

# धर्मचक्र Dharmacakra

## Dharmachakra

A lord of speech. An aspect of Manjushri. In some lore, occasionally identified as **Dharmachakra**.

<http://www.mythologydictionary.com/buddhist-mythology.html>

## دهارماتشاكرا

Abbreviation Finder - دهارماتشاكرا تريينا الكرمة -

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Yoga en Red - Mudras: مودرا دهارماتشاكرا | شبكة اليوغا -

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سوره دل نمادشناسی بودایی سوسیالیسم بودایی نموده ...



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# Dharmachakra

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **dharmacakra**, usually written **dharmachakra** in English (Sanskrit: धर्मचक्र; Pāli: धम्मचक्क **dhammachakka**; Burmese: ဓမ္မစကြာ ([dəm̩əʃə tɕà]); Chinese: 法輪; pinyin: *fǎlún*; Standard Tibetan: འཕོང་ལྷོ། (*chos kyi 'khor lo*); lit. 'Wheel of Dharma' or 'Wheel of Law'), is one of the Ashtamangala symbols<sup>[1]</sup> that has represented dharma, the Buddha's teaching of the path to Nirvana, since the early period of Indian Buddhism.<sup>[2]</sup><sup>[note 1]</sup>

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## Etymology

The Classical Sanskrit noun *dharma* is a derivation from the root *dhṛ*, which has a meaning of "to hold, maintain, keep",<sup>[note 2]</sup> and takes a meaning of "what is established or firm", and hence "law". It is derived from an older Vedic Sanskrit *n*-stem *dharman-*, with a literal meaning of "bearer, supporter", in a religious sense conceived as an aspect of Rta.<sup>[4]</sup>

The word *chakra* derives from Proto-Indo-European *\*k<sup>w</sup>ek<sup>w</sup>los*, and its cognates include Greek *kyklos*, Lithuanian *kaklas*, Tocharian B *kokale* and English "wheel," as well as "circle" and "cycle."<sup>[5]</sup><sup>[6]</sup> *\*k<sup>w</sup>ek<sup>w</sup>los* is derived from the root *\*k<sup>w</sup>el-*, a verb that meant "to turn."<sup>[6]</sup> Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, first Vice President of India has stated that the Ashoka Chakra of India represents the Dharmachakra.<sup>[7]</sup>

## History

According to Beer, the wheel is an early Indian solar symbol of sovereignty, protection and creation. As a solar symbol it first appears on clay seals from c. 2500 BCE from the Indus Valley Civilization. The wheel is also the main attribute of Vishnu, the Vedic god of preservation.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Usage

## Buddhist usage

The Dharmachakra is one of the Ashtamangala symbols<sup>[9]</sup> of Buddhism.<sup>[10][note 3]</sup> It is one of the oldest known Buddhist symbols found in Indian art, appearing with the first surviving post-Harappan Indian iconography in the time of the Buddhist king Aśoka.<sup>[2][2][note 1]</sup>

The Buddha is said to have set the "wheel of dhamma" (*dhammachakra*) in motion when he delivered his first sermon,<sup>[11]</sup> which is described in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. The wheel itself depicts the idea about the cycle of rebirth of a human.

Buddhism adopted the wheel as the main symbol of the "wheel-turning" *chakravartin*, the ideal king<sup>[11]</sup> or "universal monarch",<sup>[8]</sup> who turns the wheel (of a chariot) when he conquers the world,<sup>[11]</sup> symbolising the ability to cut through all obstacles and illusions.<sup>[8]</sup>

According to Harrison, the symbolism of "the wheel of the law" and the order of Nature is also visible in the Tibetan praying wheels. The moving wheel symbolizes the movement of *Rta*, the cosmic order.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Beyond Buddhism

- In the Vishnu Purana and Bhagavata Purana, two kings named Bharata of the Hindu solar and lunar dynasties respectively are referred to as "Chakravartin"<sup>[13]</sup>
- Jagdish Chandra Jain referred to this icon in Kalinga.<sup>[14]</sup> In Jainism, the Dharmachakra is worshipped as a symbol of the dharma.
- Other "cakras" appear in other Indian traditions, e.g. Vishnu's Sudarśanacakra, which is, however, a wheel-shaped weapon and not a representation of a teaching.
- The national flag of the former Kingdom of Sikkim in the Himalayas featured a version of the Dharmachakra.
- Thai people also use a yellow flag with a red Dharmachakra as their Buddhist flag.
- The coat of arms of Mongolia includes a dharmachakra together with some other Buddhist attributes such as the lotus, cintamani, blue khata and Soyombo.
- The Dharmachakra is also the U.S. Armed Forces military chaplain insignia for Buddhist chaplains.
- In non-buddhist cultural contexts, an eight-spoked Dharmachakra resembles a traditional ship's wheel. As a nautical emblem, this image is a common sailor tattoo.
- In the Unicode computer standard, the Dharmachakra is called the "Wheel of Dharma" and found in the eight-spoked form. It is represented as U+2638 (☸).



