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The Shintoization of Mazu in Tokugawa Japan

Mazu was a Chinese sea goddess worshiped by fishermen, villagers, maritime merchants, and local officials in the Sinic world including Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and the Ryūkyū Kingdom. In a sense, the Chinese cultural sphere was also the “sphere of Mazu belief.” Compared with China’s other neighboring nations, Japan settled at a deeper level of localization, turning Mazu into a Shinto deity, worshiping the Chinese goddess in the Shinto way, and enshrining her along with other Shinto deities. In the Tokugawa period, Mazu was worshiped by the Japanese as the manifestation of different Shinto deities. Based on Japanese primary sources, this study investigates the Shintoization of Mazu in Tokugawa Japan using Funadama belief among seafarers and shipbuilders, Noma Gongen belief in the Satsuma domain, and Ototachibanahime belief in the Mito domain as the main points of reference. Mazu was associated with Funadama, the Japanese protector god of seafarers, in different parts of Japan. In the Satsuma and Mito domains, Mazu belief differed tremendously from that in China in terms of religious titles, festival dates, forms of worship, and functions. This research aims to deepen our understanding of how Chinese folk religions were incorporated into the Shinto framework of Tokugawa Japan and the nature of the popularization of Chinese culture in Japan through the lens of localization.

KEYWORDS: Mazu—Chinese folk religion—Shinto—localization—Tokugawa Japan—Kyushu

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SINO-JAPANESE cultural exchange reached its peak during the Tokugawa 徳川 period (1603–1868). This exchange had never been one-way. The Sinicization of Japanese culture and the Japanization of Chinese culture often went hand in hand (NAKAI 1980; NG 2019, xiii–xxvi). In late medieval and early modern Japan, Chinese folk religions were popularized and Shintoized at the same time. Many Chinese deities (such as Mazu 媽祖 and Zhong Kui 鍾馗), sages (Fu Xi 伏羲 and Shennong 神農) and historical figures (Xu Fu 徐福 and Yang Guifei 楊貴妃) were transformed into Shinto deities (NG 2004; 2016). The process of foreign elements fusing with ancient Japanese myths and practices to construct and express Japanese beliefs and identity is called Shintoization (BREEN and TEEUWEN 2010, 1–65). Shintoization is the main form of religious syncretism in Japan, serving as the key to the successful importation of religions (PIRYNS 1988).

During the heyday of Buddhism in the medieval period (1186–1603), the theories of *shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合 (syncretism of Buddhism and Shinto) and *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 (local manifestation), which saw Shinto kami as the local manifestations of Buddhist deities, were widely accepted (MARAYAMA 1957; RAMBELLI and TEEUWEN 2003). With the rise of neo-Confucianism in the Tokugawa period, the doctrine of *shinju icchi* 神儒一致 (the unity of Shinto and Confucianism) became prevalent among Confucians and Shintoists (NAGURA 1974; ZHANG 2003). Like Confucianism, Chinese folk religion also went through the process of localization and many Chinese historical, legendary, and religious figures were worshiped in the Shinto way or associated with Shinto deities (NG 2019, 3–44, 105–120). The Chinese sea goddess Mazu (pronounced “Masō” in Japanese, also called Rōma 娘媽 or Tenpi 天妃) provides an example of how Chinese folk religion was incorporated into the Shinto framework in Tokugawa Japan, and, in a larger sense, how Chinese culture was indigenized to fit Japanese traditions. Borrowing Chinese elements to enrich Japanese culture, or *wakon kansai* 和魂漢才 (Japanese spirit, Chinese knowledge), had been an important cultural strategy adopted by the Japanese throughout their history (POLLACK 1986).

Mazu was a popular Chinese sea goddess worshiped by maritime merchants, fishermen, and sailors in East and Southeast Asia. She was originally a tutelary

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deity of fishermen in the southeastern coastal area of China. According to legend, a shaman from Fujian Province named Lin Moniang 林默娘 (960–987) rescued her father and brother from a shipwreck in her dream. After her death at the age of twenty-eight, her spirit frequently appeared to save seafarers in trouble. Mazu temples began to appear in the Southern Song period (1127–1279). People worshiped her as a sea goddess, calling her Mazu, literally “maternal ancestor.” They gathered in Mazu temples on the twenty-third day of the third month of the Chinese lunar calendar to celebrate her birthday. Mazu was awarded the honorary titles Tianfei 天妃 (Heavenly Princess) and Tianhou 天后 (Heavenly Queen) by Emperor Shizu 世祖 of Yuan (1215–1294) and Emperor Kangxi 康熙 of Qing (1654–1722) respectively. Mazu became the most popular Chinese goddess after Guanyin 觀音 (RUITENBEEK 1999).

Mazu belief spread beyond China and was introduced to Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and the Ryūkyū Kingdom. Modern Japanese scholars refer to the popularization of Mazu belief in the Sinic world as the “Mazu belief sphere” or the “Mazu cultural sphere” (HAMASHITA 2008, 77; ARISHIMA 2009).¹ Mazu belief reached its peak in the Tokugawa period, being worshiped by both Chinese sojourners in Nagasaki and Japanese seafarers and villagers in the Mito and Satsuma domains. Mazu was perhaps the most popular Chinese deity among Chinese sojourners in Nagasaki (RAMBELLI 2018, xii–xxiv; WU 2015, 97–103). The Nagasaki scholar Nishikawa Joken 西川如見 (1648–1724) wrote:

The Chinese in Nagasaki called her Ship Bodhisattva, Mazu, or Laoma 嫫媽. She was born in Xinghua Prefecture of Fujian Province as the daughter of the Lin family. She sank into the sea and became a deity. She appeared to protect ships across the ocean. She was honored as Tianfei and Shengmu 聖母 (Holy Mother). Some believed that she was the manifestation of Guanyin.

