrelated. This is a very important part of studying transnational ethnic studies or ethnic studies.

1.2 Research Objective

Taking the Mazu beliefs and customs of the overseas Chinese in Bangkok, Thailand as clues, from the perspective of Chinese and Thai history, inter-ethnic exchanges, and cultural mutual construction, it gradually analyzes the social function of the religious belief of "Mazu" for the Chinese ethnic group in Thailand, and explores the role of Mazu belief in China. How cultural symbols influence Thai Chinese.

1.3 Literature review

1. Research on the Chinese community in Thailand

Many scholars have done more research on the economic development, cultural recognition, and political participation of overseas Chinese in Thailand. Among them, any research involving overseas Chinese in Thailand must take the Chinese Society in Thailand published by American anthropology professor G. William Skinner in 1957 as an important reference. In this book, G. William Skinner uses anthropological theory to analyze the history of the development of overseas Chinese in Thailand from the 13th century to the middle of the 20th century, and demonstrates in detail why the overseas Chinese in Thailand can easily integrate into the mainstream society of Thailand. The reason is the Thai government's preferential treatment policy for overseas Chinese immigrants, as well as the similarity of Chinese and Thai cultures, and thus put forward the theory of "Chinese assimilation". Christine G Inglis, a professor of the Department of Education at the University of Sydney in Australia and director of the Center for Diversity Studies at the University of Sydney, conducted research on overseas Chinese in Thailand from the perspective of pedagogy, mainly discussing the selection of English teaching materials in Thailand and the integration of overseas Chinese in Thailand into Thai society. play a key role in the impact. American historian Jennifer Wayne Cushman completed her doctoral dissertation in 1975, *Fields from the Sea: Chinese Junk Trade with Siam During the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, through the study of Chinese coastal residents trading with foreign merchants at sea in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Behavior, expounded the management method of the General Administration of Maritime and

Customs of China, the navigation characteristics of Chinese merchants, the characteristics of trade and trade operators between China and Thailand, and analyzed the maritime policy of the Chinese Qing Dynasty government at that time. This paper also discusses the promotion factors of Chinese coastal residents' maritime trade to overseas Chinese emigration to Thailand in the research content of Sino-Thai trade and Sino-Thai trade operators. Later, Jennifer Wayne Cushman also published *Family and State: The Formation of a Sino-Thai Tin-mining Dynasty, 1797-1932* (South-East Asian Historical Monographs) in 1992. This article sorts out the development and formation of an overseas Chinese merchant family in Thailand, and based on this, analyzes the historical conditions for overseas Chinese in Thailand to participate in Thai politics.

The research results from the perspective of religious beliefs of overseas Chinese in Thailand include the article "Analysis of Thailand's "Assimilation" Policy from the Perspective of Chinese Religious Beliefs" by Xu Guodong of Xiamen University. In this article, the author explores the impact and consequences of the assimilation policy promulgated by Thailand on the overseas Chinese community through the analysis of the religious beliefs of overseas Chinese. In "Cultural Adaptation of Overseas Chinese Religion: Taking the Evolution of Master Baiyun's Statue of Moral Education in Thailand as an Example", Chen Jingxi traced the origin of the statue of Master Baiyun enshrined in Thai Moral Education, and compared it with the moral education in Chaoshan area of Guangdong. Compare and analyze the historical

evolution relationship between the two, and then use this as a base to discuss the cultural adaptation of the Thai overseas Chinese religion in the face of the historical environment in the early 1950s and the historical process of the localization of the Thai overseas Chinese . "Yunnan People in Northern Thailand" written by Professor Duan Ying from Zhongshan University takes the overseas Chinese living in the northern part of Chiang Mai Province, Thailand as the research object, and tries to analyze how this ethnic group continues and constructs in foreign lands through field investigation and ethnographic research. Its ethnic identity, and finally completed the identity construction and historical transformation from refugees to overseas Chinese ethnic groups.

2. Research on the Mazu Belief of Thai Chinese

Religious belief is also one of the topics of interest to experts and scholars engaged in the study of Chinese in Thailand. The issue of religious beliefs of Thai Chinese attracted the attention of Western scholars very early on. Both G. William Skinner and Landon mentioned it in their respective works, but scholars at that time generally believed that Thai Chinese were not enthusiastic about religion, and their religious beliefs were only will gradually decline. Since the 1980s, scholars have gradually ignited their enthusiasm for the study of Chinese religious beliefs in Thailand, and have analyzed the role of Chinese religious customs in Chinese communities in various ways. Carl.E.Blandfor, through the study of Chinese temples in Thailand, started from the comparison of similarities and differences between Thai

and Chinese national religions, and analyzed the reasons why Thai Chinese gradually integrated into Thai society. "Chinese Temples in Bangkok: Sources of Chinese-Thai Society in the 19th Century" written by American scholar HoChuimei discussed the statistics and functions of overseas Chinese temples in Thailand in the 19th century. The article "Investigation of Chinese Temples and Religious Customs in Bangkok and Singapore" written by Liu Lifang and Mai Liufang combined historical research methods and field investigation methods to conduct a survey and comparative study of Chinese temples and religious customs in Bangkok and Singapore. The information on the temple comes from the Thai Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Interior and field investigations. Professor Duan Lisheng's "Chinese Temples in Thailand" also conducted field research in Thailand.

In Xu Xiaowang's book "The Origin of Folk Beliefs in Fujian", he gave an introduction to Mazu. The book referred to a wealth of Mazu literature, and made a relatively plain and comprehensive discussion of Mazu from the perspective of folk beliefs. The book is composed of monographs, including 10 papers by Xu Xiaowang and 4 papers by Chen Yande. In addition, Xu Xiaowang's "Mazu's People: A Study of Fujian-Taiwan Marine Culture" centered on Fujian-Taiwan region and marine culture, and explored the related marine economy, nautical culture, overseas trade, maritime business groups, sea immigration and sea god belief wait. It can be said that this book is not a monograph on the study of Mazu, but it is different from the traditional collation and research of Mazu literature, investigation and analysis of Mazu temples,

etc., and discusses Mazu belief centered on marine culture. These two books both carry out research on Mazu from a relatively novel perspective. Professor Gao Weinong's book "A Study of Gods Belief in Southeast Asian Chinese: A Case Study in Thailand" emphasizes the inheritance and change of Chinese culture in Southeast Asia and traditional Chinese culture. "Mazu Cultural Circle and Overseas Chinese Society and Beliefs" by Li Zhuoran, a Singaporean scholar, discusses the relationship between Mazu belief and the development of overseas Chinese society, and takes Singapore Mazu belief as an example to explore Singapore through the study of Singapore Mazu belief. The spiritual life and customs of the early settlers.

In Li Tianxi's "Mazu Belief of Overseas Chinese from Chaoshan and Overseas Chinese in Thailand", it focuses on the two climaxes of the migration of Fujian and Guangdong people to Thailand at the end of the Qing Dynasty and after World War II. With the Chinese going abroad, especially Chaoshan people going abroad, Mazu belief began to spread in Thailand. The Mazu worshiped by the Chaoshan Chinese is called the "Seven Sacred Mamas". In another paper by Mr. Li Tianxi, "The Spread and Influence of Fujian Folk Beliefs in Southeast Asia", he emphasized that folk beliefs are an important part of Fujian traditional culture, and specifically explained that Mazu beliefs are the most widely spread in Southeast Asia, and The most influential Chinese religion. This paper also introduces the enshrining situation of Mazu temples and the distribution of temples in various parts of Southeast Asia. As a kind of folk belief, it has played a role in "connecting the locals and overseas Chinese

to work together, close the connection between the Chinese and the country of origin, and have a certain positive impact on the local society." Discuss the religious nature of Mazu, and think that the Mazu belief activities of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia have practical significance. In Fu Zhenzhong and Chen Xiaoli's "From Local to Foreign: Mazu Belief in Southeast Asia from the Perspective of Cultural Identity", they focused on discussing the origin and development stages of Mazu, and how Mazu belief spread. In Zhang Yudong's "Constituent Features and Development Trends of Traditional Chinese Religions in Southeast Asia", he focuses on the dual characteristics and manifestations of traditional Chinese religions in Southeast Asia.

