

Volume 1

Draw On Culture

Little Friends Around the World
(Xiao Péngyǒumen)





Dragon / *Lóng*

Chinese dragons are not fire breathing like dragons in Western mythology. Chinese dragons are creatures of great positive power associated with skies, seas, rain, rivers, mist, water and life-giving harvests. As long ago as the Shang dynasty (circa 1554–1045 BCE), the character for Dragon (*Lóng*) was found inscribed on oracle bones that shamen used to predict the future. In the Yin dynasty, more than three thousand years ago, dragons symbolized protection, good fortune and miraculous power.

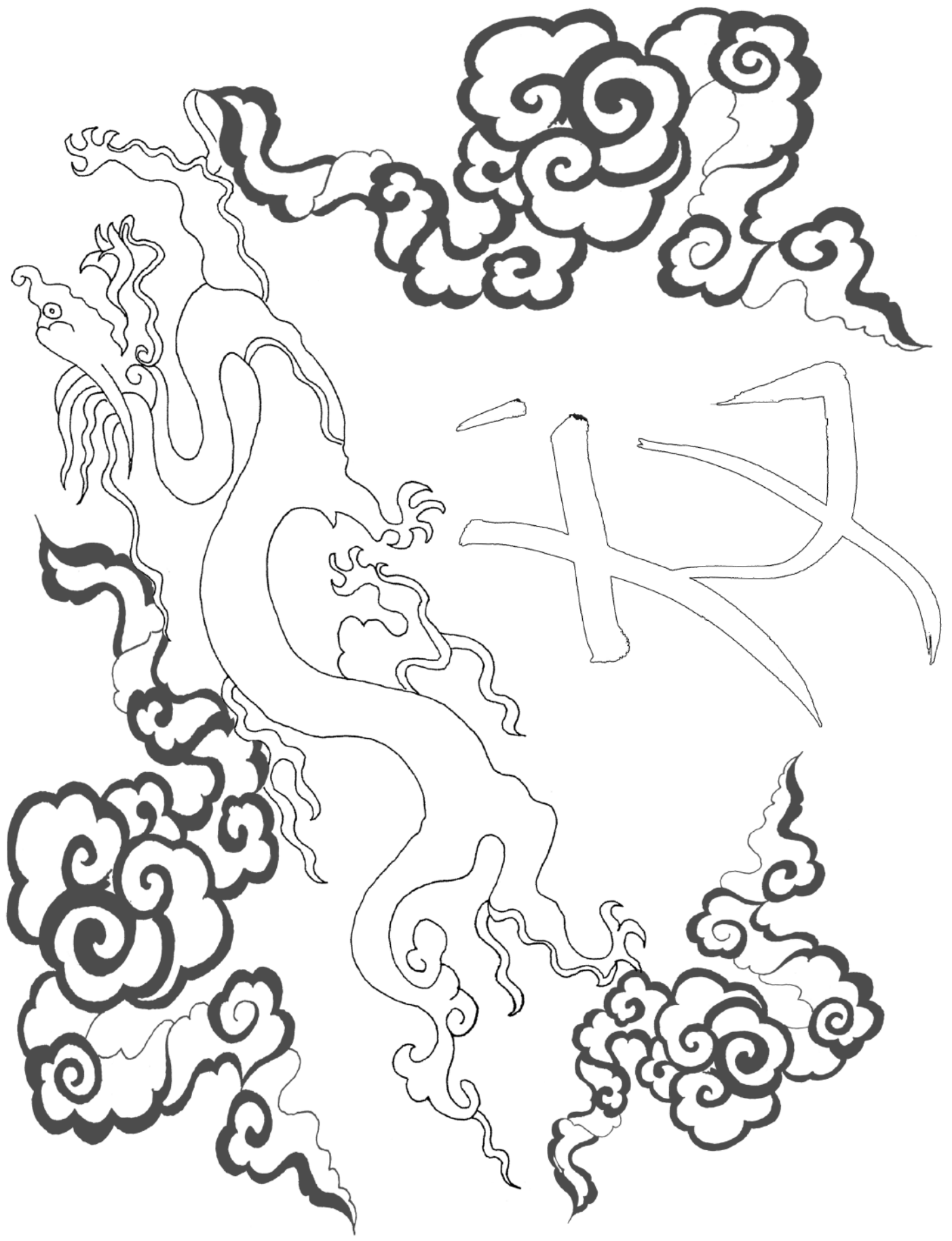
The dragon was also the symbol of the emperor. Only the emperor wore dragon robes, sat on a dragon throne, and slept in a dragon bed. The next time you see a picture of a dragon count its toes—dragons with five toes are the imperial dragon, the most powerful.

