

RESEARCH ON THE DRAGON IMAGE IN TURKISH MINIATURE PAINTINGS

By KYONG-MI KIM*

The dragon of the East was an object of worship and an authority to make rain, unlike the West. The dragon image, one of the positively accepted Chinese motifs with the blue-and-white porcelain of the Ming dynasty by the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, was combined with gigantic saw-edged leaves to create a genre in *Saz* style. By combining Eastern dragons with plant motifs instead of clouds, dragons were no longer accepted as authority and nobility but as symbols of life and longevity. Unlike Iran and other countries, the image of dragons in Turkish miniature paintings has evolved into a unique style using Turkish calligraphy. The stylistic feature is that a thick black line that gives the impression of calligraphy forms the dragon's back or a huge *saz* leaf stalk and forms the axis of the screen. Most of the work was black ink drawing, not painting, and partly lightly painted. In the development stage, the dragon appears as a protagonist on the screen of the early works, but the dragon retreats to the latter half and the *saz* leaves play a leading role on the screen. A common feature in all paintings, whether early or late, is that they have a militant character and create tension on the screen. From the viewpoint of comparative culture, Turkish dragon miniature drawings of the 16th century Ot-

* KYONG-MI KIM is an assistant professor at Tabula Rasa College, Keimyung University, South Korea.

toman period and the Joseon dynasty are somewhat similar in that they are based on calligraphic character and desire for longevity and loyalty, and are drawn according to certain iconic principles.

Keywords: dragon, miniature painting, saz style, calligraphy, Ottoman Empire, China, Munchado

INTRODUCTION

The Turks have a tradition of recording documented illustrations, making calligraphy an art and recording culture a visual art. Compared with Persian miniature painting, Turkish miniature painting is not well known but has a long history. The origin of Turkish painting goes back to the paintings of the Uighurs, who were Turks in Central Asia. The paintings of this period were characteristic of Buddhism and Manichaeism, and the figures were oriental in appearance with rounded faces, like the Dunhuang murals. This way of portraying the person continued until the miniature paintings of the Ottoman Empire. As miniature painting became important in the 12th century Seljuk Turk era, the first Islamic school of miniature painting was established in Baghdad. After the collapse of the Seljuk Turks, miniature painting began to bloom in the Ottoman Empire and reached its golden age in the 16th century. Along with the expansion of the territory of the Ottoman Empire, artists from various regions and various works of art which had entered the Imperial Palace had a significant influence on Turkish artists. During this period, Turkish painters were influenced by the colors and styles of Chinese and Iranian paintings and tried to build their styles while mixing various techniques.

Richard Ettinghausen, who was the consulting chairman of the Department of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, made a distinction between the characteristics of earlier Turkish miniature paintings:

While Turkish painting was contemporary with that of Iran and Mughal India, in nearly all ways it was distinguishable, not only in its different forms of dress and headgear and the more formal presentation of the figures, but also in its more simplified and at times monumentalized forms of trees, landscapes, and architecture. At the same time, the Turkish artist had a keen eye for details, an attitude that led in the course of time to realistic portrayals of figures and scenes. Such close observation eventually made the artists turn to exaggeration - even caricature. All of this helped

to make Turkish painting something unique, even though its heritage from Persian painting and its European influences are easily recognized.¹

The works referred to in this article are also mostly works of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, due to the very small number of outstanding works outside Turkey, and the materials are also based on the Metropolitan catalog and the writings of Dr. Edwin Binney, 3rd.

This study examines the image characteristics of miniature paintings during the Ottoman Empire. I would like to discuss how Turkish miniature paintings overcame cultural differences in the East and the West and how they embraced imaginary animals, such as dragons, into paintings. Furthermore, I would like to compare the aesthetics embodying Turkish miniature painting with *Munchado* (Painting of Characters) of the Joseon dynasty, which is the most similar genre in that it is ‘calligraphic painting.’ The difficulty of this study is the problem faced by all researchers interested in Turkish miniatures. The reason is that most of the works are in Turkey. Moreover, most are located in the Topkapi Palace Library in Istanbul. The scarcity of material outside Turkey is far more serious.² As far as this researcher knows, no specific study on the image of dragons has been conducted on Turkish miniature paintings. Moreover, a comparison of Turkish drawing with *Munchado* has never been made. Therefore, although this study suffers from a scarcity of available material, it makes a significant contribution to work in this under-researched field.

ACCEPTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE IMAGE OF DRAGON IN TURKISH MINIATURE PAINTINGS

Central Asia is a hybrid of art and culture. On the Silk Road pioneered by merchants, a diverse ethnic culture was exchanged, as well as rare items from the East and the West and numerous artists, artisans, and artwork. One of the representative examples of the mixed image of the East and the West remaining in Central Asian art is the dragon. Like Persia, Western and Eastern tales appear simultaneously in Turkish miniature paintings. According to the *Guang Ya* (廣雅), a Chinese dictionary written by Zhang Yi during the Wei

¹ Edwin Binney, 3rd, *Turkish Miniature Paintings and Manuscripts* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1973), 7.

² Binney, *Turkish Miniature Paintings*, 9.

dynasty (220-265), the dragon looked similar in various respects to nine different animals.

The head resembles the camel, the horn is like the deer, the eyes are similar to the rabbit, the ears are correspondent to the ox, the neck takes after the snake, the stomach looks like a gigantic shell, the scales are like those of the carp, the claws resemble the hawk, and the fist takes after the tiger.³

In fact, the dragon who made this appearance to the Turks was not a completely strange creature. The Turks' experience of the dragons of the East dates back to the time of the nomads of the Turks in the past. An example from the Bezeklik mural paintings (Fig. 1) in Turfan in Central Asia shows a dragon in a lake of the same shape. The appearance of the Asian dragon in Turkish miniature painting took place in the opposite direction from the Romance of Alexander, which came from Greece via Syria to Persia and Central Asia. It was through Mongolia that Chinese motifs flowed into Turkey through Persia. Chinese motifs, including dragons, were first accepted in Iran in the 14th century⁴ and were accepted in earnest during the Ottoman Empire in Turkey.

During the Ottoman Empire period, the blue-and-white porcelain of the Ming dynasty was one of the most preferred artworks. However, dragons and phoenixes were also adopted, and cloud patterns and lotus patterns were accepted as well. In addition, the manner of depicting the oriental landscape and the way of reproducing the seal of the painter in painting was also introduced in Turkish paintings.

In the East, dragons were spiritual beings who chased evil spirits and rain. Therefore, in the East, dragons in paintings were always accompanied by enormous clouds. Ancient Korea had a ritual to pray for rain when a drought occurred. They threw dragon paintings into a river during the ritual.⁵ The 'tug of war' (Fig. 2),⁶ a representa-

³ Yeolsu Yoon, *Handbook of Korean Art Folk Painting*, trans. Wonjun Nam (Seoul: Yekyung Publishing Co., 2002), 236.

⁴ Binney, *Turkish Miniature Paintings*, 31.

⁵ According to the *Samguk Saki* (*The Chronicles of the Three States*) and the *Koryosa* (*History of the Koryo Dynasty*, compiled by Kim Chongso, Chong Inji and others, on the orders of King Sejong), people threw paintings of dragons into the water whenever there was a drought. The Cloud Dragon was usually drawn with gigantic dark clouds behind it. This came from the belief that the first power of the dragon was to pour rain from the skies (Yoon, *Handbook of Korean Art*, 237). In *The Annals of Joseon Dynasty*, there are records that the heads of tigers were thrown into the Han River during ritual praying for rain. This was to stimulate the dragon, which expressed the civil faith that the rain would come when the dragon was angry (Kim Jong-Dae, Kim Jong-Dae, *The Symbolic System of Our Culture (As Seen in 33 Animals)* (Seoul: Different World, 2001), 307-10).

