

# **Chinese Dragon Boat Festival**

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## **Overview**

Little is known about the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival by most non-Chinese Americans, yet much is to be learned about the Chinese culture and history by learning about this holiday. The celebration of the Dragon Boat Festival is believed to be based upon many cultural and historical events of China. There are tales of superstition, loyalty, family, treachery, disease, patriotism, honor, and war told over more than 2200 years. All are believed to have contributed to the way the holiday is celebrated.

This curriculum unit provides a detailed description of the many events that are believed to have contributed to the celebration of the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival. It is not known how or why this holiday began but there are several historical and social explanations that are widely accepted. By focusing on this holiday as a curriculum unit the learner develops an understanding of a larger world outside the family and community. The learner engages in activities that teach the history and customs of China. Comparisons are drawn between the customs and holidays of the learner and the Chinese people. This unit helps the learner to gain an appreciation for differences between people, while also gaining an understanding of the similarities among people. A variety of hands-on activities are included with the unit. This teacher plans to use the curriculum unit throughout May and into June, the approximate time when the Dragon Boat Festival occurs. The culminating activity is the actual celebration of the Dragon Boat Festival which will coincide with the final days of the school year.

This curriculum unit has been designed to be used by Kindergarten teachers but can be adapted to any grade-level. Included is a brief history of China, an explanation of the importance of the dragon, a description of the sub-tropical climate of this region of the world and the possible impact of this on the creation of the celebration of this holiday, the legend of Qu Yuan, and the role of superstition in the Chinese culture. There is also a

description of how this holiday is celebrated today and the growing interest in dragon boat racing as a sport in its own right.

## **Rationale**

Holidays and celebrations provide an easy motivation for students of all ages. This is evident prior to the fall and winter holidays when the excitement level in the classroom rises and maintaining student attention to instruction becomes increasingly difficult. Teachers know that the easiest way to get their students' attention is to embed curriculum objectives into the approaching celebration. This is no less true as the school year is coming to an end, the weather is warm, and thoughts have turned to playing outdoors. The Dragon Boat Festival provides an opportunity to explore a theme that takes us outside the classroom. This teacher has a particular interest in this holiday through the sport of dragon boat racing so it seemed appropriate to create a curriculum unit that not only shares a bit of myself with my students but possibly exposes them to learning outside their realm of experience. A good teacher begins a lesson by building background for the lesson. Prior knowledge is the foundation this background rests upon. When teaching young children the teacher relies upon their experiences within their own family. This is the starting place for my curriculum unit on the Dragon Boat Festival.

## **A Brief History of China**

Throughout the dragon boat racing community in the United States it is widely known that the sport has grown from the celebration of the festival. The story of the poet and statesman, Qu Yuan, is cited as the origin of the celebration. However, when I began to research the holiday I found that many more historical events and customs are associated with dragon boat festival. In fact, dragon boat festival was already celebrated during the Warring States Period when Qu Yuan lived. I found that learning about the history of China gave all of the events and customs of the festival a foundation that increased my understanding of the importance of this celebration. What follows is just a very brief history of China to help the reader gain this perspective in order to more fully understand what follows in this unit. I have attempted to note one important aspect of each historical period.

China is one of the oldest civilizations, continuing for over 4,000 years to the present day. Chinese history is divided into three eras: Ancient, Imperial, and Modern. The first prehistoric dynasty was Xia (about the twenty-first to the sixteenth century BC). Archeologists have found bronze implements and tombs in the same locations as those cited in ancient Chinese historical texts ("China").

The Shang dynasty (also called the Yin dynasty) existed from 1700 to 1027 BC. Important events of this time were the development of a writing system and the use of bronze metallurgy. The Zhou dynasty began when the last Shang ruler was overthrown. The Zhou dynasty lasted from 1027 to 221 BC. It was during this period that philosophers spoke of the 'mandate of heaven,' a ruler governed by divine right and, therefore, if dethroned it was due to a loss of mandate. In 771 BC the ruler was killed by

invading barbarians. The capital was moved eastward at this time, creating Western Zhou era (1027-771 BC) and Eastern Zhou era (771-221 BC). Eastern Zhou era is divided into two periods: Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC) and Warring States Period (475-221 BC) (Poon).

The Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period were a time of disunity and unrest. However, they were also a time of cultural prosperity and known as the “golden age” of China. Many different philosophies developed during the late Spring and Autumn and early Warring States Periods. Embedded in the teaching of Confucius, came the basis for traditional society with its emphasis on order and virtue. This was further developed by Mencius, a disciple of Confucian thought, with his belief that man was by nature good. He stated that a ruler could only rule by consent of the people and, therefore, an unpopular ruler would lose the “mandate of heaven” (Wright 125).

