

EARLY CAREER AND DIFFERENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF ASOKA

Manoj Malakar*

Abstract

Asoka was the greatest emperor in Mauriyan dynasty. He was a great patronage of Buddhism and art and architecture. This paper tries to high light about the early life and career of the great Mauryan emperor Asoka. There was lot of great emperor in Indian history, who wrote their name in golden letter in history and Asoka also one of among these rulers. Some different prominent writer had analysis about Asoka's life and career. This paper tries to analyses how he (Asoka) began his career and got achievements during his region. This paper also tries to highlight Asoka's Dhamma and his patronage of art and architecture during his region. This paper also tries to discuss Asoka's patronage of Buddhism. He sent his own son and girl to Sri Lanka to spread Buddhism.

Keywords: Career, Buddha Dhamma, Art and Architecture, Inscription.

* **Assistant Teacher & Faculty K.K.H.S.O.U. (Malaybari junior college study centre).**

Introduction

Asoka was one of the greatest kings of India. He was the son of Bindusara and grandson of Chandragupta Maurya. He was the third emperor of Maurya dynasty. He has occupied a prominent place in the history of India. He is also known as Asoka the great. He was not a great conqueror but also efficient administrator. Asoka inherited not only a vast empire but also a new system of administration organized by Chanakya from his forefather. After the war of Kalinga he introduced a new theory of kingship in order to change the system of administration. He based the system of administration on the principle of social welfare.

In the annals of kingship there is a scarcely records comparable to that of Asoka as a man and a ruler. To bring out the chief features of his greatness Historian has introduced comparison between him and other distinguished monarch in history, from east to west, ancient to modern period. He made sincere efforts to uplift the religion and spiritual status of his subject. He wanted that the people of world must follow the path of truth, love and non-violence is the days of its greatness & glory. Asoka goes to Buddhism which helped to transform it from local into a world religion. He recalls his empire and to some extent in the method of his administration to while his edicts rugged uncouth involved full of repetition. He patronized art and architectures including installation many Dharmastambhas or pillar of morality.

Review of literature-

To proceed with the analyses on this topic several books have been reviewed as –

“Asoka” by Radha Kumud Mookarji analysis the early career of Asoka and his different achievements, religious reforms and his contribution towards the Maurya art and architecture in a beautiful and depth way.

“Emperor Asoka” by Vincent A Smith discussed the early career, administrative reforms and his contribution towards Buddhism in a lucid manner.

“Bimbisara to Asoka” by Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya highlighted the different aspects of Asoka and achievements of Asoka in lucid and beautiful manner.

“Ancient India” written by R. C. Majumdar analyses the rise and downfall of Maurya dynasty.

Objective

The paper tried to explore the following objective –

- a. The objective of the study is to highlight the early career of Asoka.
- b. Secondly analysis the different achievements of Asoka.

Methodology

The paper is mostly based on secondary sources. Information also collected a lot from website.

Early life and career of Asoka

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 Asoka Bindusara Maurya. Asoka 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 Asoka, and convinced his father to post him as a general to distant frontiers of the Mauryan Empire. Asoka proved a competent general, likely much to his brothers' dismay, putting down a rebellion in the Punjabi city of Taxshila.

Aware that his brothers viewed him as a rival for the throne, Asoka went into exile for two years in the neighboring country of Kalinga. While there, he fell in love with a commoner, a fisher-woman named Kaurwaki. Bindusara recalled his son to Maurya after two years to help quell an uprising in Ujjain, the former capital of the Avanti Kingdom. Asoka succeeded, but was injured in the fighting. Buddhist monks tended to the wounded prince in secret, so that his eldest brother, the heir-apparent Susima, would not learn of Asoka's injuries. Their patient learned the basic tenets of Buddhism from them. A woman from Vidisha called Devi also attended Asoka during this period - he fell in love with her and married her.

Bindusara died in 275 B.C. Two-years-long war for the succession Pire erupted between Asoka and his half-brothers. The Vedic sources vary on how many of Asoka's brothers died; one says that he killed them all, while another states that he killed several of them. In either case, Asoka prevailed and became the third ruler of the Mauryan Empire. There are three

different traditions regarding the parentage of Asoka. According to the Avadana tradition, he was the son of Bindusara by subhadra, the beautiful daughter of a Brahman of Campa . The southern traditions make him the son of dhamma, the chief queen of Bindusara, who came of the ksatriya clan of moriyas. The Tibetan historian Taranatha makes him the son of king Nemita, sovereign of camparrana.

