

ASHOKA : The Great

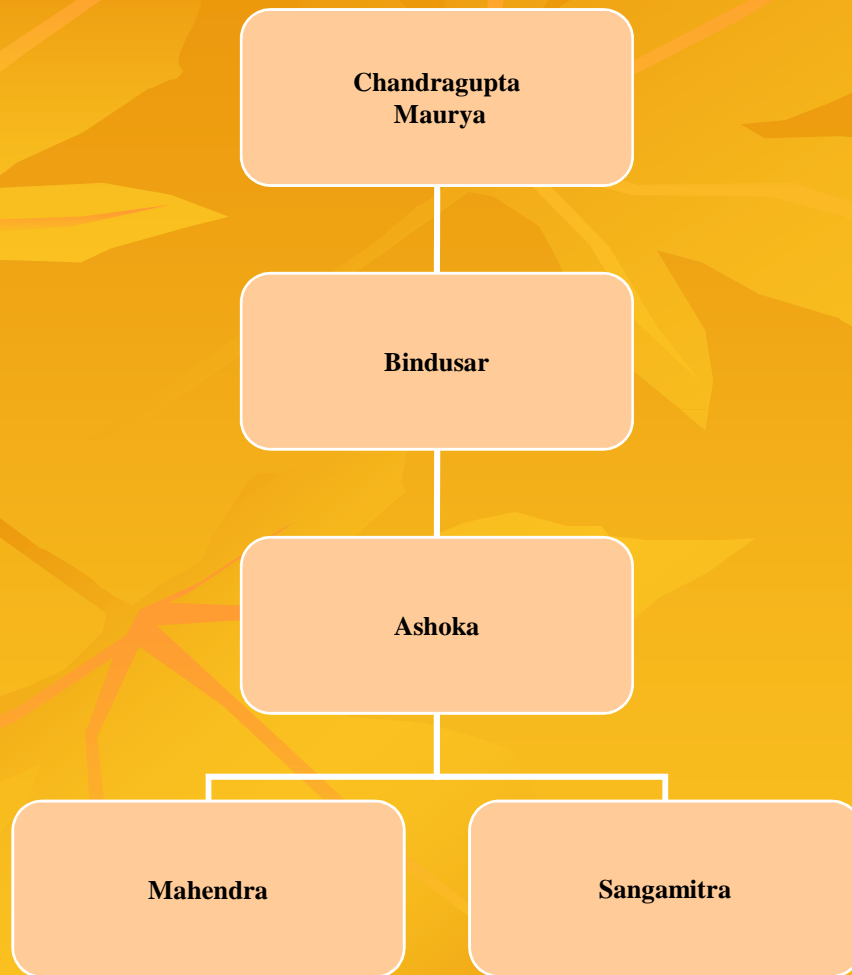


Indian Emperor of Maurya Dynasty
269 BC to 232 BC

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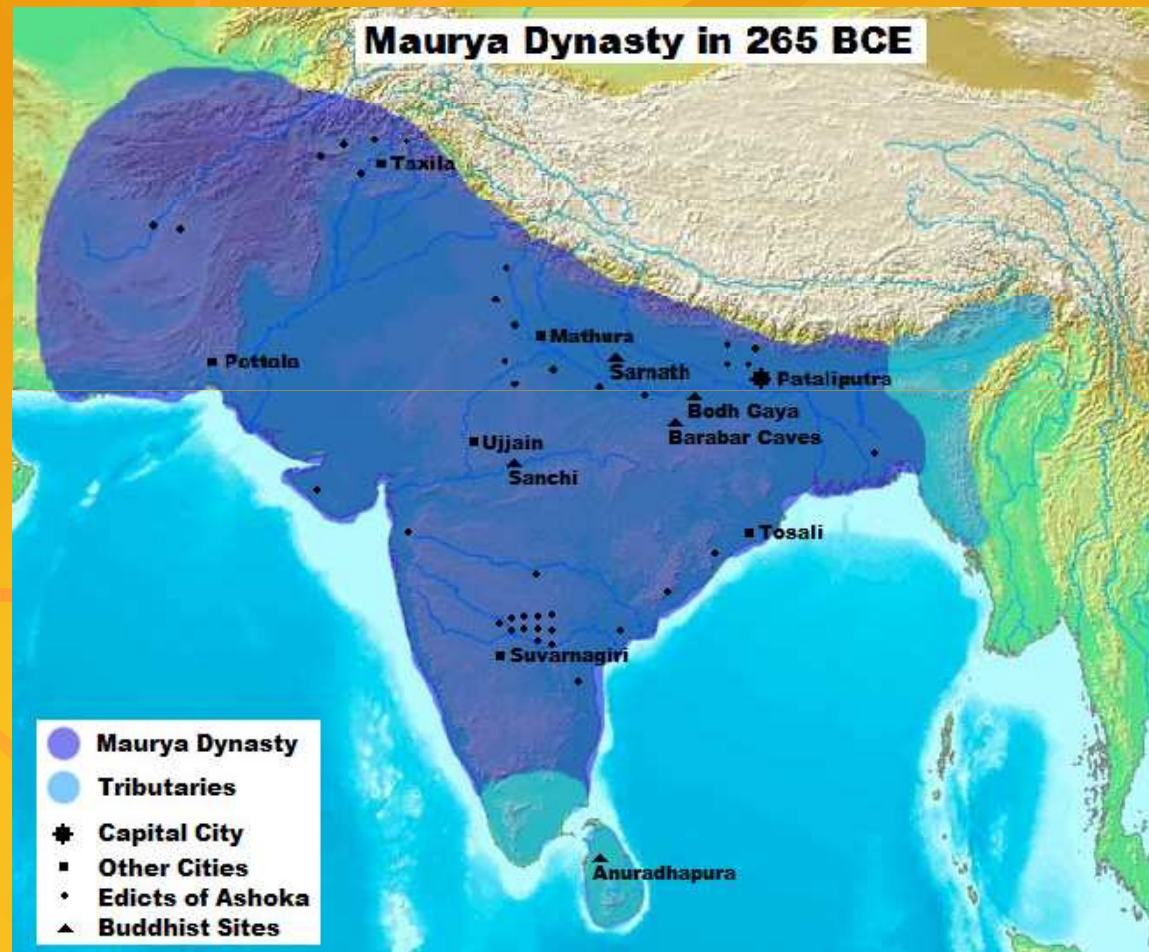
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Introduction