Jiang Jinbo's "New Thoughts on the Development of Mazu Cultural Tourism from a Global Perspective" mainly discusses the current situation of Mazu cultural tourism development. In the article, the author explained that although Mazu is a folk regional belief culture, the Mazu belief circle is worldwide. If we want to use the cultural tourism resources of Mazu belief and customs more effectively, we should correctly understand and grasp Mazu. The linking role of belief and custom in the global belief circle. Gong Yibo's "Characteristics and Prospects of Folk Beliefs of Overseas Chinese and Chinese in Thailand" explores the contribution of overseas Chinese and overseas Chinese to Thai society under the influence of Mazu belief and custom from the perspective of identity as one of the Chinese cultures. Based on the contributions made, and thus looking forward to the future, it analyzes the promoting role that overseas Chinese folk beliefs can play in Thai society and culture. "The

Spread and Development of Mazu Culture in Countries Along the Maritime Silk Road", co-authored by Lin Mingtai and Huang Zhaohui, puts Mazu's beliefs and customs in the current era when international cooperation is increasingly becoming the mainstream trend, from Mazu and the ancient Maritime Silk Road. The origin relationship of Mazu extends the positive role that Mazu beliefs and customs can play in China's 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Wang Honggang's "Matsu Beliefs and Customs International Cultural Form and Formation Reasons" discusses how to maintain the originality of Mazu beliefs and customs when they take root in various countries, and how to adjust the cultural appearance according to local conditions to carry out cultural changes. And analyzed the internal and external factors of the cultural changes of Mazu's belief and customs. Zhang Ningning's "Research on the Motives, Methods and Contemporary Functions of Mazu Culture Overseas Inheritance" expounds how Mazu culture has become the spiritual pillar of overseas Chinese and how it has become an important support for them to connect with their hometown and country and solve their survival problems. Generally speaking, these five articles are all comprehensive researches at the macro level, which regard "Thailand" as one of the overseas Mazu beliefs and customs, or regard "Mazu beliefs and customs" as one of the folk beliefs and customs of overseas Chinese in Thailand. One of the research results discussed.

Wu Qiuyu's article "On Mazu Belief in Thai Chinese Society", from three aspects: the influence of Mazu belief and customs on the formation and distribution of

overseas Chinese society, the spiritual role of overseas Chinese in marine management, and the promotion of Sino-Thai cultural exchanges. This paper analyzes the influence and function of Mazu belief and custom on overseas Chinese society in Thailand. Marina's thesis 'Thai Chinese Mazu Belief - Cross-Ethnic Communication' regards Mazu belief and customs as a special medium of cultural communication, and conducts research on the cultural interaction of overseas Chinese in Thailand from a cross-ethnic perspective.

1.4 Research method

1. field Research method: Mainly took Chao Mae Thapthim Shrine and Chik Sia Ma Shrine in Bangkok, Thailand as examples to carry out field research, and obtained first-hand information to support the research content of this paper. Interviews were conducted with local Mazu worshipers to understand the characteristics of Thai Chinese Mazu beliefs, and at the same time explore the social functions of Mazu beliefs within and between ethnic groups.

2. Literature survey method: Read the history of Thailand, the history of overseas Chinese immigrants in Thailand, Thai culture and overseas Chinese culture, as well as related materials about Mazu beliefs and customs, and organize and summarize the information. By studying the research results of predecessors, it provides a basis for topic selection, guidance for research, and support for writing.

3. Logical analysis method: verify, summarize, and synthesize the obtained literature information and field investigation materials, and summarize how a

religious belief of the Chinese, while highlighting the existence of the ethnic group, has also played a cross-cultural role. The role of ethnic communication.

2. Chinese community in Thailand

2.1 History of Chinese immigrants in Thailand

(1) Sukhothai period

Since the establishment of the Sukhothai dynasty in the mid-19th century in Thailand, during the historical period of the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties in China, there has been a phenomenon of overseas Chinese migrating to Thailand. At that time, the reasons for the migration of overseas Chinese can be roughly summarized as three side: firstly, there were many wars during the alternation of dynasties in ancient China, and many people chose to migrate to Thailand for refuge. Secondly, the tribute trade between China and Thailand allowed Chinese people to travel between the two countries for business purposes. For the convenience of life, some Chinese people migrated to Thailand. Thirdly, Thailand actively learns Chinese culture, attracts talented individuals, and employs skilled Chinese immigrants. After the establishment of the Sukhothai Dynasty, a tribute relationship was established with China. The Kingdom of Sukhothai sent envoys to the Yuan Dynasty of China nine times from 1292 to 1322 AD, while the Yuan Dynasty of China sent envoys to the Sukhothai Dynasty three times from 1293 to 1295 AD. Against the backdrop of tribute trade between China and Thailand, some Chinese people roam between the two countries for official and private commodity transactions. When the transaction

volume and material wealth accumulate to a certain extent, some Chinese people who have already regarded Thailand as their habitual residence will purchase real estate in Thailand and settle down with their families there.

(2) Ayutthaya period

At the beginning of the 16th century, Chinese people had already gathered here in Ayuttaya. According to the records of the Chinese people at that time, they lived here several generations ago. In Ayuttaya, they engaged in commercial competition with the Portuguese and Japanese. According to records at the time, by the mid-17th century, there were already approximately 3000 to 4000 Chinese residents living in Ayuttaya. By the end of the 17th century, the total Chinese population in Thailand had reached 10000, accounting for approximately 10% of the total population of the country. South China, Fujian, and Guangdong commercial ports formed the main body of Chinese people in Thailand at that time, belonging to commercial immigrants. Due to the deep interest of the Thai king in trade at that time, the Chinese became agents of the royal trade and benefited from it. And the King of Thailand treating Chinese people as his own and providing them with special policy preferences, Chinese people have an advantage in competing with European businessmen, making significant contributions to Thailand's economic development.

(3) Thonburi period

Zheng Xin, the founder of the Thonburi Dynasty (1767–1782 AD), had his ancestral home in Chaozhou City, Guangdong Province. After the fall of the

Ayutthaya dynasty, Zheng Xin established an army dominated by overseas Chinese and expelled Burmese invaders in 1767, restoring Thailand's national sovereignty. After Zheng Xin ascended the throne, he awarded important positions to the overseas Chinese who supported him. Due to the early days of the Thonburi dynasty, many things that were put on hold were waiting to be established. Zheng Xin issued some trade preferential policies to attract foreign merchants to Thailand for business and promote social development. On this basis, overseas Chinese are given more preferential treatment. Overseas Chinese who migrate to Thailand are not only free from the constraints of the Sakdi Na system in Thailand but also do not need to pay head taxes. At this time, China was at the peak of the Qing Dynasty. The Qing government used to strictly control Chinese people's travel abroad, but during this stage, the Qing government gradually relaxed restrictions and tacitly allowed immigrants to be carried on trade ships between China and Thailand. According to scholars' calculations, during the Thonburi period, the number of overseas Chinese was close to 100,000.