Schiefner in the Second World War a contraction of the two names Champa and Karna which stand for an old city as well as a kingdom to the east of Magadha. To represent the father of Asoka as a having reigned at Champa is a singularly audacious alteration of historical truth. Ceylon tradition (as narrated in the dipavamsa and the mahavamsa) makes Bindusara the husband of sixteen wives and 101 sons of whom only three are named, viz. Sumana, (Susima according to the northern legends) the eldest, Asoka, and Tishya (uterine mother of Asoka) the youngest son. According to the Ceylonese chronicles Asoka was his father's viceroy at Avanti wherefrom he went to Taxila to suppress a rebellion. The Asokasutra and Kunalasura, on the other hand make him start his administrative career at Gandhara. The north and the south thus respectively lay claim to the honour of having been governed by the future Chakravartin. whatever may be J. Przyluski's interpretation, to us it appears that the nucleus of the Ceylonese account is possibly earlier than the other narrative since Gandhara became a stronghold of Buddhism at a much later date, while the Ceylonese account is based on traditions springing from places like Besnagar, Sanchi and Ujjayini and the island of Ceylon itself. It is well known that during the time of Asoka the route from Pataliputra to Barygaza passed through Kausambi, Bidisha, and Ujjayini; and tradition affirms that it is from Barygaza that the early navigation arrived in Ceylon. It is thus possible that whatever might have been local development around the Ceylonese chronicles on the Buddhist front, the political information gathered in it possibly dates from the time of Ashoka himself and it comes originally from the headquarter Pataliputra.

Though the imperial capital was also connected by a route of Gandhara, it was not a center of Buddhism during the time of the emperor, as Kausambi had been. We are informed that while at Avanti he married the daughter of a merchant at Vedisagiri Devi by name. The Mahabodhi-vamsa calls her Medisamahavi and also as belonging to the Sakya clan, after it had migrated from

Kapilavastu and settled at Vidisha under the pressure of Vidudabha. Devi was thus the first wife of Asoka and she might have implanted the first germ of Buddhism in him.

Avanti thus become the theatre of Asoka's early political activity. The samantapasadika maintains that he was not the viceroy of Avanti, but that the kingdom of Ujjayini was annexed by him. Here evidently we have an echo of the northern tradition that make him start his career in Gandhara and evidently connects him with Avanti at a later part of his career.

Accession and coronation

There was an interval of about four years between his accession to the throne and formal coronation, if we may believe in the Ceylon chronicles. The hypothesis about a contested succession might perhaps explain this. A more probable explanation suggested is that the coronation of a king must await his twenty fifth year, as pointed in the inscription of the Kalinga king Kharavela, so that Asoka must have ascended the throne when he was about twenty one years of age. But this suggestion, as already explained seems to be contradicted by tradition, if we may believe in it. According to it Asoka ascending the throne at thirty, and been consecrated at thirty four. The fact of interval existing between his accession and coronation seems to be indicated in a way in the edicts which the king always careful to date from his Avisheka, coronation, as if to ensure that it should not be confused with accession. At this point we enter into a most debatable point of Asokan history. The Ceylonese Mahavamsa states- when he (Asoka) had slain his ninety nine brother born of different mothers, won the undivided sovereignty over all jambudipa. Be it known that two hundred and eighteen years had passed from the Nibbana of the master unto Asoka's coronation. Four years after the famous (Asoka) had won for himself the undivided sovereignty, he consecrated himself as a king in the city of Pataliptra. According to the Mahaparinibbana date determine before, Asoka's coronation that happened in 269/8 B.C, and his accession in 273/2 B/C.

The Ceylonese account has been assailed mainly on the following grounds-

The Mysore copies of the M. R. E. refers to an Arya stationed as one of Asoka's governors at Suvarnagiri while in some other records there are references to governor who are styled as Kumaras. The term Aryaputra signifies the son of a superior person king can never call his own

son an Aryaputra. In R. E. V. on the other hand, there are references to harems of his brothers. The combined evidence of these records shows that Ashoka had his brothers alive even after he become king.

K.P Joyaswal and R.K. Mookerji, though not favoring the story of fratricidal struggle, believe in the interregnum: Jayaswal maintains that for obtaining royal Abhisesh the age twenty-five was condition as proved by the inscription of Kharavela and Asoka might have ascended the throne when he was twenty one and this seems to explain why Asoka was not crowned for three or four years after his accession.

