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# Ashoka the Great: The Pride of India

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**Abstract:**
An important character in Indian history, King Asoka was known for his influential reign and support of Buddhism. Significant historical insights into Asoka's rule and his pursuits are provided by the archaeological finds, which include inscriptions dispersed over India. The king used inscriptions to spread his message of harmony and peace during his rule. These inscriptions served to establish the Dhamma, or teachings of virtue, for the community. The Asoka's inscriptions, which are written in languages like Prakrit, Greek, and Aramaic and preserved in a variety of scripts like Brāhmī, Kharosthi, Greek, Aramaic, and bilingual Greek-Aramaic, are scattered throughout India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Notable discoveries have been made in places like Kalsi, Sopara, Mount Girnar, Yerragudi, Dhauli, and Jaugada. The Asokan script was told as Bramhi script by various researchers but on the Merut and Topara pillars it is written as iyam dhamma lipi (Dhamma Script). By examining Ashoka's reign alongside modern political structures, it provides insights for fostering moral and ethical leadership today. Ashoka became king and assumed the titles 'Devanam Piya'. But in the inscriptions of Asoka there was not a single name of any God. It means that 'Devanam Piya' should be translated as Beloved of Budhha. This emphasizes Ashoka's leadership approach and how his principles can tackle contemporary problems such as environmental damage, religious intolerance, and economic disparity.

**Keywords**: Ashoka, Inscriptions, Dhamma, Buddhism, Social Welfare, Religious Tolerance

## INTRODUCTION:

The history of ancient India is replete with tales of strong emperors and their enduring impacts. Among these historical figures, Ashoka the Great stands out (Dinesh Kumar, 2016). The Indian people have forgotten Ashoka the Great's name and his background. Although there are rock and pillar edicts all over India, the Indian populace was unaware of their scripts. The people of India have lost the script of the ancient people. James Prinsep, building on the work of several other experts, deciphered the Kharoshthi script in 1837 and the forgotten AshokanBrahmi alphabet.

It took some time to determine that the Mauryan king, who had a major role in Ashoka, was the owner of the written rocks and boulders from early every region of the subcontinent that were reported to the Asiatic Society of Bengal during the nineteenth century.Since then, the historical narratives associated with these "edicts" have been rebuilt (MeenakshiVashisth, 2017).Ashoka, who ruled the Mauryan Empire from around 268 to 232 BCE, is well-known for both the vastness of his empire and his profound transformation as a ruler. A crucial turning point in his life was his embrace of Buddhism, which motivated him to advocate for "Ashoka'sDhamma," a collection of moral and ethical guidelines.

This remarkable code of conduct significantly influenced ancient Indian culture, aiming to foster social welfare, nonviolence, and compassion (Dinesh Kumar, 2016; Radhamma, 2017).

Ashoka was the sole king in history who renounced war in favor of peace and understanding. Ashoka ruled over many regions of what is now modern India. Following several military conquests, his empire extended from modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan in the west to present-day Bangladesh and Assam in the east, reaching as far down as northern Kerala and Andhra Pradesh (Dileep Kumar, 2015). Ashoka aimed to rule not merely by means of military strength but through moral influence and ethical leadership. He conveyed his principles via a collection of decrees engraved on stones and columns throughout his realm, advocating for values like religious acceptance, reverence for all beings, and the well-being of his people (Thapar, 1997). Ashoka created hospitals, wells, and rest houses, demonstrating his commitment to public welfare. His advocacy for Buddhism reached beyond his empire as he dispatched missionaries to disseminate the faith to surrounding areas, aiding in the religion's expansion. Ashoka's rule is frequently seen as a golden period in Indian history, marked by a blossoming of art, culture, and commerce. His decrees and strategies established a framework for a governance system founded on moral values and communal accountability (Radhamma, 2017)

Due to his kind disposition as a leader, he received the title 'Devanampiya (Beloved of Gods; Beloved of Buddha).' Piyadassi (The one who sees everyone with love).Ashoka and his magnificent reign are intertwined with one of the most prosperous times in Indian history, and as a homage to his impartial philosophy, the Dharmachakra featured on the Ashok stamp has been incorporated into the Indian National Flag. The symbol of the Republic of India has been derived from the Lion Capital of Ashoka (Pawar, 2014; Ramesh Babu and Lakshmi Devi, 2018)