⁶ After a combined application by Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia and the Philippines in 2015, the tug of

tive folk game that has been handed down to the present day, began with a wish for abundance, and the line symbolizes the dragon. The dragon was always the object of worship. In addition, the dragon, with its mysterious ability to bring rain, was a symbol of authority in itself, and besides the palace, it was adopted as a symbol of a divine spirit and nobility in many areas besides traditional arts such as temples, tombstones, paintings, furniture, ornaments, and clothing. On the other hand, in the West, dragons were perceived as evil that hurt humans, and dragons were always portrayed with human beings to fight against, as in the myth of St. George (Fig. 3). In Turkish miniature paintings, the so-called ‘Chinese dragon’ and the Western dragon coexist. Heroes in the Persian *Shahnameh*, and heroes from Turkey and Mongolia also defeated Western dragons with long spears, swords or bows. Interestingly, the miniature paintings of Turkey and Persia portray the dragon with an oriental appearance, whether spiritual or malicious. The dragon images covered in this study are limited to oriental dragons.

EXAMPLES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF DRAGON IMAGES IN TURKISH MINIATURE DRAWINGS

During the Ottoman Empire in the mid-16th century, a new genre was formed in Turkish paintings as Chinese images were accepted. It became popular to combine mythological animals such as dragons and phoenixes with plant motifs such as stylized serrated leaves called *saç* style (Fig. 4). Sometimes ‘gigantic saw-edged’⁷ leaves appeared. At that time, dragons and phoenixes were reproduced in various media such as paintings, textiles, and ceramic arts. Although dragons with vegetation were studied and known much earlier in Persia than in Turkey, they seem to have been accepted more actively in Turkey than in Persia and entered the mainstream of painting.⁸ The reason for this is that the dragon image was also reproduced in *saç* style, so it is presumed that it was accepted without any difficulty. The Metropolitan Museum catalog, which provides the most faithful detailed materials out of Turkey, describes the direct reason for the settlement of dragon images in Turkey as follows:

war was listed as a Human Intangible Cultural Heritage. Punnuk, a tug of war in the Ifugao area of the Philippines, is held in a river after the harvest.

⁷ Edwin Binney, 3rd, *Turkish Treasures* (Portland: Portland Art Museum, 1979), 216.

⁸ Binney, *Turkish Miniature Paintings*, 28.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, in the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66), the Ottoman *nakkāşhane*, or court design atelier in Istanbul, was flourishing under the leadership of Shah Qulu, an émigré artist from Iran. Shah Qulu is thought to have been largely responsible for the development of the new *saz* or *hatayi* style, inspired at once by the art of China and of Iran, which by mid-century had become the new emblem of imperial Ottoman artistry. His drawings in black ink on paper, sometimes with small touches of color, were sought after by Ottoman patrons and incorporated into a number of royal albums created at the court.⁹

The *Saz-style Drawing of a Dragon amid Foliage* (Fig. 5) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is a typical example of a dragon drawing combined with *saz* leaves. At the top of this picture, a seal of oriental painting is reproduced. This inscription states that it is the work of Shah Qulu ‘as an exercise.’¹⁰ Inside the picture is depicted a dragon holding a huge spray with feather-like leaves on the forefoot. The dragon skin is described as spotted instead of scaled, and dynamics are felt in the four feet of the dragon moving in different directions and in the clouds winding around the body. The most noticeable thing in this picture is the flow of thick black lines leading to the part of the leaves and the back of the dragon. This black line radiates intense internal energy and effectively controls the complex and cluttered atmosphere of the screen. The catalog of the Metropolitan Museum of Art writes about this black line:

While this type of draftsmanship may have developed as an outgrowth of elegant calligraphy, Ottoman Turkish drawings from the 1560s also include the use of strong black lines running along the backs of dragons.¹¹

Edwin Binney, 3rd, also regards this black line as a key feature of the Turkish style that served as the backbone of the dragon. In later works, “the strongest black arc serves not as a backbone for the beasts but as a fastening for the foliage on which they festoon themselves.”¹²

⁹ Maryam D. Ekhtiar, ed., *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 290-291. Shah Qulu is listed as Shah Quli on the Metropolitan Museum of Art website. See *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/57.51.26/> (Accessed 10.04.2018)

¹⁰ Ekhtiar, *Masterpieces*, 291.

¹¹ Ekhtiar, *Masterpieces*, 224.

¹² Binney, *Turkish Miniature Paintings*, 31.