As regards Mookerjis view that his edicts being dated in the year of his coronation shows that there was a gap between his accession and coronation, it may be pointed out that the Nagarjun hill cave inscription of Dasharatha, Asoka's grandson, is also dated in the same fashion and there is no reason to think that this event did not coincide with his coming to the throne and that some period must have elapsed between them. It seems to be true that the solemn consecration, or coronation, of Asoka delayed for about four years after his accession in B.C. 273 and it is possible that the long delay may have been due to dispute successions involving much bloodshed, but there is no independent evidence such struggle. The empire won by Chandragupta had passed intact to his son Bindusara, and when after the lapse of a quarter of a century, the scepter was again transmitted from the hand of Bindusara to those of his son Asoka, it seems unlikely that a prolonged struggle was needed to ensure the succession to a throne as well established and dominion so firmly consolidated. The authentic records give no hint that Asoka's tranquility was disturbed by internal commotion but on the contrary exhibit him as fully master in his empire, giving orders for execution in the most distant provinces with perfect confidence that they would be obeyed.

As contrary to the above, a group of modern historian does not accept the possibilities of a war of succession. According to them, the Buddhist wanted to prove Asoka to be a cruel and merciless man in the early days of his life. They wanted to show the importance of Buddhism which changed a ferocious and callous Asoka into a symbol of love and affection. Besides this

the inscriptions of Asoka do not mention the war of succession and the death of his brothers before his brothers and sister lived in Pataliputra and neighboring areas during his reign.

Different achievements of Asoka

Asoka inherited a vast empire from his predecessor to which he himself added the Kalinga country. The discovery of his bilingual record written in both Greek and Aramaic in Kandahar and another epigraph written in Aramaic script on the northern bank of Kabul river near Jelalabad proved that his empire included the Paropanisadae (Hindukush), aria (heart), Arachosia(Kandahar), and also evidently Gedrosia(Balusistan), which according to the classic writers, were ceded to Chandragupta by Seleucus. During the first thirteen years of his reign Asoka followed the traditional policy of his predecessors. He extended the territorial limits of his empire but with the foreign countries and powers he maintained relations of amity and cordiality. Ashoka had not to exert in the sphere of conquest as most of the areas had already been subdued by his predecessor, viz. Bindusara and Chandragupta.

From his very youth he was fired with the imagination of carrying fire and sword throughout the nook and corner of India. For the realization of this aim he conquered Kashmir and Kalinga. The Kalinga expedition left such a deep impression upon his mind that he was thoroughly a changed.

Conquest of Kalinga

While the early part of Asoka's reign was apparently quite bloodthirsty, he became a follower of the Budha's teaching after his conquest of Kalinga on the east coast of India in the present-day states of Orissa and North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. Kalinga was a state that prided itself on its sovereignty and democracy. With its monarchical parliamentary democracy it was quite an exception in ancient Bharata where there existed the concept of Rajdharma. Rajdharma means the duty of the rulers, which was intrinsically entwined with the concept of bravery and Kshatriya dharma. The Kalinga War happened eight years after his coronation. From his 13th inscription, we come to know that the battle was a massive one and caused the deaths of more than 100,000 soldiers and many civilians who rose up in defense; over 150,000 were deported.

When he was walking through the grounds of Kalinga after his conquest, rejoicing in his victory, he was moved by the number of bodies strewn there and the wails of the kith and kin of the dead.

Ashokan Dhamma

Asoka was one of the greatest kings of the Mauryan dynasty. Asoka ascended the throne in 273 B.C and proved himself a mighty conqueror. In the history of ancient India, the reign of Ashoka is marked with his aggressive imperialism as well as his own policy of religion. The personal religion of Asoka and the religious policy he followed, provide a glimpse into the religious trends of the age. Both the modern and the classical interpreters disagree regarding the personal religion of Asoka. Moreover Buddhist texts also provide some other theories about the personal religion of Asoka. Formerly some scholars put that Asoka was a Brahmanist or Jainist and not a Buddhist. Later this view was refuted and was declared that such an argumentative view arose due to the misinterpretation of the Asokan edicts and the confusion of his personal views with the principles of the Mauryan policy as a whole. However the scholars again pointed out that in the accounts of Buddhaghosa, Ashoka was mentioned as "Brahmana Bhatto" or the adherent to Brahmanism. The "Samanta -padasiaka" also corroborates the fact that Ashoka was a Brahmana. According to Kalhana, Asoka was a follower and worshiper of Lord Shiva. Later the Ceylonese chronicles depicted that originally Asoka was a Brahman but later turned into a Buddhist and paid visits to the Buddhist communities or the Samghas. Therefore the contemporary historical records testify Asoka as a Brahman. However historians, in the later years have opined that Asoka's identification with Buddhism as his personal religion was gradual rather than sudden. However Asoka is known in the history of India as the king who turned out to be a resolute non-violent Buddhist from a mighty vanquisher. But the scholars are at variance about the personal religious belief of Asoka, his date of conversion into Buddhism and the actual causes, which prompted him to adopt Buddhism.