Yin-yang and the five elements was another school of thought during the Warring States Period. This theory explains the universe in terms of complementary forces yin (dark, cold, female, negative) and yang (light, hot, male, positive) and the five elements (water, fire, wood, metal, and earth) (Wright 125).

The Imperial Era was ushered in when the state of Qin won over its last rival state to unify the states for the first time. The king of Qin took the title First Emperor. At this time the Chinese language was standardized. Also during the Qin Dynasty, the 5,000 kilometer great wall was connected. During the Han, Sui, Jin, and Ming Dynasties four great walls were rebuilt or extended to create the Great Wall we know today. The Qin Dynasty lasted from 221BC to 206 BC (Wright 126-127).

China’s territory was expanded during the Han Dynasty (206BC to 220 AD) which helped to create the Silk Road in Central Asia. After the fall of the Han Dynasty, China went through another era of upheaval lasting throughout the Three Kingdoms (AD 220-280), Jin (AD 265-420), Southern and Northern Dynasties (AD 420-589). Gunpowder (at this time for use in fireworks only) and the wheelbarrow were invented during these years. There was a brief reunification of China during the Sui Dynasty (AD 581-617). The Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907) is considered a high point in Chinese civilization. During this time the popularity of Buddhism became a part of Chinese culture and scholar-officials, chosen using a civil service examination, served as intermediaries between the people and the government.

From 907-960 (Period of 5 Dynasties and 10 Kingdoms) China was fragmented until the Song Dynasty came into power (960-1279). It was during the Song Dynasty that China became the first government to issue paper money.

Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, ruled China during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), thus, becoming the first alien dynasty to rule China. Cultural diversity developed throughout this period with an increase of West Asian and European influences. The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) followed. It is noted for an increase in

maritime expeditions. The final imperial dynasty, the Qing (1644-1911) ended following the death of the emperor amid mass civil disorder.

The Republic of China was established in 1912. The parliament elected Yuan Shikai president of the Republic after much intimidation. He soon dissolved the parliament and established himself as president for life. Amidst widespread rebellion he voiced his intent to reestablish the monarchy. However, in June 1916 he died of natural causes leaving China in upheaval again. Warlords exercised control over their territories until the late 1920s when the country was reunified by Chiang Kai-shek under one-party rule. After the surrender of the Japanese in 1945, China was in Civil War between the Nationalists (led by Chiang Kai-shek) and the Communists (led by Mao Zedong). After the Communists victory they gained control of most of mainland China. Chiang Kai-shek and the Republic of China retreated to Taiwan (“China History”).

Today the People’s Republic of China administers a one-party state on mainland China. The government of Taiwan and surrounding islands is administered by the Republic of China, a democratic multi-party state (China History).

### The Dragon Boat Festival

The Dragon Boat Festival is the third of three major Chinese holidays after the Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn Festival. No one knows when the festival began to be celebrated or why. It takes place on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month following the Chinese lunar calendar. The 5<sup>th</sup> month is considered to be unlucky and the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the month is considered the unluckiest day of the year. One legend tells of Tian Wen who was born on this day. It was believed that children born on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month were very difficult and would bring misfortune to their families. Tian Wen’s father made numerous attempts to murder him and finally banished him from their home. Tian Wen eventually became Prime Minister of a Chinese state. He ordered that the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month be considered a regular day so no other child would ever have to experience what he had (Parkinson).

In spite of this, this day is still celebrated, even today. The holiday normally comes some where between May and mid-June. This time of year is the beginning of summer when the heat of the subtropical climate in southern China and Taiwan begins. In the past during this time of the year contagious diseases thrived. Perhaps this is the reason families began to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival for it is an occasion to drive off evil spirits and pestilence. Families are reminded to take care of their health.

Families participate in several customs during this holiday. They hang pictures of the diety Chung Kuei who is the nemesis of evil spirits (“Dragon Boat Festival”). Moxa, or mugwort, an herb that was believed to have powers for preventing illness and strengthening health, was traditionally hung on doors. Also hung on doors was calamus. Calamus is also called ‘water sword’ due to its resemblance to a sword and is supposed to have the ability to ward off evil (“Dragon Boat Festival, Chinese Traditional Festivals”). Another custom to maintain health is for adults to drink a small amount of rice wine

mixed with the mineral hsiung huang. Since children cannot drink this potion, a few drops are drawn into the Chinese character for 'king' on their forehead to give them the same protection. Many of these customs have begun to fade in modern society. However, one that has not is the wearing of fragrant sachets around the neck. These sachets are made from colorful silk and filled with flowers and herbs. At one time these sachets were sewn by hand but today they are purchased in shops in a variety of shapes and styles ("Dragon Boat Festival").