- In 304 BC, the second emperor of the Maurya Dynasty, Bindusara, welcomed a son into the world. The boy's mother Dharma was only a commoner, and he had several older half-brothers. This baby was named Ashoka Bindusara Maurya
- Ashoka grew up to be a bold, troublesome and cruel young man. He was extremely fond of hunting; according to Vedic legend, he even killed a lion using only a wooden stick
- His older half-brothers feared Ashoka, and convinced his father to post him as a general to distant frontiers of the Mauryan Empire
- Ashoka proved a competent general, likely much to his brothers' dismay, putting down a rebellion in the Punjabi city of Taxshila

Extent Of Ashoka's Empire



Extent of Ashoka's Empire



The Kalinga War

The war that changed Ashoka's life

- Kalinga was a prosperous little kingdom lying between the river Godavari and Mahanadi, close to the Bay of Bengal. It had an infantry of 60,000 men, 10,000 horsemen and 600 elephants
- Ashoka wanted to capture this fertile land. A fierce battle followed, in which there were too many casualties
- There were more than a lakh prisoners of war. In the midst of the battlefield, Ashoka stood with the wounded, crippled and the dead all around him. It was during this war that he earned the title 'Ashoka the Great'
- After the battle of Kalinga was over, King Ashoka went on a tour of the city. He could see nothing except burnt houses and scattered corpses. This was the consequence of his greed
- After he had returned to Patliputra, he was haunted by the scenes he saw in Kalinga. Even his queen, Devi, who was a Buddhist, left him after seeing the brutality at Kalinga
- A new light dawned on him, and he swore that he would never wage war again
It was during this time that he embraced Buddhism under the Brahmin Buddhist sages

Conversion to Buddhism

Ashoka religiously followed the

PRINCIPALS OF BUDDHISM

- Truth
- Charity
- Kindness
- Purity
- Goodness

Propagation of Buddhism

- He attempted to spread this religion to Syria, Egypt and Macedonia, and sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sangamitra to Sri Lanka for this purpose
- He engraved it's principles on pillars throughout his kingdom
- He opened charitable hospitals and dispensaries for the welfare of the poor
- He planted trees to provide shade and opened inns for the shelter of travelers and laid out green parks and gardens to beautify his kingdom
- Wells and tanks were also constructed for the benefit of his people
- He built thousands of Stupas and Viharas for Buddhist followers
- He believed in non-violence and so he banned the sacrifice of animals. Besides this he opened clinics for birds and animals too

Achievements



- The caste system ceased to exist in his eyes and he treated all his subjects as equals. At the same time, each and every person was given the rights to freedom, tolerance, and equality
- His good works earned him the name of Devanamapriya Priyadarshi (Beloved of the Gods)
- One of his stupas, the Great Sanchi Stupa, has been declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO
- The Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath has a four-lion capital, which was later adopted as the national emblem of the modern Indian republic
- To commemorate his rule and its implications the Government of India has adopted the Ashoka Chakra as its national symbol, which can be seen till today on the national flag

Conclusion

After ruling over the Indian subcontinent for a period of approximately 40 years, the Great Emperor Asoka left for the holy abode in 232 BC. After his death, his empire lasted for just fifty more years.

But his name still lives on...

“Ashoka ...Without Sorrow”

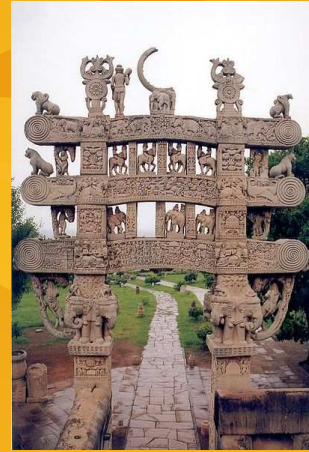
Picture Gallery



SANGAMITRA



**IRON PILLAR
QUTUB MINAR**



**GATEWAY TO STUPA
SANCHI**



**4-LION PILLAR
THAILAND**



INDIAN COINS WITH 4-LION SYMBOL



STUPA AT SANCHI