He adhered to the Buddha's teachings and assisted the Sangha. Because he dedicated himself to the Dhamma through assisting the Sangha, he is recognized as Dhammāsoka. He promoted Buddhism and the Sangha by constructing thousands of stupas, viharas, and pillars. The king endorsed the convening of the third Buddhist council to cleanse the Sangha of heretical monks (Medhācitto et al., 2024; Kiron, 2025; Debnath and Sinha, 2025)

He adhered to the Buddha's teachings and aided the Sangha. His commitment to the Dhamma by upholding Ashoka's legacy has significant implications for the education sector. The insights from the Dhamma can be used in modern teaching approaches to assist students in enhancing their abilities in empathy, social responsibility, and moral reasoning. AnalyzingAshoka's life and actions could motivate educators and lawmakers to design curricula that promote ideals beneficial for the holistic development of individuals alongside informational content (AnoopmaKumari, 2025). His influence continues to be pertinent today, representing the principles of empathetic leadership and ethical administration

An attempt has been made in this paper to provide a critical discussion of King Asoka's legacy, with special attention on the contents, scripts, languages and objectives of Asoka's Inscriptions to create moral and compassionate world.

**Fig.1: AshokaThe Great**
(Sourse: https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/ashoka-the-great-recovered/67215084)

## METHODODOLOGY

The approach employed in this study is qualitative research methodology carried out using a library-based method. It is referred to as library research because it emphasizes the analysis of documents sourced from literature, books, journals, or articles.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Historical Evidences*

A significant amount of historical information exists regarding the rule of Emperor Ashoka. Here are the proofs outlining his rule. Specifically: Ashoka's edicts; Inscriptions; Buddhist texts; Monasteries. Of these elements, the inscription holds the greatest significance. They were spread by Emperor Ashoka. Inscriptions served as contemporary governmental records. The engravings were fundamentally enduring and unchangeable.

**Fig.: 2: Rare sculpture of Ashoka -The Great: Description: A 1st century BC relief from Kanaganahalli, Karnataka Dynasty MauryanSanchi, showing Ashoka on his chariot. Source: Wikipedia. Accessed on 11/01/2026.**

***The Asoka's Inscriptions***

Alexander Cunningum, 1877; Dhammika, 1993; Thapar, 1997; TOPPO, 2024; Medhācittoet., el, 2024; Smith Vincent; Patrick Olivelle, 2023; Charles Allen, 2019; Rajendra Prasad Singh, 2023 & 2024 and many more authors and archaeologists presented the rock edicts of SamratAshoka.

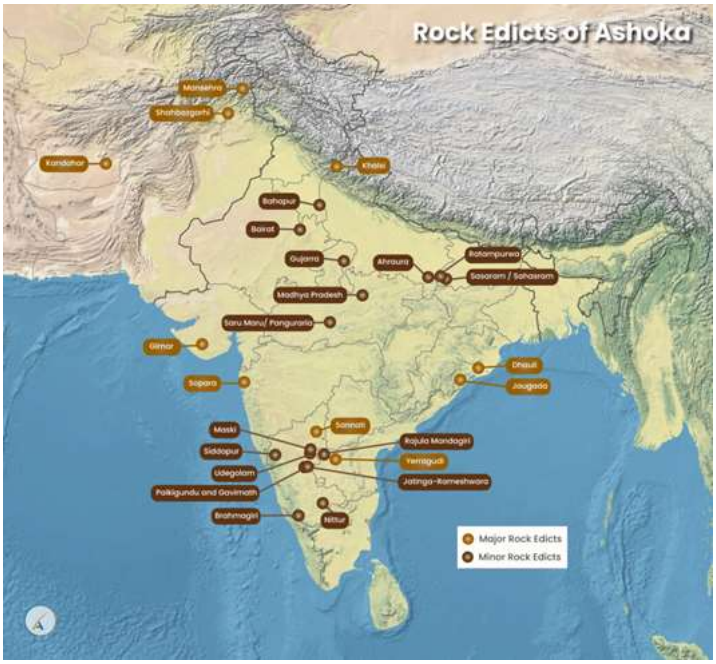


**Fig.3: Rock Edicts of Ashoka**

(Sourse: https://lotusarise.com/edicts-of-ashoka. Accessed on 11/01/2026)

**Rock edicts I** :Focus on the prohibition of animal slaughter for sacrifices and bans festive gatherings where animals were killed.

