

## Cultural Analysis 文化解析

In this episode we are given another glance at Taiwan's cultural life. For foreign visitors, they may see Dragon Boat Festivals as something that is simultaneously (同時地) odd and fascinating. The festival had its origin in around 275B.C. in memory of a great Chinese scholar Qu Yuan (屈原) during the Warring States Period (戰國時代). In traditional folklore, it was said that, since he threw himself into the Miluo River (汨羅江) to die, villagers could not properly bury him. They made rice dumplings and tossed them into the water to feed the fish in hopes that, this way, Qu Yuan's body would not be eaten by the fish. Also, it became a yearly ritual for the villagers to ride boats over the river on the fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar calendar every year and make noises—sounding gongs, playing music, banging on drums, etc.—because they also wanted to keep the evil spirits away from Qu Yuan's body. This way, villagers believed, Qu Yuan's body would be protected, and at least in death he would not be disturbed.

This is how the Dragon Boat Festival came to be. The day gradually turned into a celebration of life, and provides an opportunity for men and women to compete against one another in dragon boat races. Dragon boating is not a sport to the Chinese. It is a way to grieve for a great man and to celebrate life. It is a tradition that brings people from different villages and backgrounds together.

In Western cultures, there is not a similar cultural tradition as the Chinese Dragon Boat competitions, but rowing is a very common sport found in many colleges. Many students join rowing clubs to have fun and train, and, like in Dragon Boat Festivals, there are healthy competitions. School teams are formed, and they travel everywhere to compete with other schools in hopes of bringing glory home to their colleges.