(4) Chakri period

The Bangkok Dynasty (1782 AD to the present), several kings before Rama VI, continued the tradition of treating overseas Chinese with kindness. Rama I and II were eager for talent in order to develop national trade. Sometimes, even though they knew it was a violation of the tribute and trade regulations formulated by the Qing government, they still tacitly allowed overseas Chinese to sneak into Thailand on Thai

merchant ships. During the reign of Rama III, there were 6000 to 8000 overseas Chinese immigrants to Thailand every year. During the reign of Rama IV, since the signing of the Bowring Treaty between Thailand and the United Kingdom in 1855, which opened up Thailand's overseas trade market, Thai port trade has become more liberal, with a sharp increase in foreign trade volume and rapid development of the domestic economy. Therefore, it has also increased the demand for Chinese businessmen and Chinese handicraft workers, prompting a large number of overseas Chinese to migrate to Thailand to seek livelihood and development. During the reign of Rama V, the Qing Dynasty in China came to an end, with social turmoil and ever-changing circumstances. The southeastern coastal areas had more people and less land. In addition, the provisions of "The Treaty of Beijing" in 1860 legalized the immigration of overseas Chinese, as well as the "Current Criminal Law of the Qing Dynasty" promulgated by the Qing government in 1910 and the "New Criminal Law of the Qing Dynasty" promulgated in 1911, which eliminated legal barriers to immigration and led to an increase in the number of people going abroad.

Throughout the history of China's central dynasties, including Thailand, the surrounding areas have always had close contacts and exchanges, such as envoy visits, merchant exchanges, or migration. China and Thailand have had long-term friendly exchanges, and many Chinese people have long resided in Thailand. By the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, due to the rapid development of maritime transportation and trade, a large number of Chinese coastal residents

migrated to Thailand. The overseas Chinese worker who migrated to Thailand quickly integrated into the local society of Thailand and made great contributions to the economic development of Thailand. The relationship between the Chinese and Thai people became increasingly close.

These Chinese people are mainly concentrated in the Chao Phraya River and other river basins, and they marry and coexist with Thai people. The relationship between Chinese and Thai people is very harmonious. Chinese people not only have close relationships with the Chinese and Thai people, but also maintain certain traditional customs of the Chinese people, such as respecting elders in the family, worshipping ancestors, and celebrating traditional festivals.

Most of the Chinese communities in Thailand are immigrants from Chaozhou, followed by immigrants from Fujian, Hainan, and Guangdong Province, except for Chaozhou. Therefore, the dialect of Thai Chinese is mainly the Chaozhou dialect. Among some Chinese families, especially those of the second and third generations, the Chaozhou dialect is still the main language form. Most social customs and habits also migrate from their home country.

The Chinese society in Thailand has shown ecological changes in the immigrant ethnic group, but overall it is similar. On the basis of preserving the unique cultural landscape of the original hometown, it still basically continues the unique cultural system of the Chinese people. The cohesion and communication of interpersonal groups among Thai Chinese society can be mainly divided into five modes: firstly, the

local guild hall developed from the identification of geography, regional township party, and ancestral origin, which is known as geographical identification. Secondly, it is the development of ancestral temples or kinship associations organized by blood or in marriage relatives such as the father's, mother's, and wife's clans, which are related to the identification of clan relatives. The third is the various temples developed through the joint worship of gods or religious activities with collective identity brought by the hometown, which belongs to the belief-based deity worship identity. The fourth is the connection between industry and fortune. The identification of social related professions has developed into societies such as professional guilds, chambers of commerce, societies, and student associations. The fifth is the cultural and artistic bond, using culture and art as a medium for interpersonal relationships. The Chinese society in Thailand mainly relies on these five factors as the basis for group connections, establishing a mutually beneficial and complementary structure, with religion being the most important cultural cohesion.

2.2 Development of Chinese communities in Thailand

The early Chinese immigrants from China to Thailand, apart from some wealthy individuals who came to Thailand to do business, were mostly unemployed rural farmers and urban residents. They traveled across the sea, endured hardships, and came to Thailand with a narrow escape. They first started small businesses in Thailand, accumulated a certain amount of funds, and then married a local woman to start a family and a business. Overseas Chinese are not bound by the "akdi Na

system" in Thailand and can freely enter and accumulate wealth through business. Due to the tribute trade between China and Thailand, the Thai royal family needs overseas Chinese who are familiar with the cultures and languages of both countries to act as intermediaries, providing opportunities for them to interact with the Thai ruling class and creating a platform for personal development.

In the early 1980s, the Thai government relaxed the threshold for overseas Chinese to participate in politics, making them stand out in Thai politics. The previous prime ministers of Thailand, 38% of whom are of Chinese descent, and a significant proportion of overseas Chinese members of the Senate. In terms of cultural life, overseas Chinese have injected Chinese cultural genes into Thai culture through their economic and demographic advantages, which still affect various fields of Thai social life to this day. At the same time, overseas Chinese have also promoted the development of Thailand through their own development. The Chinese culture brought by overseas Chinese has also been integrated into the mainstream life culture of Thailand, and many Chinese folk beliefs in gods have also spread to Thailand with the migration footprints of overseas Chinese.

3. Overview of Mazu belief in Thailand

Mazu belief is a type of religious belief, Therefore, religious belief refers to the sacred phenomena (including specific doctrines) that a specific religious group believes in the unwavering belief and wholehearted conversion arising from worship and identification. This ideological belief and wholehearted conversion are expressed

and run through specific religious rituals and activities, and are used to guide and regulate one's behavior in secular society. Belongs to a special social ideology and cultural phenomenon.

For Chinese and overseas Chinese, the Mazu belief is a belief behavior that gradually evolves into a group with the outward migration of the Chinese community, and is no longer a customary phenomenon. And because the Chinese community migrates and integrates from generation to generation, it is passed down from generation to generation.

3.1 The spread of Mazu belief in Thailand

The Mazu belief has spread from a spontaneous folk religion to Thailand, with an increasing number of believers, providing many opportunities for religious and cultural exchanges between China and Thailand, and further promoting the development of China-Thai relations. Culture, as a collective way of thinking and emotions, will standardize people's cognitive orientation and generate regulatory mechanisms for behavioral norms. Religion is a manifestation of culture. The Mazu belief is a manifestation of traditional religious culture in China, and it is also a praise and beautiful yearning of the people for the virtues of Mazu's predecessor, Lin Mo, who saved the world and people during her lifetime, was benevolent, and was an excellent Chinese nation. Mazu was worshipped as the god of navigation protection, which has been passed down since the Song Dynasty and gradually evolved into one of China's long-standing folk religious beliefs. She accompanied navigation, overseas

business and trade, immigration, and Mazu worship to various parts of the world. Especially it has a significant influence in Southeast Asia. The Mazu belief as a religious culture, has been passed down from history as a religious symbol, and through such a religious symbol, it has condensed the Chinese ethnic group.