Tying five-color silk thread to a child's wrist, ankle, and around their neck, is yet another custom believed to protect the child from evil. According to folklore, the five-color thread contains magical and healing powers. A child must remain silent as the threads are tied on. The threads cannot be removed until after the first summer rain. They are then removed and thrown into the river. The five colors represent the five elements: red – fire, black – water, yellow – earth, white – metal, blue – wood. It is believed these "threads of long life" will protect the child from diseases ("Dragon Boat Festival"; Chan)

Another custom associated with the Dragon Boat Festival is to 'fetch noon water' ("Dragon Boat Festival"). This custom is believed to have started during the mid-seventeenth century. Koxinga, a Ming loyalist, led his troops to Taiwan. Unable to find water, he drove his sword into the ground hoping to find it. When he did it was believed to be a miracle. This occurred at noon on the day of the Dragon Boat Festival and, thus, became incorporated into the festivities. At noontime on this day people will make a pilgrimage to where this took place, the Sword Well on Mt. Tiechen in Tachia, or simply climb a mountain to 'fetch noon water.' Another custom that takes place at noon on this day is attempting to stand an egg on its end at exactly this time. It is believed those who are successful will be lucky in the coming year.

### Legend of Qu Yuan

The legend of Qu Yuan is known to all who dragon boat race. Qu Yuan, a great statesman, lived during the Warring States Period. He was Minister of Law and Ordinance for the state of Chu. He is also considered to be the first Chinese Poet. Qu Yuan was very popular with the people. During this time the state of Qin was trying to gain control of Chu and had presented the king with a peace treaty. Qu Yuan did not trust the Qin leaders and advised the king not to sign the treaty. However, the king was threatened by the popularity of Qu Yuan and thought he was trying to gain political power. The king signed the treaty and banished Qu Yuan to a remote region of Hunan province.

Qin did not honor the peace treaty and eventually Chu was overtaken. When Qu Yuan heard this news, on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month, he was so distraught he committed suicide by holding a rock and throwing himself into the Miluo River. When local fisherman heard about this, they raced their boats to recover his body. They beat drums and splashed their paddles to scare away fish. Rice cakes were also thrown into the water to divert the fish from his body. To remember and honor Qu Yuan dragon boat racing

became a part of the Dragon Boat Festival celebration. Tsung Tzu (rice cakes wrapped in bamboo leaves) is a traditional food eaten on this day (“Qu Yuan – The Poet”).

## The Chinese Dragon

Dragons have been an important symbol in the Chinese culture since the beginning of the civilization. Dragon images have been found on shells from as early as ca.3600 B.C.E. Zhang states historians believe that these were inspired by giant crocodiles or even a remnant species of dinosaur (5).

Unlike the Western dragon, the Chinese dragon is believed to bring good fortune and prosperity. The beginning of civilization is attributed to a meeting with a dragon in 2962 B.C. The dragon gave the knowledge of writing, fishing, making music, raising animals, and using a compass to a man named Fu Hsi (Petrini 22-23).

The Chinese dragon consists of nine entities. In the children’s story Legend of the Chinese Dragon by Marie Sellier it is told that the dragon is a creation of one aspect of each protector of the tribes of ancient China. The creation has the head of a camel, ears of a bull, neck of a snake, claws of an eagle, eyes of a hare, horns of a deer, belly of a clam, scales of a carp, and paws of a tiger (“The Chinese Dragon,” primarysource.org).

The Chinese dragon is wise and kind to people. Chinese people love and worship the dragon. During the Imperial Period the emperor declared himself to be descended from dragons and, therefore, also a god. The dragon symbolizes power, excellence, heroism, benevolence, and nobility. A dragon will persevere until success is reached. A Chinese dragon is intelligent, ambitious, energetic, optimistic, and decisive. It brings with it abundance, prosperity, and good fortune (“Chinese Dragons”).

The Chinese dragon is believed to control the weather and rain. It lives in water, on land, and in the sky. It is believed that although the dragon is good, it can also bring disaster if not honored properly. In the past, it was believed that droughts and flooding would occur if the dragon was insulted. It is not unlikely that one of the reasons the Dragon Boat Festival was celebrated was to honor the dragon.

## Dragon Boat Racing Today

Dragon boat racing is one of the fastest growing water sports today. Two types of dragon boat racing are recognized today, sport racing and festival racing. Sport racing occurs around the world following the rules of the International Dragon Boat Federation. Festival racing is a more traditional and informal racing in which rules may vary from event to event (“Dragon Boat Racing as a Modern Sport”).