Asoka was the first king of the Maurya Dynasty who accepted Buddhism not only as his personal religion but also established it as his state religion. Asoka followed a religious policy of his own and is remembered by posterity for his famous policy of "Dhamma" or "Law of Piety". After converting into Buddhism, Asoka disseminated the teachings and knowledge of the

Buddhist scriptures. He always had faith in morals and principles and had high ideals in life. These came to be known as Dhamma of Emperor Asoka.

The word "Dharma" is the Prakrit version of the Sanskrit word "Dharma" and Asoka's Dharma is a philosophical entity that highlighted on the high ideals and spiritual enlightenment as a key to successful life. When Pillar Edict II was translated, it described the "middle path", the way to enlightenment through Dharma that Buddha taught in his first sermon. Asoka aspired for a harmonious environment where everyone could co-exist peacefully irrespective of his or her caste creed and religion. Some of his ideals were to shun war and spread peace, stop animal sacrifices, respect elders, masters treating slaves like humans, promoting vegetarianism, etc. These ideals if followed correctly led one to a higher level of living and one could finally attain "nirvana". As an able king, Asoka took up the initiative and introduced welfare programs for the subjects, which was also one of the policies of his "Dhamma". Asoka appointed Dhamma Mahamattas who were basically officers looking after the spread of these principles across Asoka's empire. Asoka propagated the principles of Dhamma not just in India but also in countries like Sri Lanka, Burma and other South East Asian nations.

Asoka's religious policy of "Dhamma" had carved out a permanent place for him in the niche of ancient Indian history. However there is a keen controversy among the historians about the religious policy of "Dhamma" and they have put forward several queries regarding the true character of Dhamma and its association with Buddhism. Historians have defined that Asoka's personal religion and his attachment with Dhamma was completely different from each other. They have also added that Asoka's association with the high ideals of Buddhism was gradual and not a sudden outcome of impulse. Since the rock edicts of Asoka do not provide any information about the association of Dhamma with Buddhism, historians are at variance regarding this point. Moreover Asoka in his edicts do not mention the name of any Buddhist monk or any guru or teacher who showed him the path for Enlightenment.

Dhamma as reported by the historians was a policy of Asoka in order to unify a nation so large that the people of one region could share the little in common with those of other regions. Dharma would bring harmony to India in the form of compassion. Serving as a guiding light, a

voice of conscience, dharma can lead one to be a respectful, responsible human being. Edward D`cruz interprets the Asokan dharma as a "religion to be used as a symbol of a new imperial unity and a cementing force to blend the diverse and heterogeneous elements of the empire".

However, one of the elementary questions is the chronology of Asoka's preaching of Dhamma. According to Bhandarkar, Asoka became a Buddhist in the 9th year of his reign, the year after the conquest of Kalinga. But other scholars confirm his attachment towards Buddhism. Bongard Levin however concluded a critical study of the evidences gathered from Rock edict XIII. According to him, Asoka's personal attachment towards Buddhism and his propagation of the ideals of Dhamma are completely different from one another. Personally Asoka was a benevolent king who followed the duties of an ideal king before embracing Buddhism. "Dhamma" did not influence the personal religion followed by Asoka.

Patronage of art and architecture-

The reign of Asoka also remembered for the progress of art and architecture. Thousand of Stupas and Viharas were constructed during his time. His inscriptions are valuable document of Indian architecture. Many Dharma- Stambhas or, the pillars of morality were also setup by Asoka. It is said that about 84000 Stupas were constructed during the reign of Asoka in different places in his county and aboard. These Stupas had the solid domical structure of stone or bricks resting on a round base surrounded by a plain of ornamented stone railing, having one or more gateway. The Stupas had religious sanctity.

Chinese pilgrim Fe-hien appreciated the architecture of the Stupas. At present the Stupas of Sanchi near Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) is the most prominent among all. The diameter of these Stupas is 36.50 meters and height about 23.23 meters and the heavy stone railing surrounding the stupas are 23.30 meters height. Form the Fe-hien description, we know it that Asoka built the stupas Taxila, srinagar, kapilabastu, Banaras ,Ayodha, proyag, and Kannauoj also.

