

## THE TEN THOUSAND FORMS OF THE DRAGON ( 龍 / 龙 *Lóng*)

A millennia-old icon of Chinese culture and civilization.

Expression of the *Yáng* (陽 / 阳) principle, the vital energy of growth and renewal.

Symbol of the 'breath of nature', living spontaneously as a great organism in balance and harmony.

Interpreter of spiritual language and cosmic mediator, capable of "reaching the heavens and penetrating the earth."

Associated, within the correlative system of thought, with the eastern quadrant, spring, the element of wood, the blue-green color, and purity.

Lord of the three hundred and sixty species of scaled animals.

Described as possessing the neck of a serpent, the horns of a deer, the claws of an eagle, the ears of an ox, the scales of a carp, the eyes of a rabbit, the head of a camel, the belly of a frog, and the legs of a tiger.

Vehicle of the immortals and celestial mount, able to guide and lead the spirit of the deceased through waters and skies.

Imperial emblem, symbol of strength, protector of humanity, and guarantor of cosmic order.

Imagined, described, and represented in ten thousand forms and figures, in myths, stories, and classical chronicles, in popular tales, in art, in philosophical contexts, in ritual environments, in the objects that have composed funerary assemblages since the Neolithic period, in the symbolic characters of writing, from oracle-bone inscriptions to calligraphy, in architecture, in the decoration of ceremonial court garments, in the emblems and objects defining the status and rank of officials and in traditional rites and festivals.

Rediscovered and revitalized in graphic design, advertising, political language, and the state iconography of modern and contemporary China, as an emblem and symbol of national identity.