

Dragon Boat Festival

Dragon Boat Festival is one of the most important festivals in Chinese culture. It's always on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, and together with Mid-Autumn Festival and Chinese New Year, forms one of the three major Chinese holidays. People in Taiwan will celebrate this day in many ways: adults will drink hsiung huang wine while children wrap sachets and stand eggs upright at noon. The whole family will wrap rice dumplings and watch dragon boat races on TV or even watch them in person. All of these activities are about the traditional Chinese culture and each of them has their own story.

The first story is about why adults drink hsiung huang wine and children wrap sachets. It is because the weather in summer time is always hot and humid in southern China and it can cause many diseases. At this time of the year, medical resources are low and not so good. For villagers, diseases are evil things and can end a person's life. They believe if adults drink hsiung huang wine and children wrap sachets on that day, it will prevent evil things from happening and bring peace to

them. If you can stand an egg upright at noon, then the coming year will be a lucky one for you.

The second story is about rice dumplings, which is about the patriotic poet Chu Yuan. It is said that after the poet Chu Yuan ended his life by drowning, people began throwing balls of rice wrapped in bamboo leaves into the river to keep the fish from eating the patriot's body. Nowadays, there are many flavors of rice dumplings. Some are sweet, and some are salty. They all taste very good but we will no longer throw rice dumplings into the river. We eat them ourselves. The most important thing is that the whole family will get together to wrap rice dumplings and share in the happy time on that day.

The third story is about rowing the dragon boat, which is also related to the patriotic poet Chu Yuan. Because the villagers wanted to save Chu Yuan's life after he jumped into the river, they rowed their boats out to find his body, but in vain. Now, it has become dragon boat races and the rules of the race are that the rowers will row to the rhythm of pounding drums. The winning team is the one that first grabs the flag at the end

of the river course. It's very exciting and the difference between victory and defeat may be only a few fractions of a second. Because of the excitement and fun, the dragon boat races have become the most famous activity of the Dragon Boat Festival.

Here in Chai-yi County, the government will hold dragon boat races at Dong Shi Fisherman's Wharf. On that day, there will be hundreds of thousands of people there. They will join some of the very exciting games and watch from the river banks cheering on their favorite Dragon Boat team. You really should come here one day to feel the atmosphere, and see how we celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival. You will never forget it!