Along with the Phoenix (*Fèng Huáng*), the Tortoise (*Guīxiān*), the Unicorn (*Qílín*), the King Dragon (*Lóng wáng*) is one of the four sacred animals (*sì líng*) of Chinese mythology. Together, the Dragon and the Phoenix symbolize a harmonious marriage.

The Dragon dance, or *wǔ lóng wǔ shī*, began around 265 CE and is still performed at celebrations like the Lantern Festival to bring good fortune and chase away evil.

THINK ABOUT IT Is the dragon in your picture an imperial dragon? Remember to count its toes!

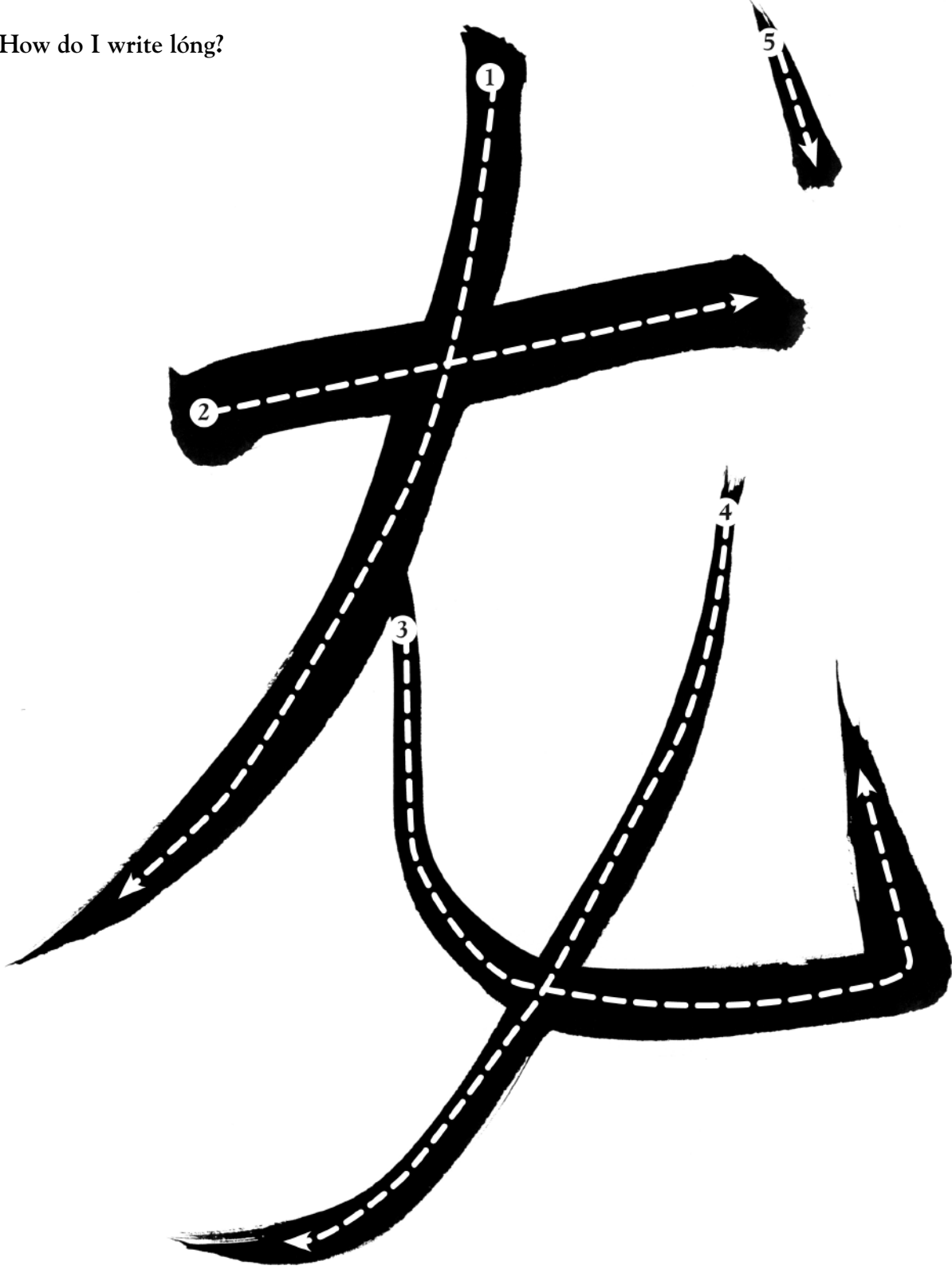
How do I say *lóng wáng*? *lóng* = between *long* and *lung*;
wáng = pair of *tongs*



On this page practice writing the character or remove this page and put your art on display.



How do I write lóng?



Dragon / Lóng