In the early days of underdeveloped navigation technology, people in the southeastern coastal areas of China engaged in maritime navigation. The Mazu belief began to spread outward with the development of China's overseas transportation trade and the increase in the number of overseas Chinese going abroad. The 16th to 19th centuries coincided with the Ming and Qing dynasties in China, with underdeveloped science and a strong feudal superstition still prevalent in people's minds. At that time, farmers and handicraftsmen along the southeastern coast of Fujian and Guangdong in China left their homes and drifted by boat to make a living or engage in business. Facing the thrilling waves and the treacherous journey, people at that time worshipped the Mazu deity as a spiritual support. Whenever they encountering wind and waves, they prayed to Mazu to show their spirit to calm them and turn danger into danger. According to relevant historical records, some Chinese people, as soon as they landed, placed incense burners on the beach and installed shrines for the goddess of heaven, devoutly burning incense and worshipping to express gratitude for Mazu's blessings. So, these immigrants living in foreign lands, after gaining a foothold in Thailand, proposed to raise funds to build a temple for Mazu, hoping that Mazu could eliminate disasters and ensure safety.

In the late 19th century, with the progress of technology and the development of society, mechanical power equipment and advanced navigation equipment replaced sailboats in ocean shipping. Although they greatly increased the sense of security for Thai Chinese, some Thai Chinese had already achieved little after years of hard work. At this time, they still devoutly believed in Mazu to bless them with prosperous business and wealth. At this time, Mazu was already regarded not only as a maritime protector, but also as a commercial protector.

Nowadays, the Mazu belief has gradually transformed into the recognition of traditional Chinese culture by the Chinese ethnic group among Thai-Chinese. Worship of Mazu has become a family activity, ethnic cohesion and the need for cultural identity.

3.2 Distribution of Mazu temples in Thailand

The Chinese-style temples in the Bangkok area generally exhibit a pattern of large dispersion on both sides of the Chao Phraya River and small gatherings in Chinatown. In the 1880s. At that time, Rama I planned to relocate the capital to Bangkok and decided to build a new palace on the east bank of the Chao Phraya River, which was an area where Chinese people were concentrated at that time. Therefore, in 1782, overseas Chinese had to move out of the scope of the new capital, and a new Chinese community was formed on the newly completed Sampheng Street at that time. Due to the fact that the Sampheng Street area is located next to the Chao Phraya River, most commercial ships traveling between China and Thailand will dock here. In order

to facilitate trade, Rama I ordered the opening of a commercial street here. In 1861, Chaoerkrung Road was completed. Subsequently, Chinese commerce and trade became increasingly prosperous, and the number of overseas Chinese continued to increase. The Chinatown centered around Sampheng Street also expanded accordingly, gradually extending to Song Watt Road, Chaoerkrung Road, and Yaowarat Road. The Chinese style temples, which symbolize the geographical connection between overseas Chinese, then stand on both sides of the Chao Phraya River and Chinatown.

The Chinese temples in Bangkok are mostly religious buildings built for traditional Chinese folk beliefs. They mostly worship Taoist immortals and also contain some totemic beliefs in folk legends, and some also include some Buddhist figures. While people start businesses and build temples in Thailand to worship their respective deities for protection, there will also be Tin Hau Temple, Seven Saints' Mother Temple, or placing Mazu and the worshipped deities in a temple for worship. The three gods worshipped by the Fujian people in Nanyang are Guan Di, Mazu, and Da Bo Gong. The main gods worshipped by the Chaozhou people in Thailand are Ben Tou Gong, Ben Tou Ma, and Mazu (Seven Saints). The Hainan people worship Ben Tou Gong, Tian Tian Hou (Seven Saints), and Shui Wei Saints. Indicating the existence of multi religious integration in the Mazu Temple in Bangkok.

Most of the Chinese style temples in Bangkok were built in the mid to late 19th century, and each Chinese style temple was built with the collective strength of overseas Chinese and funding from everyone. The proposers who call for the

construction of temples and the organizers who later gather for fundraising and overall planning are usually served by fellow villagers' associations. Therefore, temples built by fellow townspeople often attach the geo-culture represented by the fellow townspeople to the temple architecture. For example, both Chaozhou residents in Guangdong and Putian residents in Fujian both believe in Mazu Linmo, but there may be geopolitical differences when naming temples, resulting in different temple names such as Mazu Temple and Tianhou Temple. This is because overseas Chinese of different ancestral origins will continue to use the customary name of Mazu in their hometown to name temples. Over time, with the sedimentation of time, temples have become the main symbols of overseas Chinese living in their radiation areas with the same ancestral home. Overseas Chinese living in the same ancestral home have also formed a stable community of overseas Chinese centered around temples. Most Chinese temples in Thailand are multi-purpose places, and temples are often used for news dissemination, sometimes even as schools or medical facilities. It provided educational opportunities for some early Chinese children and became a venue for spreading Chinese culture.

The Mazu belief of Thai Chinese is not only the integration of religions, but also the integration of Chinese ethnic groups, as well as the integration between the Chinese community and the local population.

Table 1: Temple List of Mazu in Bangkok's Chinatown

Number	Temple name	Address	Hometown of the temple builder	Construction time
1	San Chao 7 Shrine	27 Soi San Chao Chet, Soi 39 Charoen Krung Road, Si Phraya, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500, Thailand.	Hainan	1851
2	Chao Mae Thapthim Shrine	201 Charoen Krung Rd, Yan Nawa, Sathon, Bangkok 10120	Fujian	1864
3	Bentouma Temple	1614 Charoen Krung Rd, Khwaeng Yan Nawa, Khet Sathon, Bangkok 10120	Chaozhou	1882
4	Chik Sia Ma Shrine	Maitri Chit Rd, Pom Prap, Pom Prap Sattru Phai, Bangkok 10100	Chaozhou	1883

4. Field trip to Mazu Temple in Bangkok

4.1 Chao Mae Thapthim Shrine (201 Charoen Krung Rd, Yan Nawa, Sathon,

Bangkok 10120; Fujian; 1864)

(1) Worship time

The peak of incense is usually between 10:00 and 11:00 every day, and most people come to the temple to pay respects during this time. Most people are accustomed to visiting the temple in the morning. So they all chose during the day. Out of respect for God, they also worship God before going to work or doing other things on a given day. At the same time, the peak traffic usually occurs on weekends or on the first and fifteenth days of the lunar calendar, with the highest traffic volume.

(2) Worship frequency

In the first and fifteenth days of junior high school, the flow of people is the highest, and most of them come together with the whole family. Usually, there are more scattered worshippers. Some families have made worshipping Mazu a collective activity for the whole family, and even some Chinese families have arranged to come together to worship. Mazu Temple has become a place for Chinese people and Chinese people to gather, connect, and strengthen friendship. Everyone is chatting here, and some can even stay in the temple for a day. Many Thai Chinese people come to visit Mazu almost every day, and the frequency is still very high. Some people can visit Mazu two to three times a week, which is also a group with a high frequency of visits. The average number of visits to Palace can reach at least once a week.

(3) Characteristics of the worship population

The majority of the general population is older, including some young

white-collar workers and students. However, the group that worships Mazu is mainly older. And some younger people often follow adults to worship together.

The group paying respects at the local Mazu Temple can be seen, and they mainly focus on family worship. Some children have accepted the ritual and activity of worshipping Mazu from a very young age, and most people believe that they will also let their descendants worship Mazu. They believe that worshipping Mazu is a way of life.

Some of the Chaoshan Chinese who came to Thailand for worship only came after the 1990s, speaking Thai but not writing. They also came to Thailand to join the Chaoshan people here, and the Chaoshan community believed in Mazu. Some people did not originally believe in Mazu, but began to worship Mazu due to the need to integrate into the ethnic group and business needs.