Many pillar also set up in order to engrave inscription for his religion. The Saranath pillar has been regarded as the best pillar of Asoka form the point of beauty and skill shown is its capital. The capital of saranath pillar contain the figure of four lion standing back to back this figure is

the living example of the progress of Maryan art. Our modern government had also used the pattern of the figure of Saranath capital in the modern currency. There is no doubt due to the capital of Saranath pillar that the pillar considered to be the most magnificent piece of Indian art. Sir John Marshall has also appreciated the art and architecture of used in the pillar. He has considered the four lions as the masterpieces in point of style and technique.

Asoka's inscriptions

The inscriptions provide sufficient reliable knowledge about the reign of Asoka. His inscriptions are found on the rocks, and the pillars scattered from the Himalayas to Mysore and Orissa to Kathiawar. The object of his inscriptions is religious and ethical. Broadly speaking these inscriptions can be divided into three categories. The categories can be mentioned as rock edict, pillar edicts, and cave inscriptions.

Rockedicts

The rock edicts may be further classified into several heads such as the minor rock edicts, fourteen rock edicts, Kalinga rock edicts and Bhabru rock edict.

Minor rock edicts:

These rock edicts belong to 258 or 257 B.C. They are of two types. One type of the minor rock edict can be found in Shabhar district of Bihar at Sahasram in Bairat district of Rajasthan, and also Rupnath in Jabalpur district. The minor rock edicts of the other type have been found at Brahmagiri in Mysore and at Rameshvaram. The first enlightens us with the personal life of Asoka while the second contains a code of morals.

Fourteen rock edicts:

These have been found at the following places. V.i.z. Shabhar in Peshawar district, Mansera in Hazara district, Kalsi in Dehradun, Girnar near Junagarh, Sopara in Thane district, Dhauri in Puri district, Jangarh in Ganjam district, and Ira Gurhi in Karnal district. These rock edicts belong to 257 or 256 B.C. These throw a flood of light on the ethical and political policies of Asoka. Rock edict xiii is most important and lengthy of all these edicts. It gives a vivid description of the Kalinga war and the change of mind which Ashoka underwent

subsequent to this war. It is also the important one from the historical point of view. Two Kalinga rock edicts can be found at places called Dhauri and Jangarh. These inscriptions belong to 256 B.C. These rock edicts refer to the administrative systems through which the people of Kalinga and other frontier states should be administered. Bhabru rock edict: This rock edict was placed near Viratt in Jaipur state. Dr. Smith fixes its date from 258 to 257 B.C. In this inscription Asoka expressed or rather confessed his faith in the Buddha, Dharma and the Samgha. He also refers seven examples of Buddhism which dear to him and he wished that his subjects should also follow them.

Pillar edicts –

The pillar edicts may be further classified into three categories. The name can be mentioned as seven pillar edicts, two commemorative pillar inscriptions, and four minor pillar edicts.

Seven pillar edicts:

These have been found at six places. Two pillar edicts have been found at Delhi. The seven pillar edicts have been found at Meerut, Prayag, Ambala district and also in Champaran etc. The pillar edicts tell the people of the Asoka towards the people and the propagation of Dharma as well.

Two commemorative pillar inscriptions:

These inscriptions have been found in the Terai of Nepal at Rummindai and Nigilava villages. These describe Asoka's Dharmyatras and the holy places of Buddhism. These inscriptions belong to 246 B. C.

Four minor pillar edicts:

Two of these minor pillar edicts have been found at Sanchi and the other two have been found at Prayag. These inscriptions were issued to remove the differences of Buddhism.

Cave inscriptions:

The cave inscriptions are three in number and have been found in the Barabar hills. These describe Asoka policy of toleration and charity. These inscriptions belong from 257 to 250 B.C.

Death and successor

Asoka ruled for an estimated forty years. After his death, the Mauryan dynasty lasted just fifty more years. Asoka had many wives and children, but many of their names are lost to time. Mahindra and Sanghamitra were twins born by his first wife, Devi, in the city of Ujjain. He had entrusted to them the job of making his state religion, Buddhism, more popular across the known and the unknown world. Mahindra and Sanghamitra went into Sri Lanka and converted the King, the Queen and their people to Buddhism. They were naturally not handling state affairs after him.