Iran had already embraced the images of dragons and phoenixes in the late 13th and 14th centuries of the Mongol Empire and the Yuan dynasty. Chinese traditional dragon and phoenix motifs were widely used and painted by artists of Ilkhanid to decorate the walls of the palace built when Mongolia invaded Persia in the thirteenth century. In particular, the phoenix began to be adopted as a way of visualizing the Persian mythical bird *simurgh* and reproduced in various media. However, given the fact that Persian miniature painting did not develop in the same way as Turkey, it cannot be overlooked that an Iranian artist such as Shah Qulu contributed to the adoption of Chinese dragons in Turkish miniatures. In the pictures shown after Shah Qulu, the dragon is clinging to the more aggressive leaf stalks or leaves, or the dragon can be seen fighting other animals.

In the pictures, which seem to have been influenced by Shah Qulu, the dragons become much more aggressive with the *saz* leaves, or they fight other animals. The animals are mainly the phoenix and the lion. *Dragons in Saz Leaves* (Fig. 6), which appeared in Christie's auction in 2013, seems after the style of Shah Qulu. It shows a dragon amid foliage confronting the head of a *simurgh* emerging from *saz* leaves, while a lion's head (Fig. 7) bites at the shoulder of the dragon. Two seal impressions on the drawing can be seen as well. *Chilins* (Chinese chimerical creatures) *Fighting with a Dragon* (Fig. 8) is a rare example of a work classified as a Turkish miniature painting that does not combine with vegetation. Instead of the giant *saz* leaves, the dragon is dynamically depicted in the clouds around it, giving a strong sense of the mythical oriental dragon. However, the existence of strange creatures that rush to the dragon, which is not found in oriental dragon paintings, is enough to make this picture heterogeneous. This militant element added to the mythical dragon, which was an object of worship in the East, is a common feature that appears in the process of accepting Eastern dragons in Central Asia (Fig. 9). Especially when drawing dragons, Iranian painters preferred combat scenes. This seems to be the influence left by the *Shahnameh* of Persia, the stories of heroes and kings slaughtering enemies (Fig. 10).

Iran, which accepted the motif of dragons earlier than Turkey, developed the dragon image with drawing slightly later than Turkey. "During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in keeping with the increased production of single-page, finished drawings for inclusion in albums, numerous pictures were executed of dragons, either alone or in combat with men and other animals."¹³ *Dragon and Clouds* (Fig. 11), a single work drawn with ink and watercolors on paper, shows the flow of lines

¹³ Ekhtiar, *Masterpieces*, 224.

of variable thickness developed in Iran in the 1590s. This drawing is attributed to Sadiqi Beg, who was one of the pioneers of the calligraphic style of drawing in Iran. He produced many drawings and sketches of dragons. The backbone of this drawing is also depicted as a thicker black line, a way of portraying the dragon that originated in Turkey, but in addition to the dragon, the outline of the cloud and the rock is also partially blackened. The dragon lamps are only relatively slightly thicker. Therefore, the black line descending on the dragon's back is not overwhelming. What attracted this researcher's attention in this picture is that he actively arranged cloud motifs that Turkish artists had reduced or excluded. In the process of accepting Eastern dragons, the authority of the heavenly dragon to predict the rain was removed and the cloud was used as an effective means of expressing the inner energy and the fierce gesture of the dragon fighting against other animals. In this work, the dragon was also combined with a plant motif. The dragon is standing on the ground, pulling his neck long and staring out of the screen, and the clouds that once guaranteed his authority stay on his head as escort. In this work, the dragon's nostalgia, which misses the sky of the East, is told.

Most of the drawings with dragon images were classified as Turkish works at the beginning without exception. This means that, compared with Iran, the image of dragon was portrayed in the form of *saz*, and it was popular enough to develop Turkey into a genre. This seems to have provided a basis for scholars to classify the nationality of the paintings. However, further studies are needed in the sense that it is not easy to distinguish the works of other motifs, especially the dragon in vegetation, from the works of Turkish and Iranian painters.¹⁴

CALLIGRAPHIC PAINTING: TURKISH MINIATURES AND KOREAN *MUNCHADO*

The examples of accepting oriental dragons in Turkish art are comparable to Korean works. Even though the fields of art are different, it is meaningful to compare the examples reflecting the perception of dragons. Under the influence of China, Korea was the most active adopter of the image of the dragon among East Asian countries. The brush stand with dragon heads (Fig. 12) of the National Museum of Korea, a 12th century Goryeo celadon, is a rare example combined with plant motifs. There