**Location**: Major Rock Edict I is located at the Dhauli Hills in Odisha, near Bhubaneswar, as well as at Jaugada, also in Odisha, among other places like Kalsi, Girnar, and Yerragudi.

King Piyadasi, the Beloved-of-the-Gods, has had this Dhamma edict inscribed. In this realm of mine, no creatures are to be killed or dedicated in sacrifice. Festivals ought not to take place, as Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, finds many reasons to disapprove of them, even though there are certain festivals that he does support. In the kitchen of Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, hundreds of thousands of animals were slaughtered daily to prepare curry. However, with this Dhamma edict, only three beings—two peacocks and sometimes a deer—are killed. Eventually, even these three beings will not be harmed.

**Rock edicts II** :Focus on the establishment of medical treatment for humans and animals throughout his empire and beyond.

**Location**: Pakistan, Afghanistan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha. Edicts themselves were spread across his empire.

Throughout Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi's realm, and among the peoples beyond the frontiers, such as the Coḷas, the Pāṇḍyas, the Sātiyaputras, the Keralaputras, extending to Tāmraparṇī and the territory ruled by the Greek king Antiochos, as well as among the monarchs neighboringAntiochos, Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, has established provisions for two forms of healthcare: one for humans and another for animals. Wherever medicinal herbs appropriate for people or animals are

lacking, I have arranged for their importation and cultivation. Wherever roots or fruits were absent, I arranged for them to be brought and cultivated. Along the roads, I have arranged for wells to be excavated and trees to be planted for the advantage of both people and wildlife.

**Rock edicts III** :Promotes adherence to Dhamma and emphasizes the importance of obedience to parents, generosity to friends and spiritual figures, and abstaining from killing animals.Mandates that officers (Yuktas, Pradesikas, and Rajukas) travel every five years to spread Dhamma, emphasizing obedience to parents and generosity.

**Location**: Dhauli and Jaugada in Odisha, Girnar in Gujarat, Kalsi in Uttarakhand, and Mansehra and Shahbazgarhi in present-day Pakistan.

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, declares: Twelve years post my coronation, this directive has been issued—Across my realm, the Yuktas, Rajjukas, and Prādeśikas shall undertake inspection tours every five years to provide Dhamma teachings and carry out other responsibilities. Reverence for parents is commendable, kindness to friends, acquaintances, relatives, Brahmans, and ascetics is commendable; not harming living beings is commendable; balance in expenditure and balance in saving is commendable. The Council will inform the Yuktas regarding the adherence to these instructions using these exact words

**Rock edicts IV** :Advocates for the promotion of Dhamma and the continuation of these policies by future rulers. Promotes peace and righteous conduct by preferring the "sound of righteousness" (Dhammaghosa) over the "sound of war" (Bherighosa).

**Location**: Near the town of Kalsi in the state of Uttarakhand, India.

Historically, over numerous centuries, the act of killing or injuring living creatures, along with misconduct towards family and inappropriate actions towards Brahmans and ascetics, has escalated. Yet now, as a result of the Dhamma practice of Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, the drum's sound has been substituted with the sound of the Dhamma. The appearance of celestial vehicles, fortuitous elephants, flames, and other divine visions has not been witnessed for several hundred years. However, now that Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi advocates for the reduction of killing and harming living beings, proper conduct towards family, Brahmans, and ascetics, and respect for mothers, fathers, and elders, these encounters have grown. These and numerous other forms of Dhamma practice have been supported by the Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, who will persist in advocating Dhamma practice. The sons, grandsons, and great grandsons of Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, will also persist in fostering Dhamma practice until the end of time; embodying Dhamma and virtue, they will teach Dhamma. Indeed, this is the greatest task, to teach in Dhamma. However, one lacking virtue cannot practice the Dhamma, making its encouragement and development praiseworthy. This decree has been composed to encourage my successors to commit to advancing these matters and to prevent them from deteriorating. King Piyadasi, beloved of the Gods, had this inscribed twelve years post his coronation

**Rock edicts V** :Discusses the appointment of DhammaMahamatras, a class of officials dedicated to spreading Dhamma, and addressing issues like slavery.

**Location**: The edict is known from versions located at various sites, including Girnar (Gujarat) and at Dhauli and Jaugada (Odisha).

