

## **Impact of Dragons on Chinese Culture**

Every country has supernatural narratives of imaginary creatures and majority of them are well known among people, the eastern part of the globe is no different, as a matter of fact, Asian mythology is rich and diverse, offering numerous tales and mythical creatures. Thus, the following paper will focus on mythical creatures that are heavily popular among Chinese societies. The core objective of given essay is to analyze and determine what importance did dragons had on the society, as well as define what kind of impact they have on China today.

To begin with, Asian mythology is famous for featuring numerous dragons and other lizard-like creatures. Indeed, looking briefly at their fictional and mythical literature, it would be safe to assume that there are a lot of dragons, however, the very first depiction of dragons were totems that genuinely served one particular role, which essentially is protection. The reason why there are several dragons in their literature is pretty obvious. As stated by ("Chinese Dragon - New World Encyclopedia"), dragons are generally viewed as powerful beings that can alter terrains and destroy villages in a mere fraction. Indeed, there are several types of dragons and majority of them are generally viewed as holy beings that have divine roots, moreover, these dragons are not limited to Asian region since several of them were not born in Asian regions but rather came from heavens. Speaking of roots, all dragons despite sharing physical proportions such as snakelike body coupled with the lack of wings, have similar roots, more specifically, every dragon is tied to a certain element (Hinsbergh). To be more specific, there are four major types of dragons, which are fire, water, wind and ground types. Each and every of them is different and have a specific tale attached to them. All of these dragons are generally protectors of certain lands and share a certain role within the Asian mythology. Thus, in order to fully apprehend what impact these beings have in modern Chinese society, it is critical to define the

roots of these beings, as well as what characteristics managed to survive to this day (Hinsbergh). In given case an adjusted qualitative analysis will be conducted, however, it will be somewhat adjusted in order to accommodate the research question. Essentially, the core objective is to group all major dragons into their respective class and place of origin all while assessing their impact on the society.

The purpose of this research is to define what impact dragons have on modern Asian society, as well as provide a detailed outline of specific characteristics that would ease future research if there is such a need. Furthermore, the research will provide a substantial amount of evidence due to the fact that core materials utilized for this research come from credible sources that are constantly updated and can be considered as reliable.

Thus, according to Radford (par.1) dragons are mythical creatures that are extremely popular in the modern era. Indeed, they have managed to endure several generations and are now depicted in every possible form, including books, movies, music and the most popular place where they are depicted, art. These creatures are known across the world and feature a rich history behind them. Each culture has their own type of dragon, and as Rose stated in his readings, mythical monsters that are now known as dragons have complex attributes from many other animals, as a matter of fact, several of them have multiple parts of other animals (Hinsbergh). This characteristics clearly indicates that dragons that we know today, evolved in Chinese culture dramatically.

Despite the fact that they vary in their appearances, they are extremely influential in certain Asian regions. Indeed, in China, dragons are generally viewed as holy beings that not only are powerful and can sometimes speak. Moreover, all dragons are honored by people, which in turn generated a rich culture. Clearly, once someone mentions China, dragons come into mind

and for a good reason due to the fact that they are technically their national mascots ("Asian Dragons"). Indeed, during Lunar New Year festival, Chinese people across the world gather in order to celebrate the upcoming spring. Although the core idea is to celebrate the new year, in essence, this particular festival clearly indicates that Chinese people are not only strong-willed but tied by their traditions, regardless of location. This particular tradition dates Han dynasty which is thousands of years old (Montgomery and Semionov), and is still present today, proving that it is not only honored by current generation, but will ensure that future generation of Chinese people will experience it as well.