The main believers in Mazu are mostly people between the ages of 40 and 60, who are mostly second-generation or third-generation Chinese. The reason they believe in Mazu is mostly due to the influence of their previous generation. They are in middle age, and many people have retired or are unemployed, and they visit Mazu Temple every day.

Some older Chinese in Thailand have become accustomed to worshipping and worshipping Mazu, and it is this trend of habit that has led them to adhere to their beliefs, promote and learn about them, and convey the essence of Mazu to others.

There are not many people among the worship crowd who can proficiently speak

and master Mandarin. Among the early Chinese, they mostly mastered their own local dialects, with more being Minnan and Chaozhou dialects.

4.2 Chik Sia Ma Shrine (Maitri Chit Rd, Pom Prap, Pom Prap Sattru Phai, Bangkok 10100;1883)

Built by overseas Chinese organizations in Chaozhou, Guangdong in 1883, it has a significant influence among the Mazu belief community in Bangkok due to its outstanding contributions to inheriting the Mazu belief culture.

Chik Sia Ma Shrine was originally a small shrine dedicated to the statue of Mazu, rather than a building occupying an area. The statue of Mazu was worshipped and taken care of by overseas Chinese living nearby. Later, led by wealthy overseas Chinese who had done business in Thailand through the community, they organized the construction of a Chinese style temple dedicated to Mazu. After its construction in early 1883, it collapsed due to erosion over time and was renovated with donations from nearby overseas Chinese. Although the original appearance of the temple over a hundred years ago is now unknown, the renovated temple still retains original objects such as plaques and bronze bells from the past. The Seven Saints' Mother Temple seen today is a wooden and stone structure, with a courtyard and temple layout. The overall gate of the temple is a tower style mountain gate, and after entering the gate, there is a small courtyard. Walking past the small courtyard, there is the main hall dedicated to Mazu.

Chik Sia Ma Shrine's management approach is family inheritance, passed down

from grandpa to father, and from father to son, regardless of gender. Family women also assist in the temple. The main function of the temple area is to expand on the overseas Chinese within the radiation range of the temple, which combines the "divine" and "secular" fields. It is not only a religious activity area for worshipping and praying for blessings, but also a daily gathering place for overseas Chinese communities. The types of gatherings for overseas Chinese at Chik Sia Ma Shrine are divided into two categories: daily fixed gatherings and special temporary gatherings. The former mainly focuses on leisure and entertainment, while also conveying information such as labor information, hometown family and friend information, and discussions on current Chinese politics. The latter is often driven by major events that have occurred recently among overseas Chinese in the community, such as the passing of elders, where everyone will gather to prepare for the funeral ceremony.

(1) Worship time

The daily business hours are from 7:00 to 16:00. But the crowd who came to worship mainly concentrated between 9:00 and 14:00.

(2) Characteristics of the worship population

The Chik Sia Ma Shrine, built by Chaozhou Chinese, is mostly worshipped by Chaozhou Chinese. It can be said that the Chaozhou Chinese community here is formed around the Chik Sia Ma Shrine. The Chaozhou overseas Chinese in Bangkok, with their adventurous business spirit and alliance with fellow townspeople, have gradually made a fortune in Chinatown. When this group had the strongest economic

strength, its language, the Chaozhou dialect, was once the main communication language in Bangkok. In the lives of these Chaozhou Chinese, Mazu's sacrificial activities run through various aspects.

One of the original intentions of the Chaozhou Association when building the Chik Sia Ma Shrine was to use the temple as a temporary resting place for newcomers to Bangkok, allowing them to ease their anxiety in a familiar environment. Most overseas Chinese who have received assistance from temples will pass on this bond to the next generation through annual visits to temples for sacrifices, volunteer work, and other activities, making temples a place to gather community members and care for each other.

The crowd who visited Chik Sia Ma Shrine not only prayed to Mazu and sought help from the community, but also overseas Chinese who came to use temples as educational venues to teach excellent traditional Chinese culture to future generations of women. Overseas Chinese usually teach their descendants the "loyalty", "filial piety", "benevolence", and "love" of Chinese culture through the worship and belief of Mazu, using the legendary stories of Mazu and the elements of Chinese culture in Chik Sia Ma Shrine. Especially when Chik Sia Ma Shrine set up a stage to show Chaozhou opera, the significance of promoting Chinese patriotism was particularly strong.

(3) Activity

In addition to the daily prayers of believers, there are also ritual activities held

during major festivals such as the Chinese traditional Spring Festival, the Zhongyuan Festival, and the Nine Emperor Gods Festival. The Spring Festival ceremony held within Chik Sia Ma Shrine is also the busiest day of the year in Chinatown, apart from Songkran Festival Day.

Originally, the Nine Emperor Gods Festival was only a popular festival event in the overseas Chinese community in Thailand. However, with the increasing influence of overseas Chinese in Thai society, the Nine Emperor Gods Festival became a national festival in Thailand. In the ten days of the Nine Emperor Gods Festival, all believers will wear white clothes and eat Vegetarian Dish piously. During these ten days, Chik Sia Ma Shrine will also invite prominent monks to recite scriptures and Buddha in the center of the main hall, as well as set up a stage for the troupe to perform the Chaozhou opera for ten days.

Before the Nine Emperor Gods Festival, Chik Sia Ma Shrine will have a series of preparatory works, including cleaning every corner of the temple, inserting four bamboo swords into the four corners of the temple, placing offerings on the altar table in front of the statue of Mazu, covering the entire temple with decorations, raising lamp columns to welcome Nine Emperor Gods into the temple, and building a stage. On the first day of the ninth lunar month, a monk will be specially invited to recite scriptures and pray for blessings in the main hall of the temple every day, as well as to display the incense table of the deceased fasting friend and prepare items for the bridge transportation ceremony. The ceremony of crossing the Bridge is prepared for

believers in need, with the purpose of exorcising evil spirits and seeking longevity. The believers who choose to participate in this ceremony will first purchase a paper doll, write their name and age and other personal information on the doll as their substitute, and then tie the doll with paper money to walk the "bridge". After walking the bridge, the staff will burn the paper doll along with the paper money. Performing Chaozhou opera is also an important event for Chik Sia Ma Shrine at the Nine Emperor Gods Festival.

4.3 The characteristics of worship at the Mazu Temple in Chinatown

(1) Worship groups

Generally, the belief in Mazu has continuity. If the first or second generation of Chinese families believe in Mazu, the probability of their descendants believing in Mazu is high. Moreover, in this continuity of transmission from generation to generation, the belief in Mazu has continued to this day.

(2) Multi-religious integration

In the Mazu Temple in Thailand, there will be local gods believed in, which also requires integration into the local community. In the past, as a Chinese community, it was inevitable to be ostracized. To integrate into local life and interact with local people, one had to actively or passively adhere to the local religion. Chao Mae Thapthem Shrine and Chik Sia Ma Shrine not only worship Mazu, but also many Buddhist deities.

(3) types of offerings

Chinese style sacrificial offerings mainly include wine, pastries, chickens and ducks, while in Thailand they are beverages, with local desserts and snacks being the main dishes. When Thai people worship Buddha, they like to worship flower strings made of yellow and white flowers. Therefore, when Chinese people in Thailand worship Mazu, they often bring flowers and necklaces to hang on the grid. According to local explanations, they believe that gods all like red drinks, so they will place red and yellow Fanta drinks and insert straws for them when offering them.

