



## **Forum: Common English Questions 論壇常見問題**

**Topic: 中國節日 (Chinese festivals)**

**Subject: Re: 中國節日 (Chinese festivals)**

Posted by: 123

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### **教師節 Teacher's Day**

Confucius was a well-known teacher in the Lu Kingdom 2000 years ago. He taught many people moral lessons. Then he became a master of philosophy.

He was even an advisor to the king of Lu. But the king didn't listen to Confucius' advice. So Confucius left the Lu kingdom. He taught people in other kingdoms good moral lessons.

Many people studied his lessons. One of his most famous lessons is "do not listen to, speak about, or watch bad things."

Confucius had more than 3000 students. Many of them became famous scholars and politicians.

To honor him, the Chinese Government declared Confucius' birthday as National Teacher's Day.

On Teacher's day, many students say "Thank you" to their teachers. This day is special for teachers and students, thanks to Confucius.

### **雙十節 Double Tenth Day**

This day is the birthday of the Republic of China: Double Tenth National Day. The day is celebrated every year on October 10th to commemorate the 1911 Wuchang Uprising. It is a milestone in China's political development and new chapter in the history of the Chinese people. Every Double Tenth National Day the people on Taiwan and overseas Chinese from all corners come together to cheer the nation on its birthday celebration.

The National Day Parade is the main event of the morning activities on Double Tenth, and is followed by a public parade including representatives of different professions, as well as entertainment and folk performances.

The Celebration Ceremony is held in front of the Presidential Office Building on the afternoon of National Day. Ministers, returned overseas Chinese, foreign dignitaries, and hundreds of thousands of people from around the country attend the ceremony.

Night activities are commenced by the National Day Fireworks Display, which turns the night sky over the major cities of Taiwan into a dazzling explosion of color, and is concluded by the elaborately planned National Day Evening Ceremony, a perfect final hurrah for the nation's birthday party.

### **清明節 Tomb Sweeping Day**

The Tomb-Sweeping Festival (Qing Ming Jie) is a time to pay respects to one's ancestors and to tidy their gravesite. The date of this festival was set as the third day of the third lunar month during the period of the Wei-Chin Dynasties. In recent years it has been moved to April 5th. As the name of this holiday suggests, the main activity of Tomb-Sweeping Day is for the whole family, young and old, to

go to the graveside of deceased family members to burn incense and perform a ritual offering, while at the same time clearing away plant overgrowth from the gravesite.

Its Chinese name "Qing Ming" literally means "Clear Brightness," hinting at its importance as a celebration of spring. Similar to the spring festivals of other cultures, Tomb-Sweeping Day celebrates the rebirth of nature, while marking the beginning of the planting season and other outdoor activities.

In ancient times, people celebrated Qing Ming Jie with dancing, singing, picnics, and kite flying. Colored boiled eggs would be broken to symbolize the opening of life. In the capital, the Emperor would plant trees on the palace grounds to celebrate the renewing nature of spring. In the villages, young men and women would court each other.

Besides the traditions of honoring the dead, people also often fly kites on Tomb-Sweeping Day. Kites can come in all kinds of shapes, sizes, and colors. Designs could include frogs, dragonflies, butterflies, crabs, bats, and storks.

With the passing of time, this celebration of life became a day to honor past ancestors. Following folk religion, the Chinese believed that the spirits of deceased ancestors looked after the family. Sacrifices of food and spirit money could keep them happy, and the family would prosper through good harvests and more children.

Today, Chinese visit their family graves to tend to any underbrush that has grown. Weeds are pulled, and dirt swept away, and the family will set out offerings of food and spirit money. Unlike the sacrifices at a family's home altar, the offerings at the tomb usually consist of dry, bland food. One theory is that since any number of ghosts roam around a grave area, the less appealing food will be consumed by the ancestors, and not be plundered by strangers.

### 七夕节 the Seventh Evening of July

In a Chinese legend, the Sun God had seven beautiful daughters. All his fairy daughters could weave beautiful clothes.

One day, the seven fairies came down from heaven and were playing in a river. A cowherd walked by the river. He saw that the fairies had left their beautiful clothes on the shore, so he took one of them. His plan was to stop one of the fairies from flying back to their heaven palace. He reasoned that the fairies needed to wear their beautiful clothes if they wanted to fly.

When it was time to go home, the youngest fairy could not find her clothes. The other fairies put on their clothes and flew away. The youngest fairy was very sad and she started to cry.

The cowherd saw this and offered to take her to his house. Because the cowherd took care of the fairy so well, she fell in love with him and married him.

The Sun God got so angry that he took his youngest daughter away from her husband. From then on, the fairy weaver stayed in heaven, and the cowherd stayed on earth. They could only see each other once a year on July 7th on the lunar calendar.