Old style Dharma Wheel. Spiti, H.P., India. 2004



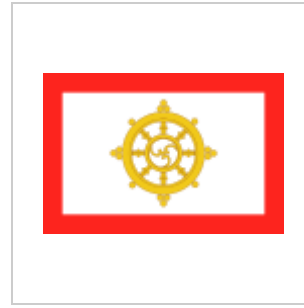
The Coat of arms of Mongolia includes Dharmachakra, Cintamani, Lotus, blue khata and Soyombo



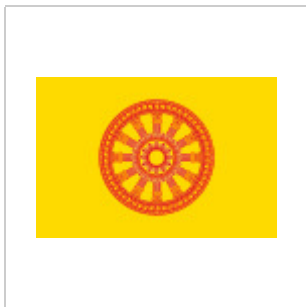
The Coat of arms of Sri Lanka, featuring a blue Dharmachakra as the crest



The National Flag of India has the Ashoka Chakra at its center representing the Dharmachakra.<sup>[15]</sup>



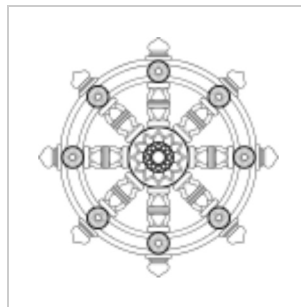
The flag of the former Kingdom of Sikkim featured a version of the Dharmachakra



The Dharmachakra flag, symbol of Buddhism in Thailand



Thammachak (Dharmachakra) Seal, seal of Thammasat University in Thailand, consisting of a Constitution on Phan or container with the 12-spoked Dharmachakra behind



Dharmachakra for the U.S. Armed Forces military chaplain

## Notes

1. Grünwedel e.a.: "The wheel (*dharmachakra*) as already mentioned, was adopted by Buddha's disciples as the symbol of his doctrine, and combined with other symbols—a trident placed above it, etc.—stands for him on the sculptures of the Asoka period."<sup>[2]</sup>
2. Monier Williams, *A Sanskrit Dictionary* (1899): "to hold , bear (also bring forth) , carry , maintain , preserve, keep , possess , have , use , employ , practise , undergo"<sup>[3]</sup>
3. Goetz: "dharmachakra, symbol of the Buddhist faith".<sup>[10]</sup>

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1. ancient-symbols.com, *Buddhist symbols* (<http://www.ancient-symbols.com/buddhist-symbols.html>)
2. Grünwedel 1901, p. 67.
3. Monier Willams
4. Day 1982, p. 42-45.
5. Mallory 1997, p. 640.
6. Anthony 2007, p. 34.

7. See the national flag code at [http://www.mahapolice.gov.in/mahapolice/jsp/temp/html/flag\\_code\\_of\\_india.pdf](http://www.mahapolice.gov.in/mahapolice/jsp/temp/html/flag_code_of_india.pdf) and also the national symbols page of the National Portal of India at <http://india.gov.in/india-glance/national-symbols>
8. Beer 2003, p. 14.
9. ancient-symbols.com, *Buddhist symbols* (<http://www.ancient-symbols.com/buddhist-symbols.html>)
10. Goetz 1964, p. 52.
11. Pal 1986, p. 42.
12. Harrison 2010 (1912), p. 526.
13. Kurt Titze, Klaus Bruhn, *Jainism: A Pictorial Guide to the Religion of Non-violence* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=loQkEIf8z5wC&pg=PA8&lpg=PA8&dq=bharata+chakravartin&source=bl&ots=ZRJWWkqDBt&sig=CGzGBwwfX9M2gjRWYY1uIwCkaZM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=zYreUozqIKTuyAGZ34DACA&ved=0CDAQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=bharata%20chakravartin&f=false>)
14. "Framing the Jina: Narratives of Icons and Idols in Jain History", p. 314, by John Cort, publisher = Oxford University
15. See the national flag code at [http://www.mahapolice.gov.in/mahapolice/jsp/temp/html/flag\\_code\\_of\\_india.pdf](http://www.mahapolice.gov.in/mahapolice/jsp/temp/html/flag_code_of_india.pdf) and also the national symbols page of the National Portal of India at <http://india.gov.in/india-glance/national-symbols>

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## Further reading

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## External links

-  Media related to Dharmachakra at Wikimedia Commons
- Buddhist Wheel Symbol (Dharmachakra) (<http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/symbols/wheel.htm>)

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