

A patron deity for each occupation! 做哪一行就拜什麼神！



Matsu devotees scramble to touch a statue of Matsu in hope of good luck as the statue is carried back to its home temple during the Tachia Matsu pilgrimage in Taichung County in March this year.

PHOTO: LIAO YAO-TUNG, LIBERTY TIMES

今年三月，台中縣大甲媽祖回鑾安座大典，信徒爭相搶摸神龕，祈求平安！ 照片：自由時報記者廖耀東

Those in the sex industry worship Chu Pa-chieh, also known as "Pigsy", while gamblers worship Han Hsin. There are different guardian and patron deities for every profession. Until Aug. 23, the National Center for Traditional Arts in Ilan County will be holding a special exhibition called the Trades and Deities Exhibition. Visit the center to find out who the patron deity of your profession is and their history.

A representative of the center said the saying that "every profession has a god and a founding father" means every profession has its own guardian or patron deities. According to folk belief, if you offer incense, you will be protected. This gives spiritual comfort, and it has become a practice among those who want to get ahead in a competitive profession to rely on the assistance of religion and faith.

Each profession has its own god. For example, Tsai Lun, the inventor of papermaking, is the patron deity for the papermaking industry. Tsao Chun, the Kitchen God, is worshipped by chefs as their patron deity. Sometimes, a god does not watch over one single profession — Lu Ban is the patron deity of both carpenters and builders. After Matsu's elevation to the exalted level of "heavenly queen," she became an omnipotent goddess that is not only the patron deity of sailors and fishermen, but also one of the guardian deities of all Taiwanese.

During these tough economic times and contracting markets, many people pray to patron deities to offer protection and help. The National Center for Traditional Arts has therefore set up the Trades and Deities Exhibition to pray to all gods to support all professions and industries.

The recent opening ceremony for the exhibition was attended by Ko Chi-liang, director of the Preparatory Office of the National Headquarters of Taiwan Traditional Arts, and others

holding up tokens reading "May all professions prosper and make lots of money" and then sticking them in a cornucopia of wealth.

Taiwan has many emerging industries and the National Center for Traditional Arts has come up with the idea to create deities for these new professions. For example, what god should the paparazzi worship? The answer is Fu Hsi, the inventor of the Eight Trigrams, or "bagua," which is also Chinese slang for gossip. Meng Chiang Nu could be the patron deity for the demolition business, because she made the Great Wall of China fall over by crying. These examples are imaginative applications of ancient legends, and the center welcomes you to come up with more ideas for new deities.

Apart from Fu Hsi and Meng Chiang Nu, Mother Yueh, the mother of General Yueh Fei and famous for the tattoo she etched on her son's back, could become the patron deity for the tattoo business. Matsu had a Dharma Protector called "Thousand-li Eye" who could see the finest details of everything. He could therefore be the patron deity of the photographic equipment business, while those in the mobile phone and telecommunications industry could worship Matsu's other Dharma Protector, "Wind-following Ear," because he could hear everything and recognize a person by only hearing their voice.

Detectives could worship Tathagata, who, according to legend, no one can escape. Nazha, who rides on fire wheels, could be the patron deity of the bicycle industry and drivers, while prosecutors could worship Judge Bao, known for his impartiality. The National Center for Traditional Arts said these are creative suggestions for deities and their success will depend on whether those in the related professions will agree with them.

(LIBERTY TIMES, TRANSLATED BY DREW CAMERON)

TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. profession /pr f n/ n.

職業 (zhi2 ye4)

例: Members of the banking profession met to discuss the new banking law.

(銀行同業會面討論新的銀行法。)

2. rely /r la / v.

依賴 (yi1 lai4)

例: It's good to have friends you can rely on.

(有可以依賴的朋友真好。)

3. paparazzi /p p r ts / n.

狗仔隊 (gou2 zai3 dui4)

例: The paparazzi are a constant source of annoyance to many celebrities.

(許多名人一直受狗仔隊騷擾。)

4. telecommunications /t l k mjun ke n/ n.

電信傳播 (dian4 xin4 chuan2 bo1)

例: The telecommunications industry has had a very successful year.

(電信業這一年的業績相當亮眼。)

情

色業拜「豬八戒」、博奕業拜「韓信」，各行各業都有自己的守護神及祖師爺，宜蘭縣國立傳統藝術中心即日起到八月二十三日推出「行業與神」特展，走一趟傳藝中心，就可知道自己行業的祖師爺及典故由來。

傳藝中心指出，俗話說「行行有神、行行有宗」，神與宗，指的是各行各業守護神或祖師爺，台灣民間信仰有著「有燒香，有保庇」的心理作用，想要在競爭激烈的各行各業佔有一席之地，借助宗教與信仰已成為一種習俗慣例。各行各業都有行業神，發明造紙術的蔡倫，就被製紙業尊奉為祖師；「灶君」是爐火之神，廚師奉為祖師爺；有時神尊並非僅守護單一行業，例如木匠和瓦匠都以魯班為祖師爺，媽祖神格提升到「天后」的崇高地位，擴展成全能之神，不只是航海、漁民之神，更是台灣全民的守護神。

經濟不景氣、市場萎縮，許多人祈求祖師爺庇蔭走出困境，傳統藝術中心特別推出「行業與神」特展，祈求「天地諸神、共扶百業」。

「行業與神」特展日前舉辦開幕活動，由台灣傳統藝術總處籌備處主任柯基良等人，手持「百業興旺、財源廣進」令牌，插在聚寶盆內為活動揭開序幕。

台灣有許多新興行業，傳藝中心提出創意思考，創造新的行業神，「狗仔隊」應拜什麼神？答案是「伏羲大帝」，因為祂發明八卦；孟姜女則可作為拆除業者之神，因為她哭倒萬里長城，有點「腦筋急轉彎」，歡迎一起來造神。

除了伏羲大帝及孟姜女，岳母（岳飛母親）可作為刺青業的行業神，因為她創造史上最著名的刺青；媽祖護法千里眼可觀千里、觀察入微，可作為攝影器材業者行業神，順風耳作為手機通訊業者行業神，自能耳聽八方、聽音辨人。

徵信業可拜「如來佛」，因為「誰也逃不出如來佛手掌心」；腳踏風火輪的三太子哪吒，則可作為自行車業者及司機行業神；包公鐵面無私，可作為檢調行業神；傳藝中心指出，這些是有創意與巧思的造神運動，能否成功，當然要取決於相關行業業者能否認同。

(自由時報記者游明金)