(4) worship methods

Thai people's daily customs require taking off their shoes when entering a house, so their worship of Mazu also requires taking off their shoes to enter the house for worship, but it is generally not necessary in China. Their way of worship is also very different from the traditional Chinese way of worship, and the way of worship is even more different, following more of the local customs of worshipping Buddha in Thailand.

5. Characteristics of Mazu belief in Thailand

5.1 Multi-religious integration

In Chinese folk temples, the deities of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism are often enshrined in the same temple. This tradition also extends overseas. Some scholars believe that "this secular religious view among the Chinese people has also been colonized in Chinese society outside of China, "The folk religious view belongs to pantheism, and the gods of the three religions are all entrusted with the same

mission, and are generally worshipped. Therefore, in Chinese society, there is no conflict in offering incense at the temples of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism at the same time. Even the gods of the three religions are placed in the same temple at the same time for sacrifice and peaceful coexistence. This is a major feature of Chinese folk religion."The Mazu belief of Thai-Chinese also reflect this Chinese religious characteristic.

Religious fusion is common in Thai Mazu temples, and in a Chinese style temple, there are usually other offerings for worship besides the main Mazu. Through an investigation of the Mazu Temple in the Chinatown area of Bangkok, it can be concluded that in addition to worshipping Mazu, there are also gods of other religions such as Dragon Tail Saint, CibeiNiangNiang, Avalokitesvara, GuanYu, and Bentou Gong.

The belief in religion itself is a shallow belief. That is, believers do not need to do much or have a deep understanding or a more complex learning process for the object of belief. It is a cognitive representation of belief content, just a state of knowing it but not knowing its reason. Therefore, folk beliefs are manifested as human consciousness activities attached to the surface of rational belief thinking. From a psychological perspective, there is a bias towards believing in the role of gods in avoiding suffering and seeking happiness. At the same time, traditional religious beliefs may also manifest in their worship of multiple deities and various cognitive systems, forming their own characteristics in folk beliefs and thus forming their own

systems. Even though it incorporates deities worshipped by various religions, there is no obvious division of factions, let alone exclusivity in belief. It is not burdened or divided by the absorption of multiple beliefs, nor does it directly oppose other beliefs or religions, nor does it prevent or worry about the infiltration of other beliefs into one's own beliefs. Therefore, such a religious belief can be recognized as an open religious belief model, which will also result in no excessive constraints and obligations within the belief. The Mazu belief, as a traditional religious belief, has a greater degree of elasticity in its belief relationship and does not require excessive communication obligations or more coercive mental pressure. The way of belief is more autonomous and free. Therefore, there is a phenomenon of multi-religious integration in Thailand.

Because 'seeking profit' is the most clear and essential goal of folk beliefs. People constantly seek spiritual sustenance and comfort for profit, and when their wishes are fulfilled or successful, they believe that it is the manifestation of the gods they worship. And because life is long and there are various demands at every level of life, praying for blessings and avoiding suffering from various gods has become the most common content of folk worship. Therefore, the core motivation of folk beliefs such as "seeking profit" directly expresses personal utilitarian goals and the pursuit of practical well-being, which is the concept of public disclosure of folk religious beliefs. People neither need to conceal nor have too many reasons to whitewash the essence of pursuing benefits. Therefore, there may be situations where several deities are

worshipped together in such temples. These co worshipped gods can be gathered together at will and worshipped by everyone. There is only a difference between the main sacrifice and the secondary sacrifice, and there is not such a strict class definition.

5.2 The Localization of Mazu Belief in Thailand

On the surface, Thai Chinese have basically accepted the local way of life in Thailand, and their clothing, food, housing, and transportation are deeply imprinted with the local imprint. In terms of daily life, such as clothing, food, housing, transportation, language, and customs, there is no longer much difference between Thai and Chinese, and it is even impossible to distinguish what is Chinese and what is Thai. Social relations among Chinese people are gradually becoming more Thai. Thai Chinese have the highest degree of assimilation among Southeast Asian countries, which is also evident in terms of language. Singaporean scholar Guiqiang Cui pointed out in an article studying the issue of assimilation of Thai Chinese: "Business interactions, education in common schools, and shared religious beliefs provide many opportunities for Thai Chinese to interact with Thai people in daily life. Therefore, most Thai Chinese can speak and write Thai, especially the second and third generation Thai Chinese descendants, whose level of Thai and Thai language is not inferior to that of the Thai people." Professor Guiqiang Cui from Singapore said, "The Thai government has always adopted a policy of tolerance and indulgence towards the religious beliefs of foreign immigrants." Therefore, although the Chinese belief in

Mazu is not in line with Buddhism in form, it not only goes hand in hand with Buddhism but also integrates with each other, forming a religious integration. Thai-Chinese worship Mazu and Buddha at the same time.

During the long history of the spread of Chinese folk beliefs such as Mazu overseas, in some places, they have been integrated with local religious culture and have been accepted by the local people (even the upper class). This has also been reflected in the process of spreading the Mazu belief among overseas Chinese in Thailand. When worshipping in many Mazu temples, the offerings and methods of worship are mostly based on Thai customs, which are very different from the worship methods in China.

Through the field trip, it can be seen that, in terms of worship methods, Thai people's daily customs require taking off their shoes when entering a house, so their worship of Mazu also requires taking off their shoes to enter the house for worship, but it is generally not necessary in China. Their way of worship is also very different from the traditional Chinese way of worship, and the way of worship is even more different, following more of the local customs of worshipping Buddha in Thailand. In terms of types of offerings, Chinese style sacrificial offerings mainly include wine, pastries, chicken and duck, while in Thai style they are beverages, with local desserts and snacks being the main dishes.

The Mazu belief integrates with local religious culture and becomes a component of local religious culture; This will further promote the integration of overseas

Chinese and local people.

5.3 The secularization of Mazu belief

Taking the Mazu belief as an example, this belief is no longer a mysterious and aloof way of belief, but a festival and mode of gathering among Chinese people. Under the conditions of modernization, the secularization of religious belief has emerged as a pluralistic, subjective, rational and emotional personal behavior model. The diversity of secular beliefs indicates that religion cannot maintain a closed traditional system, move towards openness, and cannot demand absolute loyalty from believers. The way believers live in secular society has undergone significant changes, and in the process of adjusting their outlook on life, the way they believe has been given more flexibility. Rather than solely considering a religious concept based on loyalty. Make the emotions of religion fade, broaden the perspective of religious activities, expand the scope of free choices, and maintain religious loyalty to meet personal wishes. Therefore, some people who believe in Mazu also believe in other religions, but this does not hinder their piety towards Mazu. The secular individualism of belief is the subjectivity of belief, which has two meanings: firstly, it refers to the loss of religion's obligations and essence, becoming a free choice rather than an object; secondly, it refers to objects composed according to will, with diverse individual social roles and different environmental requirements that require the establishment of one's own interpretation of the world. When necessary, personalized belief choices must be established, and the forces in society are also reconstructed by religion. The

group of Chinese people in Thailand who believe in Mazu mostly belongs to the second category. Due to different living environments, personal roles have also undergone certain changes, so there will be changes when establishing personal beliefs, and beliefs will become more autonomous and free.