The birds felt so sad for this young couple that they made a bridge for the two to walk on. The bridge is known as the Milky Way. Only once a year, the couple could meet on the Milky Way. And they still love each other deeply.

Now it is a tradition to celebrate Chinese Valentine's Day once a year on July 7th of the lunar calendar.

### **Chinese Ghosts' Festival**

The West has Halloween for ghosts and ghouls. In Taiwan there is also a holiday to fete the departed spirits of the underworld Ghost Festival, a popular occasion celebrated throughout China on the 15th day of the seventh lunar month.

In Taiwan, Ghost Festival is passed by slaughtering a pig and sheep, which together with a prodigious table of wine and meat is offered to one's ancestors and ghosts from the underworld..

The Chinese believe that the dead become ghosts roaming between Heaven and earth. Spirits without descendants to care for them are prayed to during Ghost Festival so that they may also enjoy the warmth of life among the living. This custom, an extension of the traditional Chinese ethic of "universal love," has been woven together with the didactic legend "Moginlin Saving His Mother From Hades," giving Ghost Festival positive significance as a time for remembering the importance of filial piety.

Today, Ghost Festival is more modest than in the past both in grandeur and scale as the government encourages more frugal forms of prayer in folk customs. This kind of economy is an apt realization of virtuous action that the Festival has always meant to foster.

### **Chinese Moon Festival**

The Moon Festival is on August 15 of the lunar calendar. On that day, there is always a full moon.

In Chinese custom, a full moon means family reunion. Because of this, the Moon Festival is a time for family reunions.

On this day, many families enjoy watching the full moon. Some families will bake large cakes, called moon cakes. Then, each member of the family will eat a piece of the cake to show their unity.

Some moon cakes have salted yolks in them. When we slice a moon cake, we can see a salted yolk in the center. It looks just like a full moon! People share moon cakes with their friends and relatives.

The Moon Festival is also the season of pomelos. The pomelo symbolizes prosperity. (æŸs=æœ%) On this day, many children use pomelo peels to make hats and they wear them for fun.

### **Chinese (Lunar) New Year**

In a Chinese legend, "Nien" was a terrible beast. It ate not only animals but also people. People felt that they had to do something to stop Nien from eating any more people. They found that Nien was scared of three things-anything colored red, loud noises and fire.

When the next winter came, many people put red couplets on their front doors. People set off

firecrackers to make loud noises. People also set bonfires in front of their houses.

One night, Nien came. The red couplets, the noises and the fire frightened it. So it ran away to the mountains and never came back again.

People stayed up all night with their families because they were afraid. The next morning, people discovered that Nien had run away! They congratulated each other by saying "Gong Xi."

Now, shortly before Chinese New Year, all Chinese clean up their houses. It is symbolic of sweeping away all bad luck. Many people go home to have a big dinner with their family. There are a lot of special foods served, such as fish and dumplings. They are symbolic of good luck. Children have lucky money in red envelopes from their parents. People also wear new clothes and hats to celebrate Chinese New Year.

### **Lantern Festival**

Lunar New Year celebrations end each year with the Lantern Festival. It is always the fifteenth day of the New Year.

On that day, there is always a full moon. Many Chinese celebrate by eating rice balls, or "Tang Yuan." They also hang lanterns at their front doors. Many children also carry their lanterns and walk around the streets with their friends.

Making riddles is a amusing game at the night of the Lantern Festival. There are many ways to make up riddles, such as using Chinese characters, phrases with special meanings, or the names of some Chinese heroes. If someone guesses the answer to a riddle, they will get a gift. This is one of the many things people enjoy doing during the Lantern Festival!

### **Dragon Boat Festival**

Long time ago, about 300 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. It was the Warring States period in China. A famous and patriotic poet and statesman, Chu Yuan, lived during that period.

Chu Yuan was a loyal minister to King Huai, so King Huai liked him very much. Some jesters were jealous of Chu Yuan's close relationship with the king. They started saying bad things about Chu Yuan to the king. Finally, King Huai believed all these lies, stopped listening to Chu Yuan and fired him.

Chu Yuan was very sad. One day, he was walking along the Milo River. He said: "Everybody in the world is drunk but me. Everybody in the world is sleepy but me. My king doesn't listen to me. My country is falling apart." Then, he picked up a big stone and tied it to his chest. Chu Yuan jumped into the river and disappeared.

Many people came and helped. Some people made rice dumplings and threw them into the river. Then, the fish won't eat Chu Yuan's body. Some people set out in boats to search for Chu Yuan's body. It was May 5 of the lunar calendar when Chu Yuan jumped into the river.

That is why we eat rice dumplings during Dragon Boat Festival. And that is why there are dragon boat races on that day. These activities are in honor of the patriotic poet and statesman, Chu Yuan.

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