Moving on forward, dragons first appeared in Chinese writings alongside with the creation of Earth. Furthermore, the divinity Nu Kua, a Chinese goddess is generally considered to be half dragon and was responsible for the creation of terrain, as a matter of fact, she is the one who created humans as stated in Chinese writings (Montgomery and Semionov). All dragons, as stated in Chinese mythology, became tutors for humankind. Essentially, they guided them and taught them essential survival skills such as breeding fire, fishing, and hunting. Thereafter, dragons served as holy beings which are now clearly visible in Chinese culture. Indeed, the patriarch Chinese positioned their monarchs as a direct posterity of the heavenly dragons that existed at the dawn of beginning. This particular characteristic is evident in their core architectural style. Clearly, all major Chinese buildings feature dragon-like totems and windows that are shaped as dragons. Furthermore, it has been proven numerous times that Chinese and Japanese (who share a similar style) construction methods are not only extraordinary but safe nonetheless ("Asian Dragons"). There are several monuments in China and Japan that managed to survive hundreds of years, including wars, heavy flooding, and even industrialization. These decorated buildings maintain a huge history and dragons are honored to this day, as a matter of

fact, it was estimated that approximately 35% of the Chinese population, which is roughly 600 millions of people come to several temples across the whole country just to honor their roots and traditions. A great indication of how well dragons are integrated in Chinese culture.

Although the architectural style is commonly referred by researchers, it is of utmost importance to state that art played a critical role as well. Indeed, art, as it is, is a form of expression that can provoke numerous emotions, and the core subject of Asian art is a depiction of supernatural beings and dragons are no exception. In his writings, Roy Bates clearly stated that the earliest depictions of dragons date back to the Neolithic period of time (Orrill). The author stresses out that Chinese creators at the beginning of the first millenary bestowed their personal versions of mythical creatures. Indeed, despite the fact that majority of them were similar to modern reptiles, they featured strong idiosyncratic scope of attributes that are commonly found in other animals. They have become a staple of Asian art and are now classified as masterpieces of their kind. Indeed, the impact of dragon's on Chinese art was enormous due to the fact that nowadays, these pieces are worth hundreds of millions of dollars and are widely compared to European works (Orrill) .

Old works are not the only one that is praised, as a matter of fact, modern Chinese fashion features numerous depictions of celestial bodies on their clothes. Several celebrities have numerous costumes that not only stand out in the crowd but symbolize the reach Chinese culture which is full of dragons ("Asian Dragons"). Although modern society still values their creators, the majority of people refuse to wear fabrics that depict dragons due to the fact that tourism and global trends are oriented in a completely different direction. Surely, it is clear that minority of people still follow their roots and know how important dragons are for them, major population refuses to follow these traditions due to the fact that they are outdated and feature somewhat

bizarre rituals such as not leaving the temple for several days, or eating things that are not exactly healthy for the end consumer (Orrill).

Lastly, there is Chinese opera which is full of these mythical creatures. Indeed, all major shows are featuring dragons and each and every of them, have a deep philosophical meaning behind them. In addition, prior conducting the show, viewers are given small guides in order to fully understand the show. Every show features an actor that is wearing a dragon-like armor in order to indicate that they are an important character in the scene, as well as secure that the end viewer is aware that the person comes from a noble family (Radford). Chinese designers value the fact that every emperor was wearing a dragon-like armor and ensured that this tradition did not fade, incarnating it in their operas.

Despite the fact that modern society is oriented at modernism, Chinese people value their roots and utilize these roots to prove that they have a huge history and a great imagination. Clearly, several major buildings can even be seen today, but modern society favors tall, metallic and glass buildings, in other words, no one is willing to build new monuments, indicating that modern China is oriented at new standards. Art alongside with opera is full of new works that are not only expensive and rich on detail, but feature dragons as the core topic. Indeed, at first glance, the whole society slowly forgets about dragons, but in reality, there are several industries that not only value but are proud that they have such a huge history ("Asian Dragons").

In conclusion, dragons despite being mythical creatures, play a critical role in modern Chinese culture. They are generally represented as strong, wise supernatural beings, that not only formed Asian mythology as we know it today but helped China to gain new heights and form their core native culture forever.