(NISHIKAWA 1914, 240)

The Mazu temples were built in the “four Chinese temples of Nagasaki” and the Chinese Quarter (Tōjin yashiki 唐人屋敷) where Mazu was worshiped by Chinese sojourners. Compared to Nagasaki, the popularization and localization of Mazu belief in other parts of Japan remain understudied (NIKAIDŌ 2009; LI 1978). This study will fill this research gap by examining how Mazu was worshiped in Tokugawa Japan in different regions, from northeastern Honshu to southern Kyushu.²

1. Guanyin, Emperor Guan 關, and Zhaobao qilang 招宝七郎 (“Seventh Son of Zhaobao”) were other Chinese tutelary deities that seafarers introduced to Japan.

2. According to FUJITA Akiyoshi (2006), there are forty-eight locations in Japan with Mazu paintings or statues.

In China, Mazu was affiliated with Buddhism, Daoism, and local folk beliefs,³ while in Japan Mazu was associated with different Shinto deities including Funadama (船靈, 船王, or 船魂; “Spirit of the Ship”), Ototachibanahime 弟橘媛, and Noma Gongen 野間權現 and was worshiped at Shinto shrines.⁴ In the eyes of the Japanese, Mazu was no longer an alien deity and thus they could worship her as a protector of seafarers or a regional guardian without compromising their national identity. Based on Japanese and Chinese primary sources, this study examines the Shintoization of Mazu in Tokugawa Japan through Funadama belief among seafarers and shipbuilders, Noma Gongen belief in the Satsuma domain, and Ototachibanahime belief in the Mito domain. This study will also shed light on the nature of Japan-China religious exchange and the localization of Chinese culture in the Tokugawa period.

Mazu and Funadama

Funadama (also Funadamagū 船玉宮 and Funadama Myōjin 船玉明神) was a Shinto deity that was associated with Mazu in Tokugawa Japan among fishermen, coastal villagers, and shipbuilders. Unlike Ototachibanahime in the Mito domain and Noma Gongen in the Satsuma domain, Funadama was associated with Mazu in different parts of Japan. It also had a longer history than these two versions of Mazu-related beliefs.

Funadama was the Shinto term for the protector of seafarers. Since its first appearance in the eighth century, Funadama had been associated with a large number of folk beliefs about the sea (HOTTA 1979, 82). The following were all said to be the original state of Funadama: from Shinto, Sumiyoshi Daimyōjin 住吉大明神, Sarutahiko no mikoto 猿田彥命, Konpira no kami 金毘羅神, Ōwatasumi no kami 大綿津見神, Suwa Daimyōjin 諏訪大明神, Suitengū 水天宮, Ebisu 恵比寿, Toyotamahime 豊玉姫, Ototachibanahime, Ryūjin 龍神, Ōsugi Daimyōjin 大杉大明神, and Okitama no kami 興玉神; from Buddhism, Dainichi Nyorai

3. In China, the Buddhists saw Mazu as the manifestation of Guanyin, whereas the Daoists identified her as Miaoxing yunu 妙行玉女 (Jade Woman of Wondrous Deeds) or Taishan niangniang 泰山娘娘 (Venerable Mother of Taishan). In local folklore, some Fujianese mixed Mazu up with Cai Gupo 蔡姑婆 (Grandauntie Cai).

4. There were other Shinto versions of Mazu in Tokugawa Japan, but most were little known and not well documented. Hinoyama Gongen 火之山權現 (Avatar Hinoyama) in Nagasaki was just one example. In the Tokugawa period, people in the Nomozaki 野母崎 Peninsula in Nagasaki associated Mazu with the local deity, Hinoyama Gongen. Tanabe Mokei 田辺茂啓 (1688–1768), a Nagasaki historian, gave an account of this local religion in the *Nagasakishi* 長崎志: “The Hinoyama Gongen [Shrine] was located at the top of Hinoyama near the coast of the Nomozaki Peninsula and thus it acquired this name. It is said that this belief appeared more than eight hundred years ago. It had a statue that looked like the Heavenly Princess and this deity was efficacious” (MATSUURA 1976, 73). The name Noma is believed to have been derived from Rōma (SHIMONAKA 1957, 100).

大日如来, Yakushi Nyorai 藥師如来, Kanzeon Bosatsu 觀世音菩薩, Shuyajin 守夜神, and Benzaiten 弁財天; and from Chinese folk religion, Tenpi. The nativist scholar Oyamada Tomokiyo 小山田與清 (1783–1847) listed some of these deities as Funadama: “Concerning the number of Funadama, the Chinese call it Tenpi, while the Buddhists associate it with Shuyajin. People also worship Suitengū, Toyotamahime no mikoto 豊玉媛命, Sarutahiko no ōkami 猿田彦大神, and Konpira Gongen 金毘羅権現 for maritime safety” (OYAMADA 1908, 34).

Funadama was not a part of Shinto mythology described in the *Kojiki* 古事記 and the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀. It first appeared in the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 as an ancient ritual about navigation. It records that in 758, fishermen and shipbuilders performed a ritual to pray to Funadama for the safety of the new ships, and, on the nineteenth day of the eighth month in 763, people gathered to express gratitude to Funadama for the safe return of the official vessels from a mission on the Korean Peninsula. Regarding the worship of Funadama in 763, it reads:

The first ship we sent to Goryeo was called Noto 能登. On the day of return, the wave was deadly and the ship drifted at sea. [Upon return] they prayed to Funadama, saying, “Thanks to the protection of Funadama, we returned safely to Japan. We are now asking the government to reward the envoy with a cotton crown.”
(SUGANO 1912, 77)

In the mid-Heian period, Funadama Jinja 船玉神社 was built in different parts of Japan, and people gathered there to worship Funadama on the second or eleventh day of the New Year. The *Engishiki Jinmyōchō* 延喜式神名帳 introduces the Funadama Jinja in the Kinai 畿内 area as a branch shrine of Sumiyoshi Taisha 住吉大社 (MATSUDA 1903, 68).

