

Descendants of the Dragon Take Creature Into Hearts

By: Sun Yong Ling

The Chinese people are very fond of dragons, and sometimes call themselves "descendants of the dragon." These mythical beasts with long, scaly bodies, fierce claws and impressive heads weave their way through legends, songs and folk art. On old palaces and temples, dragon figures coil around pillars, slither down roof eaves and flaunt themselves on magnificent screens. Dragons have

been painted, carved, embroidered, printed and stamped on a great variety of objects: ships, vehicles, clothing and hangings, ceremonial utensils, musical instruments, furniture, ceramics, and coins.

The dragon was an important figure in folk culture. People of talent and integrity were often called dragons. Many Chinese

parents still include the character Long (dragon) in a son's name—associating it with the hope that he will be clever, forceful and dynamic.

Many folk activities in China are connected with the dragon. On the evening of the 15th day of the first month by the lunar calendar, people in some areas carry cloth or lantern dragons through the main streets. Led by drum-and-gong bands, and banners and paper lanterns, they stop in front of stores, whereupon the storekeeper comes out to burn incense and set off fire-crackers. This is called "welcoming the dragon lantern."

Dragon boat races and dragon dances are extremely popular among China's various nationalities. The former sport has spread to Japan and Southeast Asia, where it has become very popular. The Dragon Dance appears in Han dynasty documentation and stone-

block pictures and is still a much-loved form of entertainment among China's different nationalities. It is also performed in Japan and Southeast Asia.

Dragon worship had much to do with primitive man's struggle with nature. Heroes were associated with the dragon as symbols of power and splendor. Later, dragons were associated from human beings to become independent supernatural beings.

In the early period of slave society when a hereditary imperial system had come into being and the slave owning clan had monopolized the social wealth, the dragon became the supposed ancestor of the ruling clan. It was a symbol of imperial power. The emperors were firmly linked with dragons. Long yan (countenance of the dragon) and long ti (body of dragon) became terms of flattery for the emperor


and the character long (dragon) was prefixed to the words for his articles of daily use. His clothing was called long juan; his chair, long zuo; his bed, long chuang, and so on.

But the expression and demeanor of the dragons in court and folk art differed considerably. The dragon in folk art were simple, homely and often friendly looking. Those in court art, however, were imposing, ferocious and awe-inspiring. To project imperial authority, the former were linked with the working people's labors and their hopes for a better life; the latter with the political needs of the feudal emperors. Both have their artistic appeal.

Friendly or magnificent—and sometimes a bit of both—the dragon is a mythical creature that the Chinese people have taken to their hearts and shared with the rest of the world.

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Annual Understaffed and Underbudgeted

By: Jenny Hollywood

Susan Mebane and May Sherrod, co-editors of the yearbook, are very excited about this year's edition which comes out in May. Something new this year will be a supplement to the yearbook. The supplement will cover everything from Spring Fling through graduation. It will fit in and attach to the back of the yearbook. The supplement will be mailed to Seniors, and underclassmen can pick them up in the fall.

The yearbook costs \$27.00 per student to print, but the SGA budget only allots \$21.00 of each student's fee to the yearbook. The 1984-85 annual was possible only due to a large surplus of money from last year's budget. May and Susan are proposing that the budget be raised next year.

Another problem May and Susan have had to face is understaffing. There are seven people on the staff, including

photographers. They would like to see the staff enlarge to 15-20 people, and think that if people got class credit for working on the yearbook, they would do better work, and Salem, therefore, would have a better yearbook.

Susan and May said the hardest part about being co-editors has been meeting their deadlines. The first deadline was during fall exams, and their second deadline was the first week after January term.

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