Dragon boat racing came to North America in the 1980s when the Hong Kong Pavilion at Expo 86 donated four teak dragon boats to the city of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. When boats were loaned to Toronto, Victoria, Seattle and Los

Angeles the sport of dragon boat racing began to spread across North America. Dragon boat racing came to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2002 when Three Rivers Rowing Association was given two boats through the Sprout Fund. Until 2007 dragon boat races in Pittsburgh were held in September as part of the Dragon Boat Festival organized by the Chinese Community. Beginning in 2007 the races were moved to June in order to accommodate the race schedule of the Eastern Regional Dragon Boat Association.

In 1995 a University of British Columbia physician, Dr. Don McKenzie, began researching rehabilitation following diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer (“Breast Cancer Survivor Teams”). Opinion at the time held that strenuous exercise was to be avoided to prevent lymphoedema (swelling of the arm where lymph nodes had been removed). Dr. McKenzie theorized upper body exercise would stimulate the immune system, improve range of motion, and reverse muscle atrophy. In February 1996 he formed a dragon boat team to test his theories. Dragon boating was chosen because it is a strenuous repetitive upper body activity with little risk of injury associated with weight bearing activities such as running. During that first year there were no cases of lymphoedema and many showed an improvement in physical and mental health. Today there are dragon boat breast cancer survivor teams around the world. A common event at dragon boat races is the carnation ceremony, a tribute to those who have lost their lives to this disease and hope for those who have survived.

## **Goals**

I have chosen the theme of Dragon Boat Festival as a means for my students to learn about the culture and customs of another country. To this end the students will develop tolerance for customs, language, and food different from the culture with which the student is familiar. While doing this the students will continue to increase reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and math skills according to the Pennsylvania State Standards. The students will increase fine-motor skills and eye-hand coordination through the variety of activities provided in this curriculum unit. The students will also learn about a new sport. In the culminating activity the students will participate in a fun, end-of-year activity.

## **Objectives**

Using the Dragon Boat Festival as a theme for instruction students will be able to identify the Chinese customs associated with this celebration. The students will compare and contrast these customs to their own customs in celebrating summer holidays. They will locate China and the United States on a map and compare the location in terms of distance and location on the earth. The students will increase comprehension skills by retelling stories that have been read. They will use new vocabulary and increase writing skills by drawing and labeling pictures of dragons. The student will make predictions and use problem-solving skills to create a boat that will float. When making a class

dragon the students will be able to mark-off and measure by inches. Throughout these projects the students will follow multi-step directions to achieve the objectives.

## **Strategies**

The most effective learning strategy for young children is providing many opportunities to manipulate and explore their environment. Lessons in this curriculum unit are organized so that first the students' own knowledge of the subject is explored. In this way a foundation is established on which to build new knowledge. Through the use of graphic organizers and charts and small and large group discussions the students have numerous opportunities to heighten their awareness of prior knowledge and build upon it. Throughout the lessons below there are numerous opportunities for active learning to occur. The students will manipulate and explore the environment through art, music, dance, food, and games.

## **Classroom Activities**

### **Lesson 1**

The introductory lesson should be done in two parts to allow the students adequate time to discuss, compare, contrast the celebration of the dragon boat festival and the summer holidays with which they are most familiar. The objectives of this lesson are to begin a discussion of summer holidays in the United States and China, compare the location of these two countries, and, find the similarities and differences in customs. The students will be able to use new vocabulary, find the United States and China on a map, and describe ways in which the Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated.

#### *Part 1*

I begin the lesson by looking at the calendar and discussing the approaching holiday at the end of May (Memorial Day). At the beginning of the month we mark the calendar with birthdays, holidays, and other special days throughout the month. I teach children who are only 5 and 6 years old so it is not unlikely that they have no recollection of the celebration of the holiday from previous years. Therefore, I must begin my lesson by reminding them of the picnics they might have gone on, the foods they might have eaten, and the special day they may have had when the family was able to stop their normal week-day routine and spend time together. This provides a platform for the young student to recall such days and begin to provide examples of their family on such a day. I also begin here so as to make the point that Memorial Day marks the beginning of our summer season. This allows me to introduce the Dragon Boat Festival as another holiday that marks the beginning of the summer season. Unfortunately, I have not found any picture books about the Dragon Boat Festival for this age group. However, [Awakening the Dragon](#) by Arlene Chan has excellent illustrations and discusses many of the customs. I am also providing photographs of the Washington D.C. Dragon Boat Festival that can be used to initiate discussion. This curriculum unit provides the teacher with enough information and resources to be knowledgeable about the customs of this holiday prior to initiating this lesson. Before ending this lesson show the students where the United

States and China are on a map. Compare the locations in proximity to the equator. If some students are familiar with the southern United States use this comparison to discuss climate. Cut a piece of string or yarn the distance between the two countries. To help the students understand the distance between the two countries, show the students that the string is about half-way around a globe (if one is available). Also, have the students tell you other places they have visited and compare the distances using the string.