In medieval times, the Funadama Jinja continued to flourish. Funadama was associated with different Shinto deities. Most Funadama shrines were only secondary halls at larger shrines (RAMBELLI 2018, 195). In Osaka and Fukuoka, it was under the Sumiyoshi Jinja, and Funadama was associated with Sumiyoshi Daimyōjin. In Kamakura, the Funadama Jinja built by Minamoto no Sanetomo 源実朝 (1192–1219) was dedicated to Ototachibanahime. The Funadama Jinja in Dewa no kuni 出羽国 (now Yamagata and Akita prefectures) was built inside the Suwa Jinja in 1488 by someone who asked Suwa Daimyōjin for help when his ship faced a storm (ARAI 1884, 10–11).

In the Tokugawa period, the Funadama belief was very popular among fishermen and shipbuilders. It was no longer confined to the Funadama Jinja, but also extended to some rituals concerning maritime safety and ship launching. Many fishing boats and merchant ships had a hole in the mast into which a pair of figurines representing Funadama were inserted. The *Matsu no ya hikki* 松屋筆記 reads: “Inside the hole of the mast were a pair of god figurines, a lock of hair of the ship

owner's wife, and *sugoroku* 双六 (double six, a Japanese board game). They called these three items *Funadama*" (OYAMADA 1908, 24–25).⁵ Sometimes, twelve coins, two dice, rice, or makeup items were also presented (RAMBELLI 2018, 194). Cutting hair was a shamanistic practice associated with the *Funadama* belief among Tokugawa seafarers. Oyamada Tomokiyo introduced it in the *Yōsho manpitsu* 擁書漫筆 as follows:

When someone encounters problems at sea, they cut their hair and ask the son of the Dragon God for help. People also do this to Konpira Gongen in Sanuki 讃岐 [present-day Kagawa Prefecture] and Ōsugi Daimyōjin in Anba 安波 in Hitachi no kuni 常陸国 [present-day Ibaraki Prefecture]. People cut their hair for help. (OYAMADA 1831, 3)

When a new ship was launched, people also prayed to *Funadama* for good luck. For example, according to the *Daiyūindono gojikki* 大猷院殿御実記, in 1634 bakufu retainers and domain lords held a ceremony to worship *Funadama* in Shinagawa in Edo when *Atakemaru* 安宅丸, the new bakufu vessel, was launched (HAYASHI 1904, 10094). In Osaka, the same ceremony was held when a new boat was launched. The *Kajitsu toshinamigusa* 華実年浪草 reads: “In Osaka of the Sesshū Province, during the first launch of a ship, people decorate the ship with pine and bamboo and offer *kagami mochi* 鏡餅 (‘mirror rice cake’) and wine to *Funadama*” (UKAWA 1912, 903). In addition to the ship-launching ceremony, there was another ceremony held at the beginning of the year for fishermen to pray to *Funadama* for a year of safe return and a good catch (RAMBELLI 2018, 195).

Since the true entity of *Funadama* had not been agreed upon, many sea deities were said to be *Funadama*. In the Tokugawa period, Mazu was often associated with *Funadama* (FUJITA 2006). Both the *Zōho shoshū butsumō zui* 増補諸宗仏像図彙 and *Wakan senyōshū* 和漢船用集 see Mazu as the manifestation of *Funadama*. For instance, the *Zōho shoshū butsumō zui* introduces *Funadama* as follows:

According to tradition, at the time of Emperor Taizong 太宗 of the Song dynasty, a fisherman's daughter ascended to heaven on the ninth day of the ninth month in the fourth year of Yongxi 雍熙 (987). There was a voice from the cloud, saying, “I am the manifestation of Guanyin and now I am ascending to heaven. I will safeguard maritime transport and will be worshiped as *Funadama*.”

(TOSA 1900, 69)

An article in the *Wakan senyōshū*, “*Funadama* gods together with ship bodhisattvas” (*funadama-gami narabini funebosatsu no koto* 船玉神並に船菩薩の事) introduces a large number of deities who were associated with *Funadama* and,

5. A similar record can be found in the *Usōkanwa* 雨窓閑話 allegedly compiled by Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信 (1758–1829).

above all, it was Mazu in Noma Gongengū 野間権現宮 (also Rōma Jinja 娘媽神社) in Kagoshima that drew the most attention. Not only was Mazu regarded as Funadama, but the image of Funadama had increasingly looked like Mazu since the late eighteenth century (FUJITA 2008a). For example, the Morita family in Echizen (now Fukui Prefecture), a rich family engaged in the shipping industry, hung the scroll picture of Funadama that looked like Mazu in their house, and its inscription also mentioned Mazu and Noma Gongen (TAKASE 1979, 219). Kitamura Nobuyo 喜多村信節 (1783–1856) also mentioned that the image of Funadama became increasingly feminine in the Tokugawa period following the rise of the Mazu belief. As a nativist scholar, he insisted that the Japanese should worship Sumiyoshi Daimyōjin and not Mazu as Funadama:

Funadama was no other deity. In the *Engishiki*, people worshiped Sumiyoshi as a tutelary deity of ships. The *Jingūki* 神后紀 records that Sumiyoshi looked after the incoming and outgoing ships. Mazu was worshiped in China and her feat was eternal. The Chinese made female statues [to worship Mazu]. Nowadays, most people see Funadama as a goddess. This is a mistake.

