

## **The Representation of Lion Animal Figure in Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Bangladesh**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Lion is the king of the animal world. The lion's job is to protect the clan from enemies. Due to these characteristics, the lion has been considered through all ages in the world as a symbol of royalty and protection as well as of wisdom and pride. In Buddhism lions are symbolic of the *Bodhisattvas*. In Buddhist sculpture, the lion animal figures were depicted as protectors of Dharma and therefore they support the throne of the Buddha's and *Bodhisattvas*. There are many Buddhist sculptures as *Manjubar*, *Avolokiteshwar*, *Akhobsawa Buddha* etc. in Bangladesh where the lion animal is depicted as a *bahan (vehicle)* and a symbol of royalty. Bangladesh is a heartland of Buddhist heritage and one of the important pilgrimage circuits of Asia and there are many Buddhist sites which are historically important, such as Paharpur Monastery, Shitakot Vihar, Shalban Vihar, Ananda Vihar, Vashu Vihar etc. Among them, it is possible to find many bronze sculptures and stone sculptures of Buddhism. This paper aims to address the cultural significance of the Lion symbol in Buddhist sculpture of ancient Bangladesh.

*Keywords: Lion animal figure, Buddhist sculpture, cultural significance*