### *Part 2*

Begin this part of the lesson by reading a story about another summer holiday, Independence Day. Celebrate Independence Day by Deborah Heiligman is a good choice. Students then complete a venn diagram comparing the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration and the Dragon Boat Festival. Encourage students to tell you how their family celebrates this holiday: swimming, boating, picnics/barbecues, what special foods they eat, watching fireworks, etc. The fireworks of this holiday make this an easier holiday for this age group to recall from the prior year. This is an opportune time to tell the students that the Chinese invented fireworks. Ask them to recall what other customs associated with the Dragon Boat Festival they learned in the prior lesson and add these to the venn diagram. The reinforcing activity for this part of the lesson is to create a fireworks picture. Be sure to use a non-porous paper (finger paint paper works well). The student covers the paper with bright colored crayons then covers the colors with black. Give the students popsicle sticks to carve out the fireworks. It is best to demonstrate this procedure first. When I did this lesson I told my students about the “threads of long life,” prior to leaving our group area. While the students worked on their pictures I put a bracelet on each following the tradition of the child being silent while it was tied on.

### Lesson 2

The objective of this lesson is the students will be able to express the difference between the Chinese dragon and the western dragon. The students will demonstrate their comprehension of a story by retelling what animals comprise the Chinese dragon. They will create a list of these animals and extend the least with other possibilities. The student will then create a dragon using at least five animals and label the corresponding part with the name of the animal. Be cautious with this lesson, you may have a student who is frightened by the idea of dragons.

Begin this lesson by asking the students to tell you what they know about dragons. Create a two-section chart, listing their responses as either a characteristics of a western dragon or a characteristics of a Chinese dragon. Build upon this by telling the students additional characteristics of the Chinese dragon. Read Legend of the Chinese Dragon by Marie Sellier. The student then creates the list of the animals that are or could be part of the Chinese dragon. The lesson is reinforced with the creation of each students dragon. Provide time for the students to share their creations.

### Lesson 3

This lesson is an extension of the previous lesson. During this lesson the students will collaborate and work cooperatively, they will measure and mark-off in specified inches, and they will be introduced to the sound of traditional Chinese music and instruments

At the beginning of this lesson I inform the students that we will be having our own Dragon Boat Festival celebration. I tell them we will need to make a dragon so that we can begin our festival with a parade. The book Dragon Dancing by Carole Lexa Schaefer is an excellent example of a class creating a dragon for their parade. In this book the parade takes the class on an imaginary trip to China. After reading the book discuss how the class might work together to create the dragon. A rectangular box can be used to create the dragon head and a long rope can become its body. Provide streamers for each student to decorate. Introduce the importance of the number five (5<sup>th</sup> month, 5<sup>th</sup> day, 5 elements). Use this number as the number of inches the students will mark off on the body of the dragon. After decorating their streamers each student measures five inches with a ruler and ties the streamer onto the rope. Where each student attaches his/her will become the spot where that student will later hold the dragon. Allow two students at a time to decorate the dragon head. Once all is complete begin to practice having a dragon parade to a recording of traditional Chinese music. Over the next several days practicing this dragon dancing can be used as a release after extended periods of instruction.

#### Lesson 4

This lesson will take several days to complete. During this lesson the students will create dragon boats. The objectives are to make predictions, use problem-solving skills, and create a dragon boat that will float.

The lesson begins with a discussion of what students think will float or sink. Provide a variety of objects and encourage students to make predictions. Test each prediction in a clear tub of water. Create a two-section chart, listing items that float on one side and items that sink on the other. Introduce the idea to make dragon boats for the festival. Ask the students for suggestions about how they might do this. Provide the students with a variety of materials (Styrofoam trays, egg cartons, sponges, Popsicle sticks, etc) and allow them a lot of time to experiment. After creating a boat have them test it. It might take several tries before some students create a boat that floats. Encourage discussion about why some boats float and others do not. Then have the students think of ways to make the boats move through the water so they can be raced (fans, straws, sticks).

#### Lesson 5 -Culminating Activity

During one of the last days of school the students will take part in the Dragon Boat Festival. The objective of this lesson is to demonstrate their understanding of the customs associated with the festival. The celebration will begin in the traditional way with the awakening of the dragon (placing a dot on the dragon's eye). The students will then have a dragon parade around the school that will end at the festival area. There they will participate in several activities: standing an egg on end, making fragrant pouches (red netting and potpourri tied with a string will work well), eating sticky rice with chopsticks (Zhong Zi), listening to books listed in the bibliography of this curriculum unit, and racing the dragon boats (be sure to have paper 'medals' for all the winners). As an end to the festivities, the "threads of long life" can be removed and symbolically thrown into the river (the bin of water used for the dragon boat races).