(KITAMURA 1830, 278)

Some people in the Mito domain, the Morioka 盛岡 domain, and Nagasaki also associated Mazu with Funadama. In the Mito domain, the Tentokuji 天徳寺 (later renamed Gionji) worshiped Mazu as Tenpi Seibo Funadamagami 天妃聖母船玉神 (Celestial Consort, Holy Mother, and the Guardian Spirit of a Ship). The Isohara Tenpi Jinja 磯原天妃神社 in Isohara worshiped Mazu with Funadama. In the Morioka domain, the Tenpi Gongengū 天妃権現宮 in Ōma 大間 was strongly influenced by the worship of Mazu in the Mito domain. Mazu was worshiped as Funadama by the villagers in Ōma. The *Goryōbun shadō* 御領分社堂 introduces the Tenpi Gongengū in Ōma as follows:

The titles for Tenpi Gongen are Tenpi Seibo Maso Daigongen 天妃聖母媽祖大権現 (Celestial Consort, Holy Mother, and Mazu Shinto Deity) and Guze Kannon 救世観音 (World-Saving Guanyin Bodhisattva). She is regarded as a wonderful spirit in my country to protect the nation and for maritime safety. In China, people worship her as Chuanyu 船玉 [Funadama]. (KISHI 2001, 25)

In Nagasaki, the Dutch Learning (*rangaku* 蘭学) physician Hirokawa Kai 広川 齋 (d.u.) recorded that many people regarded Mazu as Funadama (RAMBELLI 2018, 198). Nagasaki Confucian scholar Nigita Yugi 饒田喩義 (1772–1833) describes how the Chinese ships entered Nagasaki harbor in the *Nagasaki meishō zue* 長崎名勝図絵: “Some Chinese ships display the bodhisattva after entering the harbor. The bodhisattva altar on the ship is built for Funadama. The statue of Tenpi is placed on the shore. When the ships sail in and out of the harbor, they worship it day and night without delay” (NIGITA 1930, 286).

The examples mentioned above demonstrate the increasing number of people from different parts of Japan who associated Mazu with Funadama during the latter half of the Tokugawa period.

Mazu and Noma Gongen

The Satsuma domain was the center of Mazu worship among people in Kyushu during the Tokugawa period. Like her treatment in the Mito domain, Mazu was also Shintoized in the Satsuma domain and became the local deity Noma Gongen. In China, Mazu temples were built near the shore for the convenience of fishermen. In Tokugawa Japan, Mazu was usually worshiped in Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples that housed her statues or paintings. Many of them were not located near the shore. In the Satsuma domain, Mazu was honored on the top of Nomadake 野間岳, one of the three most iconic mountains of the Satsuma Peninsula. Nomadake had a longer history of Mazu belief than the Mito domain. The origin of Mazu belief in Nomadake can be traced back to the Warring States period (1463–1603) (LI 1978, 461–560). The mountain used to be called Kasasadake 笠沙岳 and was renamed Nomadake in the sixteenth century after the introduction of Mazu belief. According to the *Sangoku meishō zue* 三国名勝図会 compiled by the Satsuma domain, the naming of Nomadake was related to Rōma. It reads: “This mountain was originally called Kasasadake. After worshipping the goddess Rōma on the top of the mountain, it was renamed Nomadake. This was because the pronunciations of Rōma and Noma were close” (GODAI and HASHIGUCHI 1905, ch. 27, 15). Hirokawa Kai, in his *Nagasaki bunkenroku* 長崎聞見録, also remarked: “Noma Gongen in the Satsuma domain is Laoma. Noma is the Japanese pronunciation of Laoma” (HIROKAWA 1800, 15).

The top of the mountain had a shrine commonly known as the Eastern Shrine (Tōgū 東宮) dedicated to Izanagi and Izanami, the creators of Japan. In 1554, a small shrine for Noma Gongen, Noma Gongengū, was also constructed. Shimazu Tadayoshi 島津忠良 (1492–1568), the lord of Kaseda 加世田 in the Satsuma domain, was also a Mazu follower. In 1568, Shimazu built the Western Shrine (Saigū 西宮) to worship three Shinto deities (Honosusori no mikoto 火闌降命, Hikohohotemi no mikoto 彦火出見命, and Honoakari no mikoto 火明命) and Rōma. The Western Shrine that enshrined a wooden statue of Mazu was either moved to Satsuma Peninsula from a sunken ship or donated by the Lin family who lived in Kataura 片浦, a fishing village near Nomadake in southern Kagoshima. In 1598, the Ming general Lin Beishan 林北山 and his family migrated to Kataura from Fukien. He carried seven wooden statues of Mazu with him and the Lin family further strengthened the worship of Mazu in Nomadake. The popularity of Mazu surpassed that of the three Shinto deities in the Western Shrine. The worshipers were not only fishermen, villagers, and

maritime merchants, but also retainers and warriors. For instance, the Miyauchi 宮内, Arima 有馬, and Terazono 寺園 families worshiped Mazu in Nomadake. The Miyauchi family displayed a talisman (*kitōfuda* 祈禱札) at the Noma Gongengū, whereas the Arima and Terazono families worshiped the images of Mazu at home. The Mazu belief suffered a setback when a typhoon destroyed the Noma Gongengū and other shrines in 1830. Shimazu Narioki 島津斉興 (1791–1859), the tenth domain lord of Satsuma, rebuilt the shrines at the top of Nomadake and combined the Eastern and Western shrines. The popularity of the Noma Gongengū plummeted after this amalgamation.

Halfway up the mountain was a Buddhist temple called Ryūsenji 龍泉寺. It was built in the medieval period and was rebuilt by Shimazu Tadayoshi in 1540. The Aizen'in 愛染院 in Ryūsenji was a hall to worship Aizen Myōō 愛染明王, the Wisdom King of Passion in Buddhism. After the founding of the Noma Gongen, the Aizen'in became its branch temple and began to worship Mazu. Three wooden statues of Mazu and her two aides, Qianliyan 千里眼 (Thousand-Mile Eye) and Shunfenger 順風耳 (Wind-Accompanying Ear), were enshrined. The origins of these statues were unknown, and some believed that Japanese pirates or Chinese migrants brought them to Japan from Ming China. The nativist scholar Amano Sadakage 天野信景 (1663–1773) writes:

In the Ming period, our people went to that alien nation and took treasures back. When they destroyed the Mazu temple, they took its statue back and put it in Nomadake in the Satsuma domain. It has a shrine there now. Every year when Qing people stopped over on the way to Nagasaki, they donated silver coins to the shrine in Nomadake. (AMANO 1908, 179)

