

Stamping a Rich Heritage

Stamp collection is not only an entertaining hobby, but also a gateway to cultural awareness and knowledge

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Stamps are considered the "windows of a nation" through which people can see and understand the "heritage and nature" of a particular country. The stamp collecting today is far from just a hobby. It is a subject of deep study and research.

Stamp collection also called philately has been one of the world's most popular hobbies since the late nineteenth century. Stamp collectors relish their hobby, and they actively seek out new and unusual stamps to add to their stamp collecting albums. They are an important source of income for some countries who print limited runs of elaborate stamps designed mainly to be bought by stamp collectors. The stamps produced by these countries may exceed their postal needs, but may also feature attractive topical designs that many collectors desire. It is said that John Bourke, Receiver General of Stamp Dues in Ireland was the first collector. In 1774 he assembled a book of the existing embossed revenue stamps, ranging in value from 6 pounds to half a penny. Stamp collection as a hobby began immediately after stamps were first issued, and by 1860 thousands of collectors and stamp dealers were appearing around the world as this new study and hobby spread across Europe, European colonies, the United States and other parts of the world.

In India too besides normal stamps, commemorative stamp are issued by the Ministry of Post and Telegraph in memory of an event, occasion, personality or on any theme of national and international importance. A brochure known as 'First Day Cover' is also issued along

with the release of the stamp, relating to the subject of the stamp.

Hindu Scriptures

Hindu is a way of life. It leads people to experience the divine nature of Gods. Hindu has been called the



Trinidad and Tobago has issued a stamp depicting 'Om' syllable



Kenya, has also issued stamp depicting 'Om'

oldest religion in the world, and some practitioners and scholars refer to it as 'Sanātana Dharma', the eternal tradition, or the eternal way, beyond human history. Scholars regard Hinduism as a fusion or synthesis of various Indian cultures and traditions, with diverse roots and no founder. This "Hindu synthesis" started to develop following the Vedic period. Its adherents are mostly in India and Nepal and a few are living in other countries around the world. The Vedas, Epics, Puranas are the great storehouse of Hindu philosophy. A number of stamps related to Hinduism depicting 'Om' have been released by Trinidad, Tobago and Kenya.

Vedas

The Vedas are the origin of valuable texts in Hindu religion, tradition and culture. The four vedas are Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. They contain the code of



conducting rituals. Mauritius has issued stamp on Vedas thus honouring the Hindu texts. India should also consider issue of four separate stamps for the four Vedas with the suitable appellations.

Hindu Philosophy

Hindu philosophy has three streams. They are Advaita, Vishistadvaita and



Stamp on Advaita by India Post



Stamp on Ramanujacharya on Vishistadvaita

Dvaita. India Post has issued a stamp on Advaita theme and another depicting Ramanujacharya on Vishistadvaita. India is having a considerable number of followers of Dvaita philosophy. Issue of stamp depicting Dvaita philosophy represented by Sri Madhvacharya, founder of Dvaita philosophy by India Post will meet the ends of justice.

Holy Scriptures

India Post has issued stamps on the writers of Holy Scriptures i.e. Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Stamps have also been issued on Bhagavad Gita, emphasising the Karmayoga concept in Hinduism.



Maharishi Valmiki

A leaf from
RamacharitmanasSaint Tulsidas
author of
RamacharitmanasPoet Kambar
author of
Ramayana in TamilAstukuri Molla who authored
Ramayana in Telugu

Bhagawatam is a sacred puran written by Veda Vyas. Episodes of *Rasleelas* which form part of the divine play in which Lord Krishna enacted with gopikas on the banks of the river Yamuna in Vrindavan have been depicted by the Postal Administration of Guyana in their stamps.

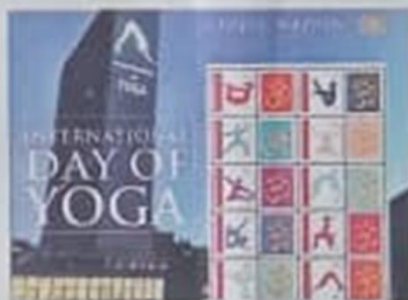
Various organisations are dedicated to Krishna consciousness. India Post may consider issue of a few of stamps depicting *Bhagawatam*.



episodes. A stamp on Veda Vyas also is necessary.

Yogasutra

The *Yogasutra* was compiled by Sage Patanjali around 400 CE. The idea of International Yoga Day was first proposed by the Indian Prime Minister Honourable Narendra Modi during his speech on September 27, 2014. The United Nations General Assembly unanimously declared June 21, of every year as International Yoga Day. India post promptly issued stamps on sage Patanjali and International Yoga Day. The United Nations has issued stamp sheet containing 10 stamps for International Yoga Day on June 21, 2017. This is a great achievement for India.