Religion is becoming increasingly emotional. Religious morality includes two levels: Shinto and humanity, as well as the modernization of communication methods. More and more religious organizations are using television, radio, and the internet to preach scriptures. More modern audio and multimedia equipment is being used between temples and religious believers to play scripture videos or audio tapes, recite and study scriptures. In a diversified and informationized modern society, the forms and contents of religious beliefs have undergone differentiation and variation. Etiquette, doctrine, and activity methods have undergone corresponding changes with the development of society, showing a certain trend of dilution. The religious function has undergone significant changes to adapt to the requirements of modern society. In the process of modernization, with the development of society towards diversification, a series of new reforms and changes have led to the transformation of traditional religious social functions, while some functions have gradually been weakened. Therefore, Mazu belief gradually peels off its sacred veil and slowly moves towards the crowd. People can use a diversified propaganda model to promote Mazu belief, and use some easy to understand stories to let everyone know the origin of Mazu and related knowledge.

6. The influence of Mazu belief on Thai Chinese society

6.1 The influence of Mazu belief on the formation and distribution of Chinese communities

The construction of early Overseas Chinese temples is a sign of the establishment of Chinese communities. The existence of a temple is a gathering of Chinese ethnic groups. From the distribution of Chinese style temples in Thailand, we can infer the distribution of Chinese settlements. For example, most of the people living around Chaozhou temples are Chaozhou people, while most of the people living around Fujian temples are Fujian people. In the early days of the Chakri Dynasty in Thailand and before, Chinese people in Bangkok mainly lived in the present-day Grand Palace area. Due to Rama I's plan to build a palace, he designated Chinese immigrants to move to the southeast gate of the palace, which gradually formed a Chinatown centered around Samsung Street, Yaowarat Road, and Chaoerkrung Road. This is an important commercial district in Bangkok and the most concentrated place for various Chinese temples. It has also become the most concentrated place for Chinese people.

Many Chinese temples in Thailand were built with donations and fundraising from fellow village leaders, who gathered fellow villagers to live around the temples.

In addition, while Chinese immigrants to Thailand make a living, they maintain their own worship of gods and build temples to worship them, which also has some impact on local municipal construction planning. The names of roads and alleys in

some cities in Thailand are related to Chinese worship of gods.

Temples in Thai society have diverse uses, often serving as local news centers, labor employment centers, news outlets, drug distribution stations, community centers, and sometimes even more as schools and medical centers. If built by Chinese people of Fujian Province, Chao Mae Thapthem Shrine and Chik Sia Ma Shrine, funded by Hainan people, are located on Charoen Krung Road in Bangkok. After years of development, this place has become a bustling place with thriving commerce and the preservation of ancient Chinese temples in the bustling market. This demonstrates the deep affection of Thai-Chinese for the Mazu belief and the unshakable sacred status of Mazu Temple, as well as the role of Mazu belief and Mazu Temple in the development of Chinese communities. And its complementary role in Thailand's socio-economic development.

6.2 The role of Mazu belief in promoting the integration of Chinese into Thai society

Thailand is a democratic country with a constitutional monarchy, and also a country that believes in Buddhism. Buddhism is the "norm" of moral and ethical education in Thailand, which maintains social harmony and promotes art. The Thai Constitution explicitly stipulates that the king must be a Buddhist, and every citizen must respect the royal family and Buddhism. Buddhism also has a profound influence in China. The majority of Chinese and Han people believe in Mahayana Buddhism, while Thailand believes in Theravada Buddhism. However, the two are of the same

origin, resulting in Chinese immigrants settling in Thailand and maintaining consistency with Thai people's religious beliefs, so religion has not become an obstacle for Chinese people to integrate into Thailand. In fact, Chinese people living in Thailand, in order to better adapt to Thai social life and facilitate local development, "admit to believing in Buddhism as soon as they enter Thailand, Some scholars believe that "perhaps using religious examples to illustrate the assimilation of local Chinese society is the most effective, because it is generally believed that religion is the most difficult to change in various aspects of culture." Both China and Thailand do not have religious concerns, and it is said that the Chinese can quickly adapt themselves to Thai Buddhist forms.

Due to the freedom of religious belief in Thailand, no religion is discriminated against. Due to the diversity of religious beliefs, Chinese people are able to maintain the cultural traditions of primitive religion and worship of gods in the democratic atmosphere of Thailand. The Thai Chinese people maintained their belief in Mazu and extensively built Mazu temples, which enabled their development in such a broad political environment. Mazu, with its protective deity of helping the poor and the world, as well as its beautiful image of wisdom, compassion, kindness, and brightness, has influenced believers to seek truth, follow goodness, and pursue beauty. Mazu's compassion, self-forgiveness, and salvation are symbolic. The influence of Mazu's belief on Thai Chinese ideology has provided strong spiritual support for the peaceful integration of Chinese into Thai society.

In Chinese temples in Thailand, Mazu is served alongside Buddhist deities. In the Mazu Temple in Bangkok's Chinatown, Mazu, along with Buddhist deities such as Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya, will be set up in the same temple. This indicates that Chinese people have successfully combined Buddhism with primitive religious beliefs, maintaining the characteristics of compromise and inclusiveness rather than exclusivity in Chinese religious beliefs. This is a very wise and effective development in the ideological and spiritual worlds.

Mazu, as a deity with high prestige among the people, has not only been highly praised by emperors since the Southern Song Dynasty in China, but has also been enshrined by the imperial court. During the Yuan Dynasty, court officials were sent three times to represent the emperor in offering sacrifices to Meizhou. Emperor Yongle of Ming held an imperial ceremony at the Tianfei Palace in Nanjing, presided over by the Taichang Temple and equipped with music and dance. After the unification of Taiwan by Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty, he repeatedly sent courtiers to pay tribute to Meizhou. The Thai royal family also attaches great importance to such a deity, which is widely worshipped and worshipped by both officials and folk in China. During the reign of Rama VI of the Bangkok dynasty, in order to strengthen the central government's rule over the southern region of Thailand, Rama VI personally visited Nakhon in 1911 and visited the Tin Hau Palace in Nakhon. He presented a copper incense burner with the inscription "Tian Bin Qing He(天宾庆荷)". This incense burner is still preserved in the temple today. The Thai royal

family's respect for the Mazu belief undoubtedly deepens the reverence of Thai Chinese towards the Thai royal family and the voluntary principle of integration into Thai society.

6.3 Promote economic cooperation and political mutual trust

Throughout Southeast Asia, although there is not much difference in the number of Chinese immigrants to Malaysia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Singapore, the status of Chinese people in the entire society is vastly different, with one-third of Thai people being of Chinese descent. Chinese people have a high status in the political, economic, military, judicial, and civil service sectors of Thai society, receiving support from the royal family.

The increase in religious and cultural exchanges has also laid the groundwork for an increase in economic and political activities. The development of the economy promotes the development of Mazu belief, and under certain specific conditions, Mazu belief can in turn promote the development of the social economy. The initial meaning of the Mazu belief was to respect Mazu as the God of Maritime Protection, but with the pursuit of wealth by maritime merchants and the development of capitalism, Mazu's divinity has been extended to be the God of Commercial Protection and the God of Wealth. Cities along the southeast coast of China are important sites for their maritime trade networks. Chinese sailing ships are full of Chinese goods such as ceramics and silk fabrics. At that time, Minnan people with rich experience in maritime trade were active in Singapore's business field. The trade

activities and immigration of Chinese sailors rely entirely on shipping for their livelihood. The long sea journey, rough seas, and constant risks make up the lives of the sailors and whether their cargo can smoothly reach their destination to achieve their commercial value, all depends on the conditions at sea. If we can rely on the magical protection of the goddess Mazu, it is a beautiful wish for profiteering merchants and immigrants who hope to live and work in peace and prosperity. Therefore, merchants and marine immigrants vigorously praised Mazu. The most common and important professional belief in the overseas Chinese community is Mazu. The belief of Thai Chinese in Mazu is mainly based on people from Fujian, Chaozhou, and Qiong. Later, there were Taiwanese people who believed in Mazu, and their livelihood and development were closely related to maritime commerce. Due to the close relationship between the formation of Mazu belief and the ocean, Mazu, as a deity, also had another name called "Water God", which reflects the combination of Mazu's natural and professional divinity. In fact, in the face of economic change and new demands, as well as fierce commercial competition, people are passionate about religious beliefs and have more hope to achieve success through the protection of gods. The religious rituals and charm of Chinese culture have played a great role.

