



# Eye Dotting and Dragon Blessing Ceremony

## Awakening the Spirit of the Dragon

There'll be joss sticks, coloured beans and dotting of eyes unlike what you learned to do in school.

Join us on June 10<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm as we Awaken the Dragons – the official kick-off event for the 2011 Rio Tinto Alcan Dragon Boat Festival.

Each year Festival honours the ancient Chinese tradition of dragon boat racing with an Eye Dotting and Dragon Blessing Ceremony. We invite priests and members of the congregation of *the Evergreen Taoist Church* to the waters of False Creek to conduct this ancient and colourful ritual.

The priests set up their altar right on the dock from which paddlers will board dragon boats the next morning. The dragon boats – “dressed” with ornate dragon heads and tails - are lined up. The chanting begins.

The priests invoke the Goddess of the Sea, the Saints and the Immortals through chanting, invocation and burning joss sticks. This cleanses and blesses the racecourse, the competitors and their boats and charges all with the strength of the Dragon.

They make offerings to the five elements and directions: joss sticks representing wood for the east, flowers representing metal for the west, candles representing fire for the south, water representing its elemental self for the north and fruit representing the earth for the centre.

The climax of the ceremony is the eye dotting ritual, which officially awakens the Dragon. Ancient Chinese dragon mythology has it that the Dragon sleeps in the mountains and travels to the water when it is awakened. Guest dignitaries assist in this rite, dipping brushes in pots of red cinnabar paint and dabbing the eyes on the boats' dragon heads.

At the end of the ceremony the priests nourish and appease other souls that might be present by throwing them 18 coins and coloured beans representing the five elements and directions.

Taoism is one of the world's oldest religions, originating in ancient China. Members of the *Evergreen Taoist Church* are devotees of the Complete Reality School – Dragon Gate Sect and follow the teachings of the Immortals, master Lu Sun-Young, Master Wong Chung-Young and his disciple Master Yau Cheung-Chun.

Please join us for this engaging ritual:

When: 2 pm on Friday, June 10, 2011

Where: Dock at the foot of Ontario Street, just south of the Science World dome

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