

- Population: 480,000
- Area: 2427 square kilometers

ZIGUI

Stone City & Gourd City
The Hometown of a Warring State Era poet - Qu Yuan

Zigui is situated on the north bank of the Yangtze, just half a dozen kilometers upstream from the western end of the Xiling Gorge. It is alternatively known as Stone City or Gourd City because in ancient times its walls were built of huge stone slabs and the city itself looked like a gourd.

Zigui is well known as the hometown of a Warring State Era poet - Qu Yuan, who is respected by all the Chinese as "the Father of Chinese Poems" and one of the greatest patriotic citizens in China.

The great poet served as a minister to King Huai of the Kingdom of Chu, with special responsibilities for the royal clans. The king had complete trust in him until discord developed among the clans and Qu was falsely slandered. Banished from the capital, he wandered about



in Hubei Province, deeply sad and bitter. His poetry and essays reveal his romanticism, loyalty and patriotism. Qu had vigorously advocated that the State of Chu stand firm against attack by the Qin State but his advice had gone unheeded, and in May of the year 278 BC, he drowned himself in the Milo River in the Dongting Lake region at the age of 62.

According to the legend, the local people scoured Dongting Lake for his body, beating drums and racing their boats during the course of the search. This event started the Dragon Boat Festival when dragon boat races are held in the river towns up and down the Yangtze and in many other parts of China. Zongzi, a kind of rice dumplings wrapped with bamboo leaves - are thrown into the water as sacrifice to Qu Yuan.



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