The Nagasaki Confucian scholar Fukami Gentai 深見玄岱 (1649–1722) suggested that the statues were donated by Fukien merchants, saying, “The Aizen'in in Ryūsenji is located twelve miles from the foot of the mountain. It offers other forms of worship and people from different parts of Japan burn incense here. A Fukien sojourner donated the statue [of Mazu] and the other two of her aides” (GODAI and HASHIGUCHI 1905, ch. 27, 26). To avoid the demanding mountain trail, many people preferred the Aizen'in to the Western Shrine to worship Mazu. Chinese merchants in Nagasaki donated generously to the Aizen'in. The abbot went to Nagasaki to receive donations once a year and gave the donors the Rōmayama Daigongen 娘媽山大権現 talisman. The *Sangoku meishōzue* reads: “Every year, Chinese sojourners in Nagasaki donated incense money to the Rōma Shrine. The abbot of the Aizen'in went to Nagasaki to receive it. He gave them the talisman of the sea goddess to assure maritime safety” (GODAI and HASHIGUCHI 1905, ch. 27, 37). When Chinese merchant ships passed by Nomadake, they burned incense, beat the drums, and worshiped Mazu from their ships.

According to Chinese sources, some Japanese went to Putian 莆田 in Fujian to invite the Mazu statues to the Satsuma domain. The *Puyujisheng* 莆興紀勝 reads:

The Heavenly Princess rose to heaven in her thirties. Her body sat up and did not decay, and thus the villagers built a temple to worship her. This deity performed miracles. Barbarian tribes on four sides heard about these and came to worship one after another. Later, one barbaric nation sent four ships to bring her statues back.... The barbarians were afraid that their ships would sink in a storm. They prayed to the Heavenly Princess for help and the wave died down in a short time. A big mountain suddenly came out from the sea. The barbarians believed that the spirit of the goddess resided in the mountain. The mountain was named Tenpisan (“Mountain of the Heavenly Princess,” referring to Rōmayama in Nomadake). (LIN 1618, 6: 46)

Supported by Satsuma villagers and Chinese merchants, the Mazu belief in Nomadake became very popular in the Tokugawa period. Whenever Japanese or Chinese vessels passed by, the sailors and passengers would pay tribute. The *Sangoku meishō zue* records: “With the Rōmayama memorial in the Satsuma domain in Kyushu, Japan is a place for worship. Her dignity is manifested and her grace is widely disseminated. She is worshiped by all vessels sailing in and out” (GODAI and HASHIGUCHI 1905, ch. 27, 37).

The Satsuma people created the following three different legends about Mazu arriving in Nomadake in their writings: the drifting theory, the flying theory, and the landing theory. First, the drifting theory is about Mazu’s body drifting to the shore of Nomadake. According to this legend, after Mazu jumped into the sea, her dead body drifted to southern Satsuma and was buried and worshiped by the villagers of Nomadake. This legend was widespread in Kyushu. Fukami Gentai writes:

The shrine on the Rōmayama in Kaseda in Kawabe County, the Satsuma domain of my Great Japan, was built a long time ago. The old men said: “[Mazu] jumped into the sea and her corpse arrived here. Her skin was as beautiful as peach blossom and her body looked like she was alive. People came from far and near to see and were shocked. They buried her with respect. Three years later, some people from China came to bring her bones back.” ... The lord thus built a shrine on the top of the mountain and named it the Western Shrine. In spring and autumn, festivals were held faithfully to worship her. Her statue smelled very good and the learned people said it was the fragrance of the Qienan tree. (GODAI and HASHIGUCHI 1905, ch. 27, 24)

Nishikawa Joken also heard about this legend in Nagasaki. In the *Nagasaki yawasō* 長崎夜話草, he states:

She was born into the fisherman's family [called] Lin. During her birth, something supernatural occurred. In her teens, she claimed that she was the manifestation of the sea god. She went to sea to rescue vessels incoming or outgoing. She died in the sea.... Her body drifted onto the shore of the Satsuma domain and the villagers buried her under the mountain, calling her "Nomayama Gongen" 野間山権現. "Noma" 野間 was the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese word "Laoma" 老媽. (NISHIKAWA 1898, 4-5).

The ancient text *Nomayama daigongen ryaku engi* 野間山大権現略縁起 also reads: "She died in the sea and drifted onto the shore of the Satsuma domain. People buried her body on the mountain. After that she performed different types of miracles and made the wishes of the seafarers come true" (GODAI and HASHIGUCHI 1905, ch. 27, 27).

Second, the flying theory is about Mazu flying to Nomadake from China and becoming a local deity in Kyushu. The *Honchō koji innenshū* 本朝故事因縁集 tells a story about how Mazu became Matsuo Myojin 松尾明神 (the Shinto deity of Matsuo) in Kyushu as follows:

The statue of Niō 仁王 [guardian of the Buddha] stood on Wanli Island in China. It is said that in the last period of the Buddha's teaching, the face of Niō would turn red and the island would be destroyed. After the face of Niō was painted red by some evil persons, half of the island sank and all the islanders drowned. The deity [Mazu] held two ships in her hands and flew to Noma in the Satsuma domain. She became Matsuo Daimyojin, the protector of seafarers. Whenever alien or Japanese vessels encountered disasters, people immediately prayed to her for help. (KYŌTO DAIGAKU BUNGAKUBU KOKUGOGAKU KOKUBUNGAKU KENKYŪSHITSU 1996, 77-78)

The same story can also be found in the *Honchō kaidan koji* 本朝怪談故事 and *Wakan senyōshū* (KANAZAWA 1944, 2: 15-16).

