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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).

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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

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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)/

Devānaṃ 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](#).