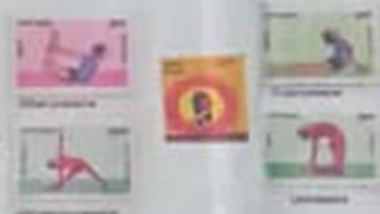


The above stamp of United Nations not only depicts Yoga but also shows the Hindu syllable "OM".

We have to record this great contribution to Hindutva by Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This has prompted some countries to plan stamp on Yoga Day.

Asana is one of the disciplines in Patanjali's *Yogasutra*.

The above stamps depicting



Asanas were issued by India Post.

Dhyana is an another discipline in Patanjali's *Yogasutra*. *Dhyana* is meditation. Sri Lanka Post too has issued stamp showing meditation.

Pranayama is one of the important



disciplines in Patanjali's *Yogasutra*. The exercise of *pranayama* is followed throughout the world. India Post may programme to issue stamps for all the disciplines envisaged in *Yogasutra* by the sage Patanjali.

Religious Festivals

Hindus celebrate many festivals, each having sanctity of its own. Hindu religious festivals find a place in Hindu mythology. India Post has issued stamps and postal stationery on the Hindu religious festivals like Dussehra, Holi and Rakhi. But unfortunately no stamps have been issued by the Indian Post on : Ganesh Chaturthi, Navaratri, Onam, Ugadi (New Year Day celebration in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka), Gudi Padva a traditional New Year Day for the Hindus in Maharashtra and Vishu, a Hindu New Year festival in Kerala.



Besides Indian Post stamps on Ramanavami and Krishnashtami and Mahashivaratri festival have been issued by the Nepal Post.

Nepal has also issued stamps on Chhat Pujan and Tamil's New Year Day.

Sri Lanka Post has issued stamps on Sankranti Festival and Pongal festival. Countries like the United States of America, Canada, Fiji, Guyana, Israel, India, Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka have issued stamps on Diwali.

CULTURE**Hindu samskaras**

The Hindu way of life is full of *samskaras*. The *samskaras* are performed on various occasions of the Hindu's life from cradle to grave.

Countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Korea and Bangladesh have issued stamps on Hindu weddings.



Singapore



Malaysia



Korea



Bangladesh

Nepal Post too has issued a stamp specifically on Hindu marriage, one of the Hindu *Samskaras* with the Nagari script on the stamp.

The post mark on the stamp also carries the word 'Vivah'.

**Saints and Gurus**

A happy feature is that the India Post has a number of stamps on saints, sages, preachers, Hindu philosophers and spiritual leaders.

Nayanmars

Sixty three saints, called Nayanmars, represent Saivism (Shiva worship). They along with Alvars, influenced the Bhakti Movement in Tamil region.



Sri Lanka Post honoured the Sundara Murti Swami and Karaikkal Ammaiyar through issue of stamps. They are among the 63 Nayanmars.

Alvars

Twelve Alvars, considered the supreme devotees of Lord Vishnu were instrumental in popularising Vaishnavism in Tamil region. Polgai Alvar, Boothathalvar and Peyalvar were the earliest among the 12 Alvars. Issue of stamps on Nayanmars and Alvars by India Post will glorify the worship of Lord Shiva and the Lord Vishnu.

Dhanvantri

Dhanvantri is an avatar of Lord Vishnu. He figures in *Vedas* and *Puranas* as the physician of the Gods. Hindus worship



Dhanwantri for sound health for themselves and for others.

Nepal Post issued The First Day Cover depicting Lord Dhanwantri. India post may also include in its programme of stamps on Lord Dhanwantri to honour the sage.

Maharishi Sushruta

In Hindu tradition *Sushruta Samhita* is a great treatise by Maharishi Sushruta (600 BC). He is not only a sage but also a surgeon. He was the first surgeon who conducted cataract surgery and plastic surgery in 600 BC. The above surgeries are believed to be the first surgery and a milestone in the medical world. He also invented 120 surgical instruments around 600 BC. India Post should consider issuing two stamps—one on his text *Sushruta Samhita* and the other on Maharishi Sushruta.

Holy Rivers

The holy rivers play an important role in the lives of Hindus. Hindus strongly believe that taking a bath in a holy river washes off all sins of their life.



India Post has issued a stamp on Gomukh of Gangotri Glacier. India Post should also issue stamps on all the holy rivers.

Holy Pilgrimage

Hindus make pilgrimages to various places to offer prayers and fulfill their desires. Issue of stamps on holy pilgrimage places such as Mount Kailash, Mansarovar and Amarnath Yatra Charodham Yatra will be appreciated.

Sacred Trees

India Post has issued stamps on the sacred trees such as Neem, Pipal, Banyan, Parijat and Tulsi plant. Besides the above trees the leaves of the 'bel tree' are also used while offering prayers and performing rituals in Hindu worship. A stamp on bel tree or a leaf of the tree will add to the list of items that proclaim thoughts on Hindu way of Life.