



1. Type of God: Queen of Heaven

Chinese names/ titles:

Tian Hou (Mandarin) / “Queen of Heaven”
Tin Hau (Cantonese) / “Queen of Heaven”
Mazu (Taiwanese)
Ba Thien Hau (Vietnamese)
Lin Moniang (birth name)
Gupo (Lum clan – “Great Grand Aunt”)
Holy Mother of Heaven
Celestial Consort
Goddess of the Seas

Birthday/ date of Celebration:

Birthday – Born the 23rd day of the third month of the lunar calendar as Lin Moniang on the island of Meizhou, Fujian province.
Ascension to Heaven – 9th day of the ninth month

Legend:

The Lum clan worship Tin Hau as their patron saint because she was born a Lum. Her parents named her Lin Moniang, the "Silent Girl" as she did not cry after birth and remained silent until about 4 years old. Growing up she studied religious literature mastering Confucius at age 8 and the Buddhist sutras by age 11. When she was 13 she was visited by a Daoist monk who recognized her religious prowess. He left her the book of lore, *Xuanwei Bifa*, which gave her the ability to foresee the future and to travel abroad without leaving her body. Living in a fishing village she excelled at swimming and was often seen standing on the shore, in her red robe, guiding fishing boats home. Once during a typhoon, Lin Moniang went into a trance and was motioning her arms as if to grasp something. Her mother woke her because she thought she was sick. Moniang cried, "Why don't you let me rescue my brothers?" Days later, 3 of her 4 brothers returned from their fishing trip and told how they encountered a terrible storm. They saw a girl trying to hold up their mast and walking on the water. Unfortunately one of the brothers did not make it. It was then that her mother realized that Moniang had appeared to them in an attempt to save them. Saddened by the loss, Moniang vowed to never marry. She died at a young age of 28, in a dignified sitting posture. Since then, many seafarers have said they've seen the goddess Tin Hau appear to them to guide them to safety or to save them from drowning. They called her Goddess of the Seas.

Successive imperial courts recognized Tin Hau's good deeds and conferred onto her 22 official and imperial titles. Her last imperial title was "Holy Mother of Heaven".