



India commemorated King Ashoka on a recent stamp showing the monarch with the single lion capital in Vaishali, India.

Front view of the single Lion Capital (sculpture) Vaishali, India



India's Lion "Capitals"

By Greg Balagian

Ashoka Maurya (304-232 B. C.), an Indian emperor who ruled almost all of the Indian subcontinent, is considered one of India's greatest rulers.

During his reign, Ashoka ordered a series of columns erected with inscriptions of his edicts called the Pillars of Ashoka.

Atop each column, the capital or sculpture is carved out of a separate block of polished sandstone and features four Asiatic lions (*Panthera leo persica*) standing back to back. They are mounted on an abacus with a frieze of various animals and a lion separated

by spoked chariot-wheels on a bell-shaped lotus. The artisans are unknown.

The most famous one is the Lion Capital of Ashoka in Sarnath with four lion sculptures and inscriptions which were adopted as the official emblem of India in 1950. That particular lion capital appears on over 150 stamps of India and other countries.

Vaishali's lion capital has a sculpture of a single lion with no inscriptions of the edicts. It appears on Scott 1630, issued in 1997 and a more recent stamp issued on August 14, 2015.

Since ancient times, lions have symbolize royalty and leadership. 🐾

Three of the four lions in the Lion Capital at Sarnath are on more than 150 stamps from India alone. (India 200, issued 1947)



India's endangered Asiatic (or Indian) lion is on the lion capitals.

India 366 (1963)