Third, the landing theory suggests that Mazu arrived in southern Kagoshima by boat and her descendants lived in the villages at the bottom of Nomadake. The *Sangoku meishō zue* introduces this legend as follows:

The deity [Mazu] landed in Akōgi 赤生木 Village in the south of Nomadake. The locals said the body of the Goddess Mazu drifted there. Another legend has it that the Goddess Mazu came by a hollow ship. The villagers were surprised and gave her a grass mat to sit on. Now at the end of the year, her descendants bring oranges to worship her at the Nomayama Shrine. This is the folk religion of the local villagers. (GODAI and HASHIGUCHI 1905, ch. 27, 28)

In the Satsuma domain, Mazu was given Shinto titles such as Nomayama Daigongen and Matsuo Myojin. Both "Noma" and "Matsuo" were likely derived from the Japanese pronunciation of "Rōma" and "Maso" (LI 1978, 509). The

Mazu belief developed within the Shinto framework, and Mazu was worshiped by Satsuma people as a Shinto deity. Unlike its counterpart in the Mito domain, the Mazu belief in the Satsuma domain was not considered an alien folk religion and thus did not invite suppression or criticism from nativist leaders and scholars.

Mazu and Ototachibanahime

Many villagers and fishermen of the Mito domain worshiped Mazu and the Shinto sea deity Ototachibanahime together. The combined acts of worship for these two sea deities in local shrines were largely due to the religious policy and local customs of the Mito domain. Some fishermen confused Ototachibanahime with Mazu so as to resolve the psychological conflict in worshiping an alien deity.

According to a legend from Ōmi no kuni 近江国 that was popularized in the Edo period, Ototachibanahime, the wife (or concubine) of the legendary prince of the Yamato dynasty Yamato Takeru 日本武尊, threw herself into the stormy sea along the west coast of the Bōsō 房総 Peninsula to soften the rage of the sea god and save her husband. After her death, Ototachibanahime was worshiped as a protector of seafarers and a guardian goddess for safe childbirth (ASANO 1986, 561). There was mention of Tachibana Jinja 橘神社, a shrine dedicated to Ototachibanahime, as early as the mid-Heian period in the *Engishiki*. The worship of Ototachibanahime became more prevalent in the medieval and early modern periods all over Japan, as seen from the establishment of a number of shrines for Ototachibanahime including Ototachibanahime Jinja 弟橘姫神社, Tachibana Jinja 橘樹神社, Azuma Jinja 吾妻神社, Azuma Jinja 吾孀神社, and Hashirimizu Jinja 走水神社. In particular, the villagers and fishermen who lived in the coastal area of the southern Kanto region were enthusiastic supporters of Ototachibanahime worship.

The Shintoization of Mazu started soon after Mazu belief was introduced to the Mito domain in the late seventeenth century. Mazu was given Shinto titles or associated with Ototachibanahime. In 1682, Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628–1701), the second daimyo of the Mito domain, invited the late Ming refugee-monk Donggao Xinyue 東皋心越 (Tōkō Shinetsu, 1639–1696) to his domain to teach Sōtō Zen Buddhism. Mitsukuni supported the doctrine of the unity of Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism and was interested in introducing Chinese culture.⁶ Xinyue carried two wooden statues of Mazu allegedly from Yongfusi

6. Mitsukuni was anti-Buddhist in his early years and later came to believe in the doctrine of the three teachings. Although he ordered the destruction of illegal Buddhist temples, he sheltered Chinese refugee scholars and monks and promoted Confucian rituals and Chinese folk religions (XU 2008).

永福寺 at West Lake near Hangzhou and some Taoist texts on Mazu, including the *Tienfeijing*, with him to the Mito domain.

On the sixth day of the fourth month in 1690, Mitsukuni attended the opening ceremony of the Isohama Tenpi Jinja 磯浜天妃神社 (also called the Tenpisan Maso Gongensha 天妃山媽祖權現社 or Tenpisansha 天妃山社), a shrine built on Mitsukuni's order and dedicated to Mazu on a small hill, Tenpisan (literally "Hill of Mazu"), near the seashore of Iwaichō 祝町 (now Ōarai). A wooden statue of Mazu was enshrined and Mazu received the Shinto-Buddhist title *gongen* 權現 (avatar, meaning that Shinto deities were incarnations of Buddhist divinities). A lighthouse was erected on the top of Tenpisan to aid maritime navigation. The Mito scholar Nakayama Nobuna 中山信名 (1787–1836) wrote about this shrine as follows:

This deity was introduced by the Zen master Xinyue who founded the Jushōzan 壽昌山 [Gionji 祇園寺]. It is said that on the sixth day of April in the third year of the Genroku era, our former lord Gikō 義公 [Mitsukuni's posthumous title] attended the ceremony. This deity was the protector of seafarers and all fishermen believed in her. The top priest of the shrine built a lighthouse, which was lit up every night so that seafarers could recognize the route.

(NAKAYAMA 1899, 824)

The second Mazu shrine was built in Isohara 磯原 (now north Ibaraki) in the same year. On the twenty-sixth day of the seventh month, the Yakushi Nyoraiji 薬師如来寺 was converted into the Isohara Tenpi Jinja and its nearby seaside hill was named the Tenpisan (NOGUCHI and MATSUMOTO 1986).⁷ The shrine housed two statues of Mazu. Xinyue performed the *kaiguang* 開光 (literally "opening the light"), a ritual for new religious images of veneration, and composed two poems to celebrate this event (CHEN 1994, 157). Mitsukuni strove to promote maritime trade and Isohara played an important role as a major port. Hence, the worship of Mazu was meant to assure the safety of ships (LAI 2016, 94). The Zen monk Daiten Kenjō 大典顯常 (1719–1801) writes in the *Tenpisanhi* 天妃山碑:

The consecration ceremony was performed for the statues of the Heavenly Princess. The Isohara Tenpi Shrine in Taga County of Hitachi housed the statues donated by Donggao Xinyue. Seizan Gikō 西山義公 [Mitsukuni] built the shrine and it was completed on the twenty-sixth day of the seventh month in the third year of the Genroku era. For a long time, her spirit had protected maritime traders countless times. Hence, a stone monument was erected to praise her.

