Main Article

Ashoka the Great, was an Indian emperor of the Maurya Dynasty who ruled almost all of the Indian subcontinent from 269 BC to 232 BC. One of India's greatest emperors, Ashoka reigned over most of present-day India after a number of military conquests. His empire stretched from present-day Pakistan, Afghanistan in the west, to the present-day Bangladesh and the Indian state of Assam in the east, and as far south as northern Kerala and Andhra. He conquered the kingdom named Kalinga, which no one in his dynasty had conquered starting from Chandragupta Maurya. His reign was headquartered in Magadha (present-day Bihar, India).[1] He embraced Buddhism from the prevalent Vedic tradition after witnessing the mass deaths of the war of Kalinga, which he himself had waged out of a desire for conquest. He was later dedicated to the propagation of Buddhism across Asia and established monuments marking several significant sites in the life of Gautama Buddha. Ashoka was a devotee of

ahimsa
(
nonviolence
),
love
,
truth
,
tolerance
and
vegetarianism
. Ashoka is remembered in history as a
philanthropic
administrator. In the
history of India
Ashoka is referred to as
Samraat
Chakravartin
Ashoka
- the Emperor of Emperors
Ashoka
.

His name "aśoka" means "without sorrow" in Sanskrit (a= no/without, soka= sorrow or worry). In his edicts , he is referred to as Devānāmpriya (
Devanāgarī
: देवानांप्रिय)/
Devāna□piya
or "The Beloved Of The Gods", and Priyadarśin (
Devanāgarī
: प्रियदर्शी)/
Piyadassī
or "He who regards everyone with affection". Another title of his is Dhamma (
prakrit
: धम्म□), "Lawful, Religious, Righteous".

Renowned British author and social critic H. G. Wells in his bestselling two-volume work,
The Outline of History
(1920), wrote of emperor Ashoka:

In the history of the world there have been thousands of kings and emperors who called themselves 'their highnesses,' 'their majesties,' and 'their exalted majesties' and so on. They shone for a brief moment, and as quickly disappeared. But Ashoka shines and shines brightly like a bright star, even unto this day.

Along with the Edicts of Ashoka , his legend is related in the later 2nd century *Aśokāvadāna* (" *Narrative of Asoka* ") and *Divyāvadāna* (" *Divine narrative* "), and in the Sinhalese text *Mahavamsa* (" *Great Chronicle* ").

After two thousand years, the influence of Ashoka is seen in Asia and especially the Indian subcontinent . An emblem excavated from his empire is today the national Emblem of India . In the History of Buddhism Ashoka is considered just after Gautama Buddha .