In his old age, he seems to have come under the spell of his youngest wife Tishyaraksha. It is said that she had got his son Kunala, the regent in Takshashila, blinded by a wily stratagem. The official executioners spared Kunala and he became a wandering singer accompanied by his beloved wife Kanchanmala. In Pataliputra, Ashoka hears Kunala's song, and realizes that Kunala's misfortune may have been a punishment for some past sin of the emperor himself and condemns Tishyaraksha to death, restoring Kunala to the court. Kunala was succeeded by his son, Samprati, but his rule did not last long after Asoka's death.

The reign of Asoka Maurya could easily have disappeared into history as the ages passed by, and would have had he not left behind a record of his trials. The testimony of this wise king was discovered in the form of magnificently sculpted pillars and boulders with a variety of actions and teachings he wished to be published etched into the stone.

In the year 185 BC, about fifty years after Asoka's death, the last Maurya ruler, Brhadrata, was assassinated by the commander-in-chief of the Mauryan armed forces, Pusyamitra Sunga, while he was taking the Guard of Honor of his forces. Pusyamitra Sunga founded the Sunga dynasty (185 BC-78 BC) and ruled just a fragmented part of the Mauryan Empire. Many of the northwestern territories of the Mauryan Empire (modern-day Afghanistan and Northern Pakistan) became the Indo-Greek Kingdom.

Conclusion

Asoka believed that Buddhism is beneficial for all human beings as well as animals and plants, so he built 84,000 stupas, Sangharama, viharas, Chaitya, and residences for Buddhist monks all over South Asia and Central Asia. He gave donations to Viharas and Mathas. He sent his only daughter Sanghamitta and son Mahindra to spread Buddhism in Sri Lanka (ancient name Tamraparni). Asoka also sent many prominent Buddhist monks (bhikshus) Sthaviras like Madhyamik Sthavira to modern Kashmir and Afghanistan, Maharaskshit Sthavira to Syria, Persia, Egypt, Greece, Italy and Turkey, Massim Sthavira to Nepal, Bhutan, China and Mongolia. Mahadhhamarakhkhita sthavira to Maharashtra, Maharakhhit Sthavira and Yavandhammarakhkhita Sthavira to South India. Ashoka also invited Buddhists and non-Buddhists for religious conferences. Ashoka inspired the Buddhist monks to compose the sacred religious texts, and also gave all types of help to that end. Ashoka also helped to develop viharas (intellectual hubs) such as Nalanda and Taxila. Asoka helped to construct Sanchi and Mahabodhi Temple. Asoka never tried to harm or to destroy non-Buddhist religions, and indeed gave donations to non-Buddhists. As his reign continued his even-handedness was replaced with special inclination towards Buddhism. Asoka helped and respected both Sramans (Buddhist monks) and Brahmins (Vedic monks). Asoka also helped to organize the Third Buddhist council at Pataliputra. It was conducted by the monk Moggaliputta-Tissa who was the spiritual teacher of the Mauryan Emperor Asoka.

So, the age of Asoka was the age of light and delightment. He was the first emperor in human history who has taught the lesson of unity, peace, equality and love. Asoka's aim was not to expand the territories but the welfare of all of his subjects (sarvajansukhay). In his vast empire there was no evidence of recognizable mutiny or civil war. Asoka was the true devotee of Non-violence, peace and love. This made him different from other emperor. Asoka was also kind to prisoners, and respected animal life and tree life. Asoka allowed females to be educated. He also permitted females to enter religious institutions. He allowed female Buddhist Monastics such as Bhikkhuni. He combined in himself the complexity of a king and simplicity of a Buddhist monk. Because of these reasons he is known as the emperor of all ages and thus became a milestone in the History of the world.

References

- (1) Chattopadhyaya, sudhakar : “Binbisara to Asoka” published by Roy and Chowdhury,1977, hasting street. Calcutta 700001. India. pp 105-6,107-8,126-7.
- (2) Mookerji, R.K : “Asoka” published by Rajkamal Publications ltd. Delhi 1955, pp 2-8
- (3) Smith, vincent A : “Emperor Asoka” published by wisdom Publications, kaziwara,sikandrabad- 203205, pp -10, 59-60, 6.
- (4) Majumdar, R.C. : “Ancient India” published by Motilal Banarsidass Publication pvt.ltd. 1998, Bungalow road, Delhi, 110007.
- (5) Bhandarkar,D.R _ “Asoka” published by Asian Educational services,2005, Houz Khas village, New delhi.110016.
- (6) Goggle - <https://owlcation.com/humanities/Ashok-A-Short-Biography-of-Ashoka-the-Great-of-India>.
- (7) Google - <https://www.thoughtco.com/ashoka-the-great-195472>.