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, states: It is challenging to perform good deeds. A person who acts kindly must first tackle a difficult task. I have performed numerous good acts, and if my sons, grandsons, and their future descendants continue in this way, they will also achieve much goodness. However, anyone among them who overlooks this will commit wrongdoing. Indeed, it is simple to

commit wrongdoing. Thirteen years after my coronation, I appointed DhammaMahāmātras, a position that did not exist before. They currently collaborate across all faiths to establish Dhamma, promote Dhamma, and enhance the welfare and joy of all who are dedicated to Dhamma. They operate among the Greeks, the Kāmbojas, the Gandhāras, the Rāshtrika-pairyānikas, and additional groups along the western frontiers. They operate among soldiers, leaders, priests, families, the underprivileged, the elderly, and those committed to Dhamma—aiming for their well-being and joy—ensuring they are free from distress. They (DhammaMahāmātras) advocate for the humane treatment of inmates, striving for their liberation, and if the Mahāmātras consider, "This individual has a family to care for," "That person has been enchanted," "This one is elderly," they endeavor to secure the freedom of those prisoners. They are employed here, in remote towns, in the women's sections owned by my siblings, and among my other family members. They are engaged everywhere. These DhammaMahāmātras are engaged in my realm among individuals committed to Dhamma to ascertain who is faithful to Dhamma, who is grounded in Dhamma, and who is charitable. This Dhamma decree has been inscribed on stone to ensure its longevity and to guide my descendants in following it.

**Rock edicts VI** :Highlights Ashoka's commitment to the welfare of his subjects and his desire to communicate directly with them regarding his policies.

**Location**: found at multiple locations across India including: Girnar (Gujarat), Kalsi (Uttarakhand), Sopara (Maharashtra), Yerragudi (Andhra Pradesh), Dhauli (Odisha), and Jaugada (Odisha).

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, states: Previously, state affairs were not conducted nor were reports presented to the king at all times. However, I have issued this command: that at any moment, whether I am dining, in the women's area, the sleeping quarters, the carriage, the sedan, in the garden, or wherever, reporters are to be stationed with orders to inform me about the people's matters so that I can address these issues wherever I may be. Any verbal instructions I give regarding donations or announcements, or when pressing matters arise for the Mahāmātras, must be reported to me immediately if any disagreement or discussion occurs in the Council. This is what I have requested. I am always dissatisfied with putting in effort or with completing tasks. I genuinely see the well-being of everyone as my responsibility, and the foundation of this lies in effort and the swift handling of tasks. There is no greater task than advancing the well-being of everyone, and any endeavors I undertake are to repay the obligation I have to all beings to ensure their joy in this life and achieve paradise in the afterlife. Consequently, this Dhamma edict has been inscribed to endure over time, so that my sons, grandsons, and great grandsons may follow it for the benefit of the world. Nonetheless, accomplishing this is challenging without significant effort.

**Fig. 4: A c. 1st century BCE/CE relief of Ashoka, from the Amaravathi village, Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh India, currently present in the Guimet Museum, Paris.**

**Rock edicts VII** :Advocates for religious tolerance and respect for all sects and religions within his kingdom.

**located** at various sites including Girnar (Gujarat), Mansehra (Pakistan), Kalsi (Dehradun), and Yerragundi (Andhra Pradesh).

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, wishes that all faiths should exist everywhere, as each seeks self-discipline and a pure heart. However, individuals possess different desires and diverse passions, and they might engage in all that they ought to or merely a portion of it. However, a person who receives significant gifts but lacks self-discipline, sincerity, thankfulness, and strong commitment is indeed unworthy.

**Rock edicts VIII** :Mentions Ashoka'sDhammaYatras (tours) to connect with his subjects and preach moral principles.

**Location**: Found at various Ashokan sites, including the famous Bodh Gaya,

Historically, kings would embark on leisure trips that included hunting and various forms of entertainment. Ten years after Beloved-of-the Gods was crowned, he embarked on a journey to Sambodhi and established Dhamma tours. Throughout these tours, several activities occurred: visits and offerings to Brahmans and ascetics, donations of gold to the elderly, trips to rural residents, teaching them Dhamma, and engaging in appropriate Dhamma discussions with them. This brings joy to Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, and is, in a sense, a different form of income

**Rock edicts IX** :Criticizes empty rituals and instead promotes the observance of Dhamma, emphasizing virtues like truth, non-violence, and moral restraint.

