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SYMBOL OF OUR FREEDOM - THE FLAG

* EDITOR: This article is sent to you. *
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* for use in the special issue of your *
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* paper which you may be bringing out *
* * * * *
* in connection with the inauguration *
* * * * *
* of the Republic of India on *
* * * * *
* January 26, 1950. *

The Flag of India is the symbol of her freedom. Behind it lies the epic story of her non-violent struggle for independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

The tricolour, which substituted the Union Jack on State buildings from August 15, 1947, was adopted as the Nation's Flag by the Constituent Assembly on July 22, 1947. The resolution described the Flag as a horizontal tricolour of deep saffron (kesari), white and green in equal proportions with a wheel in navy blue in the central band. The design of the wheel is that of the Dharma Chakra on the abacus in the Lion Capital of Sarnath.

The Flag was presented to the Nation by the women of India at the memorable/midnight session of the Constituent Assembly on August 14, 1947.

The tricolour with the emblem of the Charkha was the banner of freedom held aloft by thousands of Desh-sevaks and Desh-sevikas since 1921 when Mahatma Gandhi launched the non-co-operation movement. Then the colours on the flag were red, white and green. The Indian National Congress in 1931 changed the colours into saffron, white and green with the Charkha in blue across the white band. This was adopted by the Congress in 1933 as the flag of the nation.

The Asokan Chakra displaced the Charkha when the tricolour was made the State Flag. One reason for the change

was ...

was that the symbol on one side of the flag should exactly be the same on the other side.

The choice of the Dharma Chakra from the Lion Capital of Sarnath was influenced by many considerations. The Chakra is nearly the same as the Charkha, but without the spindle and the string. Apart from being artistic, the Dharma Chakra represented India's age-long tradition and culture and was associated with Asoka whose memory is cherished not only in India, but in China, Tibet and other Asian countries. The Asokan wheel, as Professor S. Radhakrishnan explained, represented the Wheel of Law - the Dharma which was perpetually moving, indicating that there was death in stagnation while there was life in movement.

According to the Professor, the saffron colour on the Flag represented the spirit of renunciation, the white truth and purity, and the green our relation to the earth on which all life depends.

"This Flag", Pandit Nehru said, while introducing the resolution in the Constituent Assembly, "is not a flag of empire, a flag of imperialism, a flag of domination over anybody, but a flag of freedom not only for ourselves but a symbol of freedom to all people who may see it. Wherever it may go - and I hope it will go far - not only where Indians dwell as our ambassadors and ministers but across the far seas where it may be carried by Indian ships - wherever it may go, it will bring a message, I hope, of freedom to those people, a message of comradeship, a message that India wants to be friends with every country of the world and India wants to help any people who seek freedom."

Mrs. Sarojni Naidu who followed him said: "Remember, under this Flag, there is no prince and there is no peasant, there is no rich and there is no poor. There is no privilege; there is only duty and responsibility and sacrifice. Whether we be Hindus or Muslims, Christians, Jains, Sikhs or Zoroastrians and others, our Mother India is one undivided heart and one indivisible spirit. Men and women of reborn India, rise and salute this Flag! I bid you, rise and salute the Flag!"

VK/MRS.

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (DEFENCE WING)
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

NEW DESIGNS OF CRESTS AND BADGES IN THE SERVICES

THE ASOKA LIONS REPLACE THE CROWN

New Delhi, January 5 - With the inauguration of the new Constitution on January 26, when India becomes a sovereign republic, changes have been introduced in the designs for Flags, crests and badges of all the Armed Forces.

The main feature of these changes is that the three Asoka lions replace the Crown.

The Army

The new Army flag is scarlet in colour and has a design consisting of crossed swords and the three Asoka lions with the pedestal at the crossing of the swords.

Generals' cap-badges will be embroidered in gold on a blue cloth background. The design will include the three Asoka lions above the "crossed sword and baton" within a laurel wreath. The blade of the sword will be in silver.

Colonels and Brigadiers will wear cap-badges, consisting of the three Asoka lions with the pedestal, in gold embroidery.

Another important change is that the five-pointed star will take the place of the present four-pointed star.

The manufacture of badges for all the officers in the Army before January 26, 1950, has not been found possible. Therefore, in the first instance, only officers of the rank of Colonel and above will wear the new badges on January 26, 1950. The badges of the remaining officers will be changed in the course of the next few months.

The Navy

The Naval Ensign will be similar to the existing White Ensign but with India's National Flag in the upper left canton in place of the Union Flag.

The Naval crest will continue, except that the Crown in it will be replaced by the Three Lions.

Everywhere else, on the officers' cap-badges, buttons, etc., the crown will yield place to the Three Lions.

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The Air Force

While the rank braids (stripes) of the Indian Air Force officers remain unchanged, the Crown and IAF eagle in uniform buttons have been replaced by the National emblem, namely The Asoka Lions, and IAF eagle.

Similarly, the National emblem replaces the Crown which appears above a Flight Sergeant's stripes, pilot's flying badge (wings), officers' and airmen's cap-badges, and Indian Air Force Crest.

The Indian Air Force Ensign, though it remains unchanged in dimension, has been altered in design. The Union Jack, in the upper-left corner of the Ensign, has been replaced by the National Tricolour, and the star surrounding the Saffron-white-green roundel of the Indian Air Force in the centre of the right-half of the flag, has been deleted. Now only the roundel remains. The sky-blue back-ground colour of the Ensign, also remains unaltered.

Busts of 'Asoka-Lions' above a semi 'Chakra' are the main features of ~~ex~~ both the Master Warrant Officers' and Warrant Officers' badges. The MWO's badge is however super-imposed on Pilot Officers' rank braid to be worn on sleeves of Service Dress (barathea tunic) or on shoulders of Battle Dress, and in summer, on shoulders, as in the case of officers' stripes.

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