Similarly, Mazu's memorial activities have sparked a wave of tourism in Mazu. Many famous Mazu temples have become the largest tourist destinations for Mazu pilgrimage tourism. It promotes the exchange of people who believe in Mazu and attracts Mazu believers from all over the world to provide sufficient tourist sources for

pilgrimage tourism. Greatly promoted the economic development of Thailand

6.4 Promoting the cultural exchange between China and Thailand

The Mazu belief, as a primitive religion and folk worship of gods among Chinese people, has become a cultural phenomenon after thousands of years of survival and development. Mazu culture has profound ethnic and folk connotations. As a folk belief deity of Chinese both at home and abroad, Mazu is first and foremost a protective deity for saving lives at sea. Secondly, as a kind of Mazu culture developed from myth and legend, it belongs to the category of historical culture. It extends from mythology, belief, temple, temple literature, temple sculpture, temple painting, temple fair, etc., and involves mythology, religious studies, folklore, architecture, culture, sculpture and painting art, economics, oceanography, history, archaeology and other disciplines. The multidisciplinary culture it covers is spread by overseas Chinese, It is the content of cultural exchange between China and foreign countries, and its ability to survive in Chinese residential areas lies in the coexistence, subtle interaction and integration of Chinese and foreign cultures.

Chinese immigrants, in order to adapt to local life in an unfamiliar environment and driven by the assimilation policies of Southeast Asian countries, have converted and integrated into local religions, or actively absorbed another form of local religion, thus forming integration. This deeply reflects the tolerant and broad-mindedness of the Chinese nation, as well as the proactive and enterprising spirit of not fearing hardships. But we should see that the traditional religions of the Chinese people have

not been completely assimilated into the local religions in this process of integration, but have more persistently adhered to the unique temperament of traditional Chinese culture, enriching the religious culture of Southeast Asia. Of course, we should see that there are two important factors in the process of adapting and reintegrating Chinese culture. That is to say, in the process of identification, both parties have an unshakable responsibility to promote mutual communication and integration.

The architectural art, sculpture, painting, calligraphy, poetry, couplets, cultural relics, etc. of Mazu temples in various parts of Thailand are rich in connotation and extensive in extension. They are not only an important component of Mazu culture, but also an important component of Thai Chinese culture. The prevalence of Mazu belief in Thailand has made Mazu culture an important part of cultural exchange between Thai Chinese and Thai people. Mazu belief and Mazu temple are already examples of cultural exchange and integration between China and Thailand.

In 2006, Taiwanese businessmen built the Nanyao Mazu Palace in Bangkok, serving as the home of the sub spiritual mother of the Nanyao Mazu Palace in Taiwan. The purpose is also to soothe the homesickness of 140000 Taiwanese businessmen traveling to Thailand while inheriting Chinese culture. At the request of Thai businessmen, the Nanyao Palace in Taiwan sent a statue of Mazu to the Nanyao Mazu Palace in Thailand in 2006. According to traditional Taiwanese customs, deities from other places must return to pay homage to their ancestors before and after the birthday of the ancestral temple deities. Thailand's Fenling Mother made a special trip back to

Taiwan to pay respects to her ancestors on the eve of Mazu's birthday on March 23, 2007 in the lunar calendar. More than 100 believers accompanied Mazu back to Taiwan, including the sisters group in traditional Thai costumes. They respectfully escorted the statue of Mazu back to Taiwan for ancestral worship activities, which played a promoting role in promoting further friendship between Mazu temples, strengthening Sino Thai folk exchanges and cultural exchanges, and promoting the spirit of Mazu culture.

In addition, in early overseas Chinese society, there were usually temples first, followed by clubs. The existence of temples and their inscriptions are the historical imprints of local and overseas Chinese. Mazu Temple, due to its long history, contains objects such as gold and stone carvings, plaques, bells and drums, incense burners, inscriptions, plaques, bell inscriptions, couplets, and other written materials. These records record the era, history, figures, and congratulations of the temple's construction and development at that time. They not only witness the construction and development of the temple, but also preserve a precious cultural relic and written material for future generations, which is helpful for studying the rise and fall of the temple, traditional Chinese culture, and the historical development process of local Chinese people. The exchange between China and Thailand has high historical value.

Conclusion

The worship of Mazu by Thai Chinese is still popular. The local Chinese are

willing to let their descendants believe in "Mazu" and participate in the worship of Mazu. And the Mazu Temple has gradually transformed from a place for religious and missionary activities into a place and way for Chinese people to gather. The activities related to the Mazu belief have also evolved from the initial gathering among fellow villagers to a form of communication and gathering between Chinese communities, Thai Chinese, and Thai people. With the establishment of marriage relationships between Chinese and locals, and so on, this assimilation phenomenon will become increasingly severe. The Mazu belief is gradually showing a diversified trend, and Thai people are gradually gaining a deeper understanding and Mazu belief. Mazu has also become a bridge between Chinese and Thai people since it was originally a religious symbol that condensed Chinese people. The two cultures understand and tolerate each other, and Mazu belief has been endowed with a new-era connotation.

Cultural relations have become a key aspect that needs to be maintained in international diplomacy. In the diplomatic process between countries, culture can not only consolidate economic and political relations that balance interests, but more importantly, cultural relations can establish a new connection between countries—a "spiritual connection". China and Thailand have had a friendly exchange relationship since ancient times, and the cultures of the two countries have long established a connection of mutual learning and communication under the influence of overseas Chinese. The Mazu belief in China is the common point of Chinese and Thai cultures. The Mazu belief in Thailand conveys the value system of Chinese culture

and marks the Chinese cultural identity of overseas Chinese in Thailand. Moreover, under the protection policy of Thailand's cultural heritage, Mazu belief and customs have also deeply rooted in Thai folk life. In today's cultural relations between countries, the key to connecting each other's psychology is the exchange and common local folk life culture. As a cultural commonality between China and Thailand, Mazu belief in customs is of great benefit in triggering mutual spiritual resonance and serves as a source of vitality for China and Thailand to establish a "spiritual connection".

In the cross-cultural communication process between Chinese culture and Thai culture, the Mazu belief has become a cultural symbol that highlights the existence of the Thai Chinese ethnic group. At the same time, in the process of continuous localization, it has also adjusted and changed the culture, resulting in a mixed transformation and global development. Through research on the Thai Chinese and Mazu belief, it is recognized that although it is difficult to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the Thai Chinese community through religion, it is undeniable that common religious and cultural symbols have always had an intangible attraction for members of ethnic groups far away from their hometown, and have become an important medium for community communication to showcase community characteristics to a certain extent.

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