

A Comparative Study on the Image of the Dragon in Sri Lanka and China

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Dragon is a concept of the East and the West and it is also a philosophical symbol used in Eastern countries. However, Western countries have not used it as a philosophical symbol but as a symbol for puerile matters. The study examines the use of the dragon concept in both China and Sri Lanka. It is seen in public sculptures in both countries. Chinese believe in two different dragons: Wa Zhua Da long representing power and the other, a symbol of prosperity. The image of the oriental dragon combines a collection of certain strong animal organs. It is not a destructive creature but an animal attracting prosperity. The image of the dragon in Sri Lanka is created with seven powerful local animal body parts: elephant's nose, lion's legs, monkey's eyes, pig's ears, crocodile's teeth, fish's body and bird's feathers. The dragon in China looks different from the one in Sri Lanka. It combines nine animal parts. The Chinese dragon image is created with a camel's head, deer's horns, rabbit's eyes, snake's neck, oyster's stomach, calf fish's scab, tiger's palm and eagle's nails. However, both countries consider the dragon as a dominant water animal. Dragon is also a symbol of time. Hence it is used in portals carvings in the gates of Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka. Further, it is represented in the flag of Cupid. Chinese celebrate the year of dragon. The symbol of the dragon carries political nuances in China and they compare their kings to these mythological creatures.

Keywords: philosophical symbol, sculpture, oriental dragon, symbol of the time, sons of the dragon

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