¹⁴ See Binney, *Turkish Miniature Paintings*, 28.

are dragon head sculptures on the left and right sides of the brush stand, and the lotus flowers and vines are decorated with openwork. The lower part, with its fine engraved lines, is reminiscent of fish fins or waves due to elegantly cut edges. The dragon of the brush stand is often called a carp dragon. The carp dragon (Fig. 13) reminds us of ancient Chinese legend, symbolizing the achievement of the ambitious goal of overcoming difficulties in that the carp is transformed into a dragon. The combination of dragon and carp reflects the ideals of oriental examinees and writers preparing for national exams in order to become officials. The foreground of a folkloristic landscape scene is taken by an over-sized carp (Fig. 14), “a symbol of success in state examinations.”¹⁵

The Iznik plate with saz leaves and scaly pattern (Fig. 15) is a very interesting case considering the oriental meaning of the combination of dragon and carp. At first glance, it seems to have two green fish facing each other in the center of the bottom, but we come to conclude that the scales on the background are hard to see as fish scales once again. Without seeing the dragon as an exotic creature, you can feel the presence of a dragon by the scales, and it is also stunning in shape.

The dragon picture in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Fig. 16, 17) is one of the best calligraphic drawings in the addition of the black stroke that forms the backbone of the biggest branch, as well as the fact that the letters are patterned and the space is geometrically divided and beautifully painted. Unlike the early Shah Qulu drawing that made the dragon figure fashionable, the dragon played a leading role in the drawing, but the dragon gradually disappears and the giant *saz* leaves begin to appear as the main characters. The overwhelming figure in this picture is a large, solid stalk that forms the axis of the screen in a C shape. The dragons seem to be hanging like extras on this black line and leaves. The flowers that bloom through the small stalks in the center of the picture seem to inform the main character of this picture. In the background, there are vine motifs with a light line. The vine and flowers are depicted in color in the upper left and lower left corners of the picture and the triangular space in the right middle. The vine motifs in the background and the flowers in the center (Fig. 17) resemble those of Joseon rather than the form of the Ming dynasty of the 15th century (Fig. 18).¹⁶

¹⁵ Roger Goepper, ed., *Kunstschätze aus Korea* (Hamburg: Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst der Stadt Köln und Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, 1984), 192.

¹⁶ The taste for the blue-and-white porcelain of China was so well developed in Islamic lands by the late 14th century that many of the miniature paintings depicting court life of the period gave prominence to the rare and costly Chinese vessels (See Binney, *Turkish Treasures*, 207) The design of the flower

In the case of works later than the LA Museum of Art dragon picture, the dragons certainly shrank significantly and the stem of the leaves became the protagonist. The representative example is the drawing of *saç* leaves with dragons (Fig. 19). The inner frame of this work is decorated with a marble pattern and shows various developments. In this work, the early gigantic dragons are noticeably tiny, with only the head in the lower right and the tail protruding from the top. While the dragon is lethargic, the huge leaves pierce and attack each other with a dramatic gesture. A similar version in the Louvre (Fig. 20) provides almost the same atmosphere, and it is not easy to see the presence of a dragon at a glance.

Munchado (Painting of Characters) is a type of Korean folk painting combining Chinese characters and pictorial elements. It originated in China and spread to Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. However, Korean *Munchado* developed into various forms that cannot be found in China and established a unique genre. *Munchado* from the late Joseon dynasty reflects the wishes of the people at that time. Confucian (or *Hyoje* 孝悌) *Munchado*, which dealt with the eight key virtues of Confucianism such as filial piety, brotherhood, and loyalty, were depicted in sets of eight on folding screens (Fig. 21). Just as dragons in Turkish miniature paintings were combined with *saç* leaves, each letter in the Korean *Munchado* was drawn in combination with the folk image associated with that letter. For example, carp, shrimp, and shellfish are depicted in the character for 'loyalty' (*chung* 忠) (Fig. 22). The carp turns into a dragon, symbolizing the commitment of a senior civil servant to the state, and shrimp and shellfish mean principles and harmony.¹⁷

The later version (Fig. 23), reminiscent of Turkish zoomorphic calligraphy, is one of many variants. As mentioned above, the role of dragons and leaves in Turk-

spirals, which was freely transformed and elaborately drawn from the 15th century Chinese originals by Iznik artisans, became popular. The vine that is the basis of the pattern means a strong life. The dynamics of the vine also symbolize a steady increase in wealth and prosperity. In spite of the unfamiliar exotic animal image, the dragon seems to have been accepted comparatively unequivocally, representing the desire for longevity and prosperity by being combined with vine plants in Turkey.

¹⁷ In *Minbwa*, which means the paintings of ordinary people, dragons, like carp, symbolize the duty of the bureaucracy and the virtues of the national government. Korean *Munchado* retain calligraphic elements, but at the same time, painting characteristics are very strong. In the early days of *Munchado*, the pictures that were trapped in bold letters jumped out of the letters as they went to the middle. By doing so, instead of destroying the original letter's form, the image related to the letter constitutes a stroke which develops more pictorially. This development process of producing traditional fonts and their variation seems to be somewhat similar to the Turkish calligraphy style, which is divided into Divani, zoomorphic, and Kufic styles. In particular, the Divani calligraphy of the tuğra of Suleyman the Magnificent placed flower patterns in a dense pattern inside the black petals of the seal.

ish paintings changed in the later stages and the dragons that were dominant almost disappeared. Interestingly, we can see a similar phenomenon in late Korean *Munchado*. The dragon, who was the hero of 'loyalty', is withdrawn, and other elements such as shrimp appear as heroes. A shrimp makes the shape of a letter instead of a dragon. The letter style looks free from traditional styles as well.

The following are the common points of Turkish miniature painting and Korean *Munchado*. First, Turkish dragon paintings and the works of *Munchado* are paintings that combine calligraphy or calligraphic characteristics. Second, they reflect the universal ideals or ideologies of society at the time, such as longevity and loyalty. Third, both were drawn according to certain iconic principles. Although it is not as strict as *Munchado*, the dragon is also combined with the *saç* leaf around the black stroke, and the heterogeneous elements are shown as being as far removed as possible. This commonality is by no means a coincidence. In other words, the similarities are possible because both countries share a culture based on calligraphy. In addition, in the sense that things like calligraphy and character are the result of writing, I would like to add that both countries have a long tradition of writing and keeping records.

Another attraction of the painting in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art is the green and light blue patterns on a black border (Fig. 24) that surrounds the dragon painting. This pattern, which is very familiar to Koreans, is well known as a decorative or hinge pattern in traditional Korean furniture. The method of shifting the dragon image to the left rather than the center is also close to the Korean aesthetic that allows margins. It is a different aesthetic from China and Japan. In other cases, the sense of the bookbinder who discards the center and selects the other side when placing the picture attracts attention in another sense.

CONCLUSION

The dragon image, which was prevalent in the 16th century Ottoman Empire, was produced mostly by drawing rather than painting. The characteristics of the dragon images shown in Turkish miniature drawings can be summarized as follows. First, the black calligraphic line that forms the backbone of the dragon is a special feature of Turkish miniature drawing that distinguishes it from other miniatures including Persia. This black curve is the central axis of the picture, lively and overwhelming. This is also the result of an image encountered in Turkish calligraphy and painting. Second, in the process of accepting Chinese dragon images, reducing or removing the

cloud pattern, which is characteristic of oriental icons, and arranging plants that swirl around the dragon are a reinterpretation of the meaning of dragon in Turkish. The dragon of Turkish miniature drawings, which is lost in the cloud, no longer symbolizes authority. Third, in dragon drawings, the dragon played a leading role in the early stage, but the leaf stalk became more prominent and the dragon was pushed out of its place. However, the aggressive atmosphere that caused the tension that appeared from the beginning continued until the later period. The intense inner force comes from the overwhelming flow of calligraphic line rather than from the existence of the *saç* leaves or dragon itself.

