

# 競渡中的社會與國家—— 明清節慶文化中的 地域認同、民間動員與官方調控

陳熙遠\*

節慶不僅是日常生活的調劑，也具體展現各地同風異俗的特性。在傳統社會中，「節」雖人人共度，「慶」卻處處不同，各個鄉園人文地理的特色往往薈萃在節慶之中。在普遍共度的節日裡因地而異的慶典活動，正是型塑地域文化認同的資源。本文以江鄉水域的龍舟競渡活動為分析主軸，探討明清時期競渡文化所牽涉的重要課題，包括競渡典故的挪用、各地競渡時間的歧異與變遷、多元的龍舟造型與競渡形式，以及官方與地方在縱任與禁限之間的糾葛。本文試圖論證：一、普天同度端午，隨地各競龍舟；端陽節慶既通行全國，但各地的活動內容與意涵卻各具特色，這種在普遍性中的特殊性，助長了地方意識與地域認同的形成。二、競渡的典故源流：所謂祭吊屈原或伍員等的英雄傳說，不僅在流傳上有地域性的限制，也並未獲得民間的普遍關注，主要還是附麗在士人的文本傳統中流行。當民間在抗拒官方禁令時，往往是以競渡來祛疾避疫為理由，信仰與娛樂在節慶中有機地整合。三、「端午」、「龍舟」與「競渡」三者的關聯，其實並非完全地疊合，而有各種隨時因地制宜的可能交集：端午不必競渡，競渡不必端午；龍舟不必競渡，競渡不必龍舟。龍舟的造型儘可因時制宜或就地取材，競渡的形式更是多樣而多元。四、端陽節慶中龍舟競渡的活動具有集體狂歡的特性：它彷彿虛擬出一個暫時性的公共空間，開放給全民在其間共通交接，性別與階級在此一特定的時空中頓失區隔分別的意義。「熱鬧」是這種社會性節慶的特色，而顛覆禮教規範下的日常秩序，容許跨界交接與互動的可能，正是製造熱鬧的關鍵。五、如何維繫節慶中的地方秩序，一直是官方調控的重大考驗，國家與社會之間在慶典中猶如競渡中相互角力的龍舟。有些執事者因勢利導，趁著端陽節慶與民共樂，甚至藉著龍舟競渡訓練軍旅；有些亟思斧底抽薪，根本禁抑龍舟的製作與競渡的舉行，祇不過官方或可斷水截流

---

\* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所

陳熙遠

於一時，恐怕無法拔本塞源。畢竟民間日常積鬱的活力沛然難禦，終究會尋繹發洩的出口。

**關鍵詞：**端午 龍舟 競渡 奪標 狂歡

## Local Identity, Popular Autonomy, and Political Authority in the Dragon-boat Festival Celebrations in Ming-Qing China

Hsi-yüan Chen

Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica

This article deals with five intertwined issues surrounding the popular celebration of the Dragon-boat Festival (Double Fifth Day) during the Ming-Qing period. First, together with the Lantern Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival forms one of the three most popular Chinese holidays which have been celebrated over the past centuries. It was observed almost everywhere in China, but ways of celebrating the festival varied enormously from place to place. Shared experiences of the local specificities of celebration activities helped to cultivate a sense of locality and cultural identity among people from the same regions.

Second, although a quasi-official version associating the death of the patriotic poet Qu Yuan (ca. 340-278 BC) with the origin of the festival dominated among elite circles, it is questionable whether this legend ever made its way into the collective memory of the populace. Whenever local governments proscribed these celebrations on the grounds of maintaining public order and safety, the common rationale used by the people to justify continuing their centuries-long tradition was the need to ward off epidemic diseases and evil spirits.

Third, it is generally held that the “Dragon-boat Festival,” as its English translation misleadingly suggests, constitutes three indispensable elements: the date (*duanwu*; the fifth day of the fifth lunar month), the object (*longzhou*; dragon-boat), and the act (*jingdu*; boat racing). However, based on a comparative study of extant local gazetteers, this paper argues otherwise. In fact, dragon-boat racing was neither always held nor only held on the Double Fifth Day. Some places featured boat races during the Mid-Autumn Festival instead. Furthermore, boats for racing on the Double Fifth Day were not necessarily built in the shape of a dragon. Conversely, in some localities, dragon boats might not be built for speed racing, but rather used as floating stages for musical or acrobatic performances. Instead of racing, boaters in this case were competing to catch scurrying ducks or sinking coins cast by spectators.

Fourth, “*re’nao*” (hustle and bustle) is a key term frequently employed to depict this festival celebration. The river featuring the dragon-boat racing became a temporary spectacle where people, regardless of gender and social status, enjoyed clamorous interaction with the rowers in the boats or the viewers along the banks. Yet under the surface of the hustle and bustle lay its subversive potential, since the social order based upon class differentiation and gender distinction was temporarily at stake. Moreover, preparation for the dragon-boat festival celebrations involved fund-raising, boat building, and the training of rowers, all of which required the social mobilization of the local populace. Arguably, then, the Dragon-boat Festival might serve to foster social autonomy to a certain extent and was hence perceived as a threat to political authority.

Lastly, this paper uses the Dragon-boat Festival as a lens to examine the interaction and dialectical tension between state and society. Normally, political authority would allow—or at least tolerate—the popular celebration of the Dragon-boat Festival in order to “share joy with the people.” Yet at the same time, local governments also attempted to monitor and police festival activities for fear of their latent subversive potential. The delicate balance between permitting the populace to relish in celebration activities and release pent-up energy on the one hand while simultaneously preserving social order on the other constituted an enduring challenge to political authority. Indeed, many official attempts were made during the Ming-Qing period to prohibit boat-racing and to limit celebration activities to the household. These attempts eventually failed, but the centuries-long struggle between political power and popular social forces like two dragon-boats in the stream of history—might continue forever.

**Keywords: Dragon-boat, carnival, local identity, popular autonomy, political authority**