

Foreigners fall in love with Penghu' s turtle culture

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One of the main attractions in Penghu today is the ‘Praying for Turtles Lantern Festival’ , which reveres a 12.5 Kg golden turtle. The foreign face at this year’ s festival is no different from normal; it’ s no other than that of George H Balazs, seasoned turtle expert from Hawaii. Ever since being baptized into Penghu’ s turtle culture some ten years ago, George has endeavored to make this event a yearly pilgrimage.

George H Balazs is from Hawaii's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (夏威夷太平洋島嶼漁業科技中心), where he is responsible for researching turtle ecosystems. Ten years ago, during a visit to an academic program in Penghu, George met Penghu County Magistrate Lai Feng-wei (賴峰偉), where he discovered that in Penghu one can not only witness the migration of green sea turtles, but also, come Lantern Festival, turtles of all shapes and sizes appear; it was this phenomenon that forged a deep attraction between George and Penghu. This year George brought Ph. D. student Wu Jia-en (伍家恩) from Hong Kong, who like George, has a deep fascination and love for sea turtles. Together, these two turtle aficionados bathed themselves in the turtle mania of Penghu's 'Praying for Turtles Lantern Festival', where a turtle effigy is revered as a deity and various materials, like white rice, lard and bread, are used to make turtle figurines. Both George and Wu Jia-en agree that in all their travels around the world, they have never experienced anything quite like Penghu's turtle culture.

At George H Balazs' yearly pilgrimage to Penghu Lantern Festival, he enjoys photographing the rich array of temples and lavish display of sea turtle figurines made from all kinds of weird and wonderful materials. George uploads these photographs onto his personal website ([http:// balazs.itgo.com /](http://balazs.itgo.com/)), which promotes Penghu's wonderful festival and sea turtle conservation work to the international community.



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URL: <https://www.peopo.org/news/109022>

外國人愛上澎湖乞龜文化



元宵乞龜是澎湖一大特色，在澎湖最重的250兩黃金龜的迎金龜隊伍之中，有一個少見的西方臉孔，就是來自夏威夷長年研究海龜的專家學者喬治·柏樂滋（George H. Balazs），自從十多年前接觸澎湖乞龜文化後，他幾乎年年造訪澎湖。

在美國夏威夷太平洋島嶼漁業科技中心從事海龜生態研究的柏樂滋，10年前來澎湖參與學術活動時，拜會當時的縣長賴峰偉的，得知澎湖不僅只有實體的綠蠵龜迴游，元宵一到還有各式大小烏龜展示，透過烏龜的連結，他也喜歡上澎湖這個島嶼。今年更約了同樣對海龜很有興趣的博士研究生，來自香港的伍家恩，一同到澎湖參與元宵活動，兩人發現澎湖乞龜文化非常有獨特性，在世界上幾乎沒看過有人這樣把海龜當神明看待，並用各種形式來呈現烏龜，像是用白米疊成的大米龜、肪片龜、麵包龜等等，他們覺得這是非常有趣的地方文化！

喬治·柏樂滋幾乎年年安排假期於元宵節時專程來澎湖，目的就是走訪各大小廟宇，欣賞各種不同材質的海龜，用相機拍下自己的所見所聞，還架設個人網站(<http://balazs.itgo.com/>)，輸入自己對澎湖元宵乞龜的感想及照片，向國際人士介紹澎湖推動海龜保育成效及元宵乞龜活動盛況。

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