(NOGUCHI and MATSUMOTO 1986, 44)

7. According to the *Shinpen Hitachi kokushi* 新編常陸国誌, both the Isohama Tenpi Jinja and the Isohara Tenpi Jinja were founded in 1690. However, Akizuki Kan'ei believes that the Isohara Tenpi Jinja was built in 1692 (AKIZUKI 1962).

The Mazu belief was Shintoized from the very beginning in the Mito domain. Although the Isohama Tenpi Jinja and the Isohara Tenpi Jinja worshiped Mazu, they were Shinto shrines and the worshipers were Japanese. Many Shinto practices were added to the Mazu rituals. For example, in Ming-Qing China, the Mazu Festival was held on the twenty-third day of the third month (Mazu's birthday), the twenty-third day of the seventh month (Great Heat), and the twenty-third day of the ninth month (Autumn Equinox). The Chinese in Nagasaki also worshiped Mazu on these three days (USUKU 1936, 77). On the twenty-third day of the third month, the Mito people worshiped both Mazu and Seishi Bosatsu 勢至菩薩 (Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva). Seishi Bosatsu and Kannon were two feminized bodhisattvas who served as the two main attendants of Amida Nyōrai. Some Japanese believed that Mazu was a manifestation of Seishi Bosatsu and thus worshiped them together on Mazu's birthday.⁸ An ancient text reads: "The Celestial Queen Holy Mother [Mazu] is locally known as Seishi Bosatsu" (LI 1978, 52–54). The Mito people also worshiped Mazu on Double Fifth Festival, Double Ninth Festival, and Double Tenth Festival. The Isohara Tenpi Jinja celebrated its founding day on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month. Unlike their Chinese counterparts, Japanese worshipers did not present incense, chicken, or pork to Mazu. Instead, following Japanese customs, they presented rice, fish, and wine on the birthday of Mazu (the twenty-third day of the third month), calamus on Double Fifth Festival (the fifth day of the fifth month), chrysanthemums on Double Ninth Festival (the ninth day of the ninth month), and rice spikes on Double Tenth Festival (the tenth day of the tenth month).

Tentokuji 天徳寺 (also Gionji) in Mito became the third place in the Mito domain to worship Mazu.⁹ Asano Fuzan 淺野斧山 (1866–1912), a monk of the temple, writes about the beginning of the Mazu worship in the Mito domain:

The founding Zen master [Xinyue] prayed [Mazu] at Yongfusi at West Lake and regarded her as the protector of seafarers. In the third year of Genroku, under the command of Minamoto Gikō [Mitsukuni], replicas [of Mazu's statue] were enshrined in two places, namely Iwaichō County and Isohara

8. This idea can be found in the inscription on the Nijūsanyatō 二十三夜塔 (Twenty-Three Night Tower) (KIKUCHI 2017, 39).

9. Besides Mito, Iwaichō, and Isohara, there were two more places, Ogawamachi 小川町 and Kashima 鹿島, in the Mito domain that were related to Mazu worship. Ogawamachi was an inter-waterway port between Edo and Mito, whereas Kashima was an important trading port. Tenshōji 天聖寺 in Ogawamachi had three Mazu statues donated by Tokugawa Mitsukuni, whereas Kashima had the Oritsu Tenpi Jinja 下津天妃神社. The Oritsu Tenpi Jinja worshiped Toyotamahime 豊玉姫, a Shinto female deity who could guarantee safety for delivery and navigation and was considered to be Funadama by some Japanese. The relationship between Toyotamahime and Mazu in Kashima remains unknown.

Village. The original statues were kept in our monastery for the people to pray for maritime safety at dawn and dusk. (LI 1978, 571)

Under the patronage of Mitsukuni, Xinyue became affiliated with Tentokuji in 1691 and the two statues of Mazu were enshrined in the temple. Based on Xinyue's advice, the Tentokuji held an annual ritual to worship Mazu and celebrate her birthday on the twenty-third day of the third month in the Ming Chinese fashion.

Due to the dramatic change in religious policy in the reign of the ninth daimyo Tokugawa Nariaki 徳川斉昭 (1800–1860), Mazu belief was further Shintoized in the Mito domain. In 1831, Nariaki carried out religious reform and banned the worship of alien deities. Mazu was replaced by Ototachibanahime in both Iwaichō and Isohara. The two Mazu shrines were turned into the Ototachibanahime Shrine. The lighthouse ceased to function on the Tenpisan in Isohama. The statue of Mazu was removed from the shrine in Isohara and a mirror representing Ototachibanahime filled in. The Ototachibanahime Shrine 弟橘媛神社 in Isohara also worshiped the two Shinto sea deities, Ryūgūshin 龍宮神 (Deity of the Dragon Palace) and Funadama.¹⁰ The grand festival day was changed from the twenty-third day of the third month (Mazu's birthday) to the third day of the fourth month (Spring Festival). It was celebrated in a Shinto fashion, and sumo and kabuki were also performed to entertain the deities as well as the villagers (IBARAKI KEN MATSURI GYŌJI CHŌSA IINKAI 2020, 270).

The abolition of Mazu worship in the Mito domain resulted in some resistance from the people who had prayed to Mazu for maritime safety for one-hundred-and-forty-one years. In 1845 and 1847, fourteen villagers from Isohara and Ōzu filed a petition to the Jisha Bugyō 寺社奉行, the domain official who supervised shrines and temples, complaining that they suffered from shipwrecks and poor catches since the Mazu statues were removed from the Isohara Tenpi Jinja. They wrote: "Since then, the fishery has been terrible and maritime transport has been difficult.... We hope that the statues of Tenpi [Mazu] will be returned to us" (LI 1978, 584). The daimyo finally returned the Mazu statues, and they were again enshrined in the Ototachibanahime Shrine. The people worshiped both Ototachibanahime and Mazu in the shrine and called Ototachibanahime "Tenpisan" 天妃さん (Ms. Celestial Consort) (HIGANO 1973, 120).¹¹

Mazu belief in the Mito domain spread to northern Honshu and the Tohoku region of Honshu. Mazu was worshiped by the people in the Shimokita 下北

10. Ryūgūshin was a sea goddess who gained popularity in Kyushu. Some Japanese associated this goddess with Toyotamahime. Yunnan in China also had this goddess.