**Location**: found at several locations including Dhauli and Jaugada in Odisha, India. Other notable locations for Ashoka's edicts include Mansehra and Shahbazgarhi in Pakistan, Girnar in Gujarat, Sopara in Maharashtra, Sannati in Karnataka, and Yerragudi in Andhra Pradesh.

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, states: During sickness, for the weddings of sons and daughters, at childbirth, before starting a journey, on these and similar occasions, individuals carry out numerous rituals. Women, in particular, engage in numerous trivial and meaningless rituals. Such ceremonies can be conducted in various ways, yet they yield minimal results. What yields significant results, however, is

the ceremony of the Dhamma. This includes appropriate conduct towards servants and staff, reverence for educators, moderation concerning living creatures, and kindness towards ascetics and Brahmins. These elements and others form the ritual of the Dhamma. Thus, a father, a son, a brother, a master, a friend, a companion, and even a neighbor ought to declare: "This is commendable, this is the ceremony that must be carried out until its objective is achieved, this I will do." Other ceremonies have uncertain outcomes, as they might fulfill their aim, or they might not, and even when they do, it is only in this life. However, the ritual of the Dhamma is eternal. Even if it fails to accomplish its goal in this world, it generates significant merit in the next, while if it succeeds in this world, one gains great merit both here and in the next life through the Dhamma ceremony.

**Rock edicts X** :Reinforces the importance of Dhamma over fame and glory, urging people to seek the true meaning of righteousness.

**Location**: Girnar (Gujarat), Dhauli and Jaugada (Odisha), Sopara (Maharashtra), and Erragudi (Andhra Pradesh)

The beloved King Piyadasi does not regard glory and fame as important unless they come from my subjects respecting and practicing Dhamma, both presently and in the future. For this reason alone does King Piyadasi, Beloved-of-the-Gods, seek glory and renown. All the endeavors of Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, are solely for the benefit of the people in the afterlife, ensuring they encounter minimal wrongdoing. To lack merit is to be wicked. This is challenging for both a modest individual and a distinguished one to achieve without significant effort and by relinquishing other pursuits. In reality, it could be even harder for an exceptional individual to accomplish.

**Rock edicts XI** :Explains the principles of Dhamma and the importance of giving, rather than receiving.

**Location**:Edicts found at various sites across India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, such as Mansehra, Shahbazgarhi, and Girnar. Edict XI, found in the Shahbazgarhi and Mansehra versions

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, expresses this: There is no offering comparable to the offering of the Dhamma, (no connection like) connection with Dhamma, (no sharing like) sharing of Dhamma, and (no bond like) bond through Dhamma. It includes this: appropriate conduct towards workers and staff, honoring parents, being charitable to friends, peers, family, Brahmans, and ascetics, as well as refraining from taking life. Thus, a father, a son, a brother, a master, a friend, a companion, or a neighbor ought to express: "This is good, this should be accomplished." By offering the gift of the Dhamma, one gains advantages in this life and earns significant merit in the next

**Rock edicts XII** :Stresses tolerance among different religious communities and encourages respect for elders and teachers.

**Location**: Multiple sites across India including places like Girnar (Gujarat), Dhauli (Odisha), Jaugada (Odisha), Kalsi (Uttarakhand), Mansehra (Pakistan), Shahbazgarhi (Pakistan), Sopara (Maharashtra), and Yerraguddi (Andhra Pradesh).

King Piyadasi, Beloved-of-the-Gods, respects both ascetics and householders from all faiths, bestowing upon them gifts and various forms of recognition. However, Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, prioritizes the growth in the fundamentals of all religions over gifts and honors. Expansion in essentials can occur in various manners, yet all originate from a limitation in discourse, meaning refraining from boasting about one's own faith or criticizing the faith of others without justifiable reason. If there is a reason for critique, it ought to be expressed gently. However, it is preferable to respect other faiths for this purpose. In doing this, one's own faith gains, as do other faiths, whereas acting differently damages one's own faith and the faiths of others. Those who overly praise their own faith and criticize others with

the intention of elevating their own religion ultimately damage their own belief system. Consequently, interaction (among religions) is beneficial. It is important to hear and honor the beliefs expressed by other people. King Piyadasi, Beloved-of-the-Gods, wishes for everyone to be well-versed in the virtuous teