

Model Composition 3 – The Dragon Boat Festival

Many years ago, in ancient China, there lived a virtuous man called Qu Yuan. Qu Yuan was a high official in the state of Chu. He was such a patriotic man that when he found out that he had failed to protect Chu against invaders, he drowned himself in a river. When the local people found out what had happened, they raced out on dragon boats and threw rice dumplings into the river. They loved Qu Yuan so much that they were hoping to prevent the fish from eating his body by giving them rice dumplings.

Today, we celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival by eating glutinous rice dumplings similar to those thrown to the fish so long ago. We call these rice dumplings 'zongzi', and they are traditionally wrapped in bamboo leaves and have various types of fillings. The ones that my grandmother makes every year are wrapped in pandan leaves and have meat fillings. They are time-consuming to make. The result, however, is always worth it. The pyramid-shaped dumplings are absolutely delicious!

Every year during this time, dragon boat races are held on the Singapore River. Dragon boats are long, narrow paddle boats that have a carved dragon head attached to their fronts. About eighteen paddlers are seated in pairs on the boat. Dragon boat races are very exciting. People gather along the river to watch and cheer on their favourite teams.

Although I do not see how Qu Yuan's patriotism is related to eating dumplings and dragon boat racing, I still enjoy the Dragon Boat Festival every year.