11. When the Japanese associated a Shinto deity with a Chinese deity, they often added "san" to the Chinese name. For example, people in Dohōmachi 道修町, the herbal medicine center in Osaka, called the Shinto medicine deity Sukunahikona no mikoto 少彦名命 "Shinnōsan" 神農さん.

Peninsula and the Sendai domain where she was associated with Ukanomitama 倉稻魂, the goddess of agriculture, instead of Ototachibanahime.

A small Mazu shrine, Tenpi Gongengū, was built in 1696 in Ōmamachi 大間町 on Shimokita Peninsula. According to the *Tenpi engi* by the ethnologist Sugae Masumi 菅江真澄 (1754–1829), in 1695 a ship from Ōmamachi had an accident off the coast of Mito. The captain called Mazu for help and eventually the ship survived the storm. To express gratitude for Mazu's protection, the representative of the Ōmamachi Satō Gozaemon 佐藤五左衛門 built the Tenpi Gongengū inside the Ōma Inari Jinja 大間稲荷神社 in 1696. A painting of Mazu from the Mito domain and a statue of Mazu from the Satsuma domain were enshrined in the Ōma Inari Jinja where Mazu was worshiped as “Tenpi Maso Daigongen” 天妃媽祖大権現 and Funadama (SUGAE 1931, 629–631; SHIMONO 2005, 344–345). An ancient text kept in the Tenpi Gongengū records the origin of Mazu worship in the Shimokita Peninsula as follows:

The Heavenly Princess, or Tenpi Maso Daigongen according to her Shinto title, together with Guanyin and Myōken 妙現 Bosatsu safeguard maritime transport. In China, she was called Chuanyu [Funadama]. Her statue was shipped to Dazaifu in Chikuzen (now Fukuoka) and was later invited to the Mito domain. During the Genroku era, the people of Yoshida Village brought it to this shrine. (KISHI 2001, 25)

Ōma Inari Jinja held the Mazu Festival twice a year: the twenty-third day of the third month (Mazu's birthday, Spring Festival) and the twenty-third day of the seventh month (Autumn Festival). The Mazu shrines in the Mito domain put more emphasis on the twenty-third day of the third month, whereas Ōma Inari Jinja regarded the twenty-third day of the seventh month as the grand festival day. The decision was made mainly based on a very peculiar reason: July was the time to celebrate the harvest of seaweed along the coast of Shimokita Peninsula and thus the villagers chose this time to express their gratitude to Mazu (FUJITA 2008b). Mazu was Shintoized in the Ōma Inari Jinja, granted a Shinto title, and worshiped as a Shinto deity. She was mixed with Funadama and worshiped together with Ukanomitama. When the Mito domain used Ototachibanahime to replace Mazu in the late Tokugawa period, the Ōma Inari Jinja did not follow.

Mazu belief was introduced to Sendai in 1795, one hundred years after the Shimokita Peninsula. The Sendai domain and the Mito domain were partners in maritime trade. Ships from the Mito domain often stopped over in Sendai, while Sendai merchants and retainers frequently visited the Mito domain. In 1794, a Sendai retainer named Seto Ichidōsai 瀬戸一道齋 was sent to the Mito domain to bring rice back to Sendai. He heard that the goddess worshiped in the Isohara Tenpi Jinja was very efficacious and thus he carried a replica of a painting of Mazu back to his own domain. In the following year, the Mazu image was enshrined

in the Arasaki Inarisha 荒崎稲荷社 (now Arasaki Jinja) in Shichigahamamachi 七ヶ浜町 (TAKAHASHI 2009, 124). Like the Ōma Inari Jinja, the Arasaki Inarisha also worshiped Mazu together with its main object of worship, Ukanomitama.

Concluding Remarks

Shintoization was a mechanism for the Japanese to amalgamate foreign folk religions into their indigenous tradition. Legends about Mazu in Japan remind us of similar legends about Xu Fu, Yang Guifei, and Wu Taibo. Like Mazu, Xu, Yang, and Wu were also localized in Tokugawa Japan and were associated with Shinto deities (NG 2019, 3–70). Mazu provides an excellent case study to demonstrate how a Chinese deity can turn into a Shinto deity or be worshiped in Shinto shrines.

Japan has had a special place in the Mazu belief sphere in Asia. Mazu was mainly worshiped by Chinese sojourners or migrants in East Asia and Southeast Asia and thus the level of localization was not high (LI 1999, 223–229). The localization of Mazu in Japan was relatively stronger in the Tokugawa period. Modern scholars have divided Mazu belief in Japan into two systems: western Japan (represented by Nagasaki) belonged to the overseas Chinese system and eastern Japan (represented by the Mito domain) belonged to the Japanese sea deity system (SAKURAI 2012, 41). This research indicates that the Japanese worshipping Mazu as a Shinto deity was not a practice only in eastern Japan but could also be found in other parts of Japan, Kyushu in particular. Mazu was worshiped in Tokugawa Japan by fishermen and shipbuilders in different regions as well as by local people in the Mito and Satsuma domains in Shinto style. The high degree of localization in Japan can be seen from the religious titles, dates of worship, rituals, legends, images, temple designs, and functions. Mazu belief in Tokugawa Japan provides a good example of how the Japanese transformed Chinese culture into a hybrid one or used Chinese culture as building blocks to construct their own culture. Mazu in China and Maso in Japan carry the same Chinese characters, but they are different in many ways due to the Shintoization of this Chinese deity in Japan.

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