## **Annotated Bibliography**

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<http://www.abreastoflife.org.nz/dragonboathistory.html>

History of the tradition of dragon boat breast cancer survivor teams within the modern sport.

“Celebration of the Dragon Boat Festival.” 12 March 2008.

<http://www.c-c-c.org/chineseculture/festival/dragonboat/dragon.html>

This website details the history and customs associated with the Dragon Boat Festival.

“China.” Wikipedia Foundation, Inc. 12 May 2008.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China>

This on-line encyclopedia website offers a history of China with time-line that divides history into ancient, imperial, and modern periods.

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<http://www.chinahighlights.com/traveloguide/history.htm>.

A brief history of China.

“The Chinese Dragon.” Fortune City. 9 April 2008.

<http://fortunecity.com/roswell/goldendawn/102/Dragons/chinese.html>

This site provides details about the history of the Chinese Dragon as well as the history of the Dragon Boat Festival.

“The Chinese Dragon.” 13 April 2008.

[http://www.primarysource.org/resources/tcu\\_botsford/part1.htm](http://www.primarysource.org/resources/tcu_botsford/part1.htm)

This website provides background information for a lesson on the Chinese Dragon.

“Chinese Dragons.” 11 May 2008.

<http://www.crystalinks.com/chinadragons.html>

This website compares the Celestial Chinese Dragon to the Chinese race itself. It provides detailed information about the Chinese Dragon including the nine types of dragons, the 5 personality traits of the of the dragon, and a tale of the four dragons who became the four great rivers of China.

“Dragon Boat Festival.” 12 March 2008.

[http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/festival\\_c/dragon\\_e/dragon.htm](http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/festival_c/dragon_e/dragon.htm)

History and customs associated with Dragon Boat Festival.

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“Dragon boat racing as a modern sport.” Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia. 13 April 2008.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon\\_boat\\_racing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon_boat_racing)

This website describes the difference between current day dragon boat racing as a sport and festival dragon boat racing. It also details the international governing organization (IDBF) and the drive to make dragon boating an Olympic sport.

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon\\_boat\\_racing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon_boat_racing)

This website connects worship of the Chinese Dragon to the Dragon Boat races.

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History, customs, and recipes for Dragon Boat Festival.

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This book tells the history of dragons including the Chinese Dragon.

Poon, Leon. “History of China.” 13 April 2008.

<http://www-chaos.umd.edu/history/>.

In depth history of China from ancient civilization to present.

“Qu Yuan [Chu Yuan] – the Poet.” China the Beautiful. 21 February 2008.

<http://chinapage.com/quayuan2.html>

Story of Qu Yuan including his poetry.

Wilkinson, Phillip. Chinese Myth: A Treasury of Legends, Art, and History. London: Marshall Editions, 2008.

A history of the Chinese civilization with beautiful illustrations and photographs. It is appropriate for middle school students and older.

Wright, David Curtis. The History of China. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001.

An in depth history of China.

### **Books for Children**

Chan, Arlene and Song Nan Zhang. Awakening the Dragon. Toronto: Tundra Books; Plattsburgh, N.Y.: Tundra Books of Northern New York, 2004.

Describes the celebration and customs of the Dragon Boat Festival with detailed drawings.

Chin, Karen, Cornelius Van Wright, and Ying-Hwa Hu. Sam and the Lucky Money. New York: Lee and Low Books, Inc., 1995.

A boy finds a very special way to spend the lucky money he receives from his grandparents for the Chinese New Year.

Compestine, Ying Chang and Yong Sheng Xuan. The Story of Chopsticks. New York: Holiday House, 2001.

The youngest Kang brother invents chopsticks so he will not have to wait for the food to cool and finally get enough food to eat.

---. The Story of Paper. New York, Holiday House, 2003.

The Kang brothers invent paper so that the whole community will not see the notes on the hands when they misbehave at school.

---. The Story of Noodles. New York: Holiday House, 2002.

When the Kang brothers are left to make their mother's prize winning dumplings they begin to play and soon strips of noodles are everywhere. With no time left to make dumplings they bring flour strips (mian tiao) to the contest.

---. The Story of Kites. New York: Holiday House, 2003.

The Kang brothers invent kites when they attempt to find a way to scare birds away from eating their rice harvest.

Enderlein, Cheryl L. Celebrating Birthdays in China. New York: Grolier Publishing, 1998.

