

ARTY FACTS

STELE

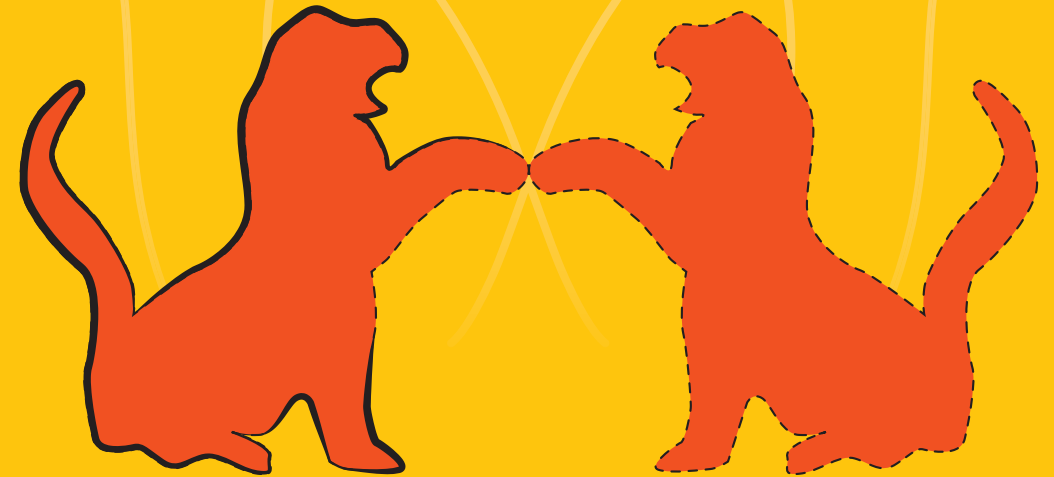
China, Northern Qi dynasty (550–577)
Limestone

This is a stone pillar called a stele (sounds like steel-ee). It is nearly 1500 years old. A pious devotee of Buddhism probably paid for the construction of it to gain spiritual benefit. The four tiers of relief sculptures show various Buddhist scenes and symbols.

The top shows Maitreya (sounds like my-tray-ah), the Buddha of the Future. He is meditating under a canopy of snakes, which often protect Buddhist figures.

The middle two sections each show a seated Buddha surrounded by disciples and bodhisattvas (beings who help others attain enlightenment). The Buddhas are seated in lotus position (padmasana), and one makes the gesture of reassurance (abhaya mudra), the other the gesture of teaching (vitarka mudra).

The bottom section is decorated with a pair of lions (they are in "confronting" pose) with a lotus bud between them.



MEET THE LION

The lion is a symbol of strength and protection.

The lion is not native to China. Its use as a symbol came via India and Iran. In Buddhist art, lions are seen as protectors of the law and holy figures. Lions are also found at the entrances to temples and shrines.

Spy with your little eye

the lions in the Ancient Religions gallery.



LOOK closely at this votive stele. How long do you think it would have taken to carve this sculpture?

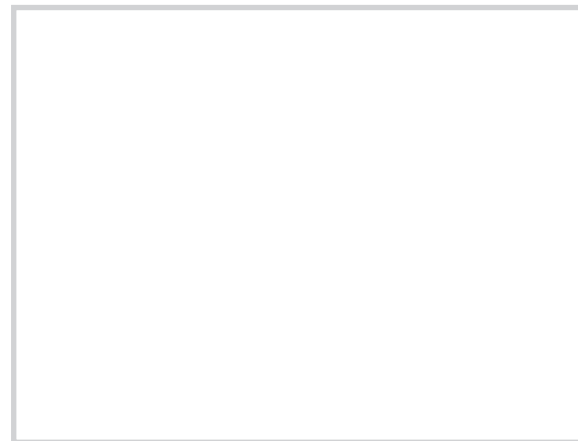
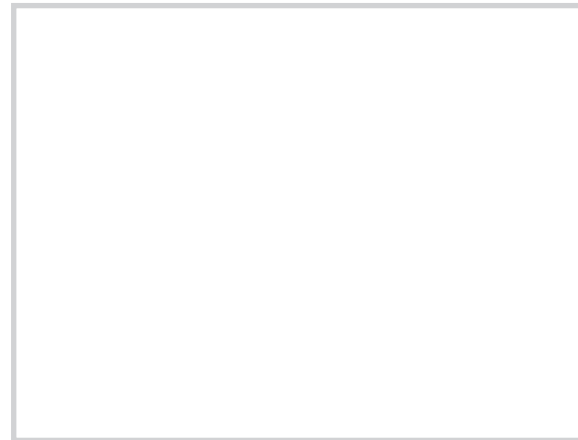
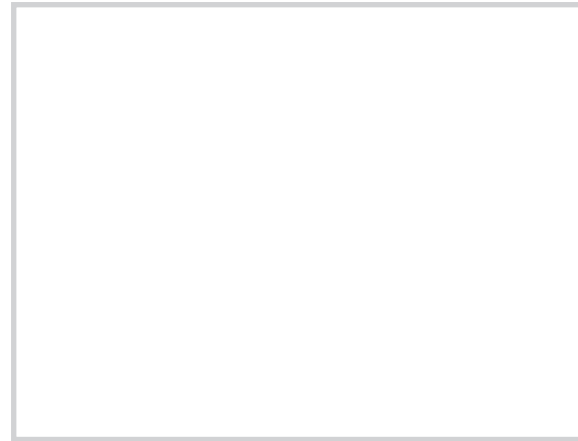


Circle the words that **DESCRIBE** this object.

HARD	SILKY	HOT
THICK	ROUGH	SOFT
SMOOTH	SOLID	COLD



IMAGINE these lions are talking to each other. What might they be saying?



CREATE your own comic strip using the lion as the main character. Take into consideration the lion's special powers.

Use the icons and speech bubbles below to help you.

PEOPLE



Adult



Child

ANIMALS



Snake



Lion

DIALOGUE



Think



Talk



Scream