Previous researchers generally regarded the dragon as a “symbol of longevity.”¹⁸ It was believed that the combination of a substantial serrated leaf, which looks rather threatening, instead of a cloud, and a vine pattern in the background was due to faith in the Tree of Life, which had been handed down from ancient times in Central Asia. Cloud patterns that were somewhat unfamiliar to them were minimized or removed and replaced with familiar plant images. In other words, exotic Chinese dragon imagery became a universal style after touching up by Turkish painters. This image for the Turks reflected a strong vitality and aspiration for eternity combined with familiar plant motifs. Therefore, Turkish painters contributed to miniature drawing and book art by accepting the images of mythical animals that are not easy to accept in Islamic art and developing them into an independent style.

Artworks are excellent texts in themselves. The artworks left by many countries connected to the Silk Road provide exciting research routes. In this sense, I would like to believe that pursuing the possibility of the cultural connection between Turkey and South Korea, which are located at the ends of the Silk Road, via the dragon is not a meaningless attempt. More research on Turkey’s miniature painting, which is full of exciting research possibilities, is expected to continue and expand, so there will be more opportunities to introduce better miniature paintings from Turkey, and more research can be conducted.

¹⁸ Binney, *Turkish Miniature Paintings*, 28.



Fig. 1) Dragon in a lake, Bezeklik, Cave 19, ca. 1024-1155, wall painting



Fig. 2) Korean folk game 'tug of war'



Fig. 3) Donatello, *St. George and the Dragon*, relief from the niche of St. George Tabernacle, Orsanmichele, Florence



Fig. 4) Tile with saz leaf design, ca. 1545–1555, 30.2x30.2 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig. 5) Shah Qulu, *Saz-style Drawing of a Dragon amid Foliage*, ca. 1540-1550, Image: 17.3x27.2 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig. 6) *Dragons in Saz Leaves*, ca. 1570 or later, 9.3 x 20.7 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig. 7) *Dragons in Saz Leaves*, detail



Fig. 8) *Chilins* (Chinese chimerical creatures) *Fighting with a Dragon*, 16th century, 15.4 x 25.9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig. 9) A youthful warrior fights a dragon that has wrapped itself around his body, early 17th century or later, Turkish miniature painting



Fig. 10) Nasr al-Soltani, *Rostam Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1430, Illustrated manuscript of the *Shahnameh*, Fitzwilliam Museum, Persian miniature painting



Fig. 11) *Dragon and Clouds*, Attributed to Sadiqi Beg (1533/34-1609/10), Iran, ca. 1600, Image: 19.1x12 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig. 12) Brush stand with dragon heads, Goryeo period, 12th century, celadon, National Museum of Korea



Fig. 13) Carp-dragon kettle, Goryeo period, 12th century, celadon, National Museum of Korea



Fig. 14) Flat bowl with carp image, Joseon dynasty, 19th century, National Museum of Korea



Fig. 15) Iznik plate with saz leaf and scaly pattern, 17th century, Huntington Museum of Art



Fig. 16) Two dragons entwined on a spray of stylized foliage, ca. 1560-1575, 18.1 x 9.4 cm, Los Angeles County Museum of Art



Fig. 17) Two dragons entwined on a spray of stylized foliage, picture image



Fig. 18) Upper: Blue-and-white jar with Baoxiang-hua Scrolls design, Ming dynasty, 15th century, 35.8 x 42.0 cm
Lower: Blue-and-white jar with Baoxiang-hua Scrolls design, Joseon dynasty, 15th century, 20 cm



Fig. 19) Drawing of saz leaves with dragons, ca. 1550-1570, 30.5 x 18.6 cm, The Metropolitan Museum



Fig. 20) Hanceri leaf and dragon, ca. 1570-1580, 20.8 x 13.3cm, Louvre Museum



Fig. 21) Folding screen (Munchado) of the eight Confucian virtues, 19th Century, Los Angeles County Museum of Art



Fig. 22) The character for loyalty (*chung*) from the Munchado, 19th century, Los Angeles County Museum of Art



Fig. 23) The character for loyalty (*chung*) from the Munchado, 19th century, Museum of Duksung Women's University



Fig. 24) Two dragons entwined on a spray of stylized foliage (Fig. 15), detail

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