Describes the celebration of birthdays throughout one's life in China. Includes recipe to make red eggs and additional resources.

Gibbons, Gail. Behold...the Dragon. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1999.

Describes the many types of dragons around the world including the Chinese Dragon.

Heiligman, Deborah. Celebrate Independence Day. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2007.

Celebrating Independence Day with parades, picnics, and fireworks.

Schaefer, Carole Lexa and Pierr Morgan. Dragon Dancing. New York: Penguin Group, 2007.

A class listens to a story about dragons then makes a dragon and has a dragon dance through China.

Sellier, Marie, Catherine Louis, and Wang Fei. Legend of the Chinese Dragon. New York: North-South Books, Inc., 2007.

Tells the tale of creating the Chinese Dragon from elements of different tribes benevolent spirits.

Shui, Amy and Stuart Thompson. Food and Festivals: China. Austin, Texas: Raintree Steck-Vaughn Publishers, 1999.

Describes several Chinese Festivals, including the Dragon Boat Festival.

Simonds, et al. Moonbeams, Dumplings, and Dragon Boats: A Treasury of Chinese Holiday Tales, Activities and Recipes. San Diego: Harcourt, Inc., 2002.

This book of Chinese holidays includes "The tale of Qu Yuan" told in story form.

Also included are directions to make dragon boats, bamboo clackers, and fragrant bags.

Tan, Amy and Gretchen Shields. Sagwa, the Chinese Siamese Cat. New York: Simon and Schuster for Young Children, 1994.

A mother cat tells her kittens the story of their family's Chinese ancestry.

Thompson, Stuart and Angela Dennington. Chinese Cookbook: Holiday Cookbooks from Around the World. Austin, Texas: Steck-Vaughn Company, 2001.

Describes several Chinese Festivals. Includes three recipes for the Dragon Boat Festival.

Yep, Laurence, Jean Tseng, and Mou-Sien Tseng. The City of Dragons. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1995.

An outcast boy finds his place in the world among the underwater dragons.

Zhang, Song Nan and Hao Yu Zhang. A Time of Golden Dragons. Canada: Tundra Books, 2000.

Beautifully illustrated book details the history of the Chinese Dragon from ancient times to today.

## Appendix I

# History Timeline

**NOTE:** Clicking on the Chinese characters for each of the dynasty will bring up a list of the emperors (in Chinese) for each of the respective dynasty. However, not every dynasty will have a link. For those who can read Chinese, I highly recommend Seke Wei's excellent [Era and Timeline of Chinese History](#).

Dates	Dynasty	朝代
ca. 2000-1500 B.C.	<a href="#">Xia</a>	夏
1700-1027 B.C.	<a href="#">Shang</a>	商
1027-771 B.C.	<a href="#">Western Zhou</a>	西周
770-221 B.C.	Eastern Zhou	東周
	770-476 B.C. -- Spring and Autumn period	春秋時代
	475-221 B.C. -- Warring States period	戰國時代
221-207 B.C.	<a href="#">Qin</a>	秦
206 B.C.-A.D. 9	<a href="#">Western Han</a>	西漢
A.D. 9-24	<a href="#">Xin</a> (Wang Mang interregnum)	新
A.D. 25-220	<a href="#">Eastern Han</a>	東漢
A.D. 220-280	Three Kingdoms	三國
	220-265 -- Wei	魏

	221-263 -- Shu	蜀	
	229-280 -- Wu	吳	
A.D. 265-316	Western Jin	西晉	
A.D. 317-420	Eastern Jin	東晉	
A.D. 420-588	Southern and Northern Dynasties		南北朝
	420-588	Southern Dynasties	南朝
		420-478 -- Song	宋
		479-501 -- Qi	齊
		502-556 -- Liang	梁
		557-588 -- Chen	陳
	386-588	Northern Dynasties	北朝
		386-533 -- Northern Wei	北魏
		534-549 -- Eastern Wei	東魏
		535-557 -- Western Wei	西魏
		550-577 -- Northern Qi	北齊
		557-588 -- Northern Zhou	北周
A.D. 581-617	<a href="#">Sui</a>	隋	

A.D. 618-907	<a href="#">Tang</a>	唐
A.D. 907-960	Five Dynasties	五代
	907-923 -- Later Liang	後梁
	923-936 -- Later Tang	後唐
	936-946 -- Later Jin	後晉
	947-950 -- Later Han	後漢
	951-960 -- Later Zhou	後周
A.D. 907-979	Ten Kingdoms	十國
A.D. 960-1279	<a href="#">Song</a>	宋
	960-1127 -- Northern Song	北宋
	1127-1279 -- Southern Song	南宋
A.D. 916-1125	Liao	遼
A.D. 1038-1227	Western Xia	西夏
A.D. 1115-1234	Jin	金
A.D. 1279-1368	<a href="#">Yuan</a>	元
A.D. 1368-1644	<a href="#">Ming</a>	明
A.D. 1644-1911	<a href="#">Qing</a>	清
A.D. 1911-1949	<a href="#">Republic of China</a> (in mainland China)	中華民國

A.D. 1949-	Republic of China (in Taiwan)	
A.D. 1949-	<a href="#">People's Republic of China</a>	中華人民 共和國

## Appendix II

### The Mountain Spirit

There seem to be a man in the deep mountain,  
Clad in creeping vine and girded with ivy,  
With a charming look and a becoming smile.  
"Do you admire me for my lovely form?"

She rides a red leopard - striped lynxes following  
behind -  
Her chariot of magnolia arrayed with banners of cassia,  
Her cloak made of orchids and her girdle of azalea,  
Calling sweet flowers for those dear in her heart.

"I live in a bamboo grove, the sky unseen;  
The road hither is steep and dangerous; I arrive alone  
and late.  
Alone I stand on the mountain top  
While the clouds gather beneath me.

"All gloomy and dark is the day;  
The east wind drifts and god sends down rain.  
Waiting for the divine one, I forget to go home.  
The year is late. Who will now bedeck me?"

"I pluck the larkspur on the mountain side,  
The rocks are craggy; and the vines tangled.  
Complaining of the young lord, sadly I forget to go  
home.  
You, my lord, are thinking of me; but you have no time,"

The man in the mountain, fragrant with sweet herb,  
Drinks from the rocky spring, shaded by pines and firs.  
"You, my lord, are thinking of me, but then you  
hesitate."


The thunder rumbles and the rain darkens;  
The gibbons mourn, howling all the night;  
The wind whistles and the trees are bare.  
"I am thinking of the young lord; I sorrow in vain."


Qu Yuan

## Appendix III

# Stuffing Tsung Tzu

Making *tsung tzu* is relatively simple and can be mastered after a few tries. A recipe for Taiwanese-style *tsung tzu* is included below if you want to give it a try.

 <b>Ingredients:</b>	long glutinous rice	Chinese five-spice
	pork(stewed in spices is best )	salt
	dried mushrooms (large cap and long-stemmed)	broad bamboo leaves
	salted egg yolks	string
	sugar	
	soy sauce	

 <b>Directions:</b>	Wash sticky (glutinous) rice and soak for three hours.
	Chop pork into 4cm long and 2cm wide strips.
	Soak mushrooms until tender, remove stems and cut into strips.
	Mix soy sauce, Chinese five-spice, salt, and sugar. Let pieces of pork and mushrooms soak in above mixture for two hours.
	Cut salted egg yolks in halves.
	Thoroughly clean soaked and softened bamboo leaves and string.
	Shape two long bamboo leaves into a funnel shape using one third of the length of the leaves.
Fill the funnel half with rice and half with pieces of pork, mushroom, and egg yolk.	
Cover the "funnel" with additional rice, and then wrap the mixture tightly with the remaining portion of the leaves.	
Tie string around <i>tsung tzu</i> and cook in a covered steamer over medium heat for two hours.	
May be eaten hot.	

## Appendix IV



Hanging moxa on the door to ward off disease during Dragon Boat Festival.

**Appendix V**

**2008 Washington D.C. Dragon Boat Festival**  
Additional pictures can be found at  
[The Paddlefish in DC -5-31-2008](#)



**Dragon Boat Racing**





**Preparing for the Lion Dance**



**Lion Dance**



**Musicians**



**Dragon Parade**

## **Appendix VI – Content Standards**

### Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening

- 1.1 All students will read for a variety of purposes.
  - All students will use picture and context clues to understand new words during reading.
  - All students will understand the meaning and use correctly new vocabulary.
  - All students will retell or summarize the major ideas, themes or procedures of the text.
  - All students will demonstrate comprehension
- 1.2 All students will read and understand essential content of informational texts.
- 1.4 All students will use relevant illustrations.
  - All students will write informational pieces.
- 1.5 All students will gather and organize information.
- 1.6 All students will listen to a selection of literature and relate it to similar experiences.
  - All students will contribute to discussions.
  - All students will participate in small and large group discussions and presentations.

### Mathematics

- 2.3 All students will use a ruler to the nearest inch.
  - All students will compare sizes and weights.
- 2.5 All students will show and tell how to solve a problem.
  - All students will show different ways to solve the same problem.
- 2.7 All students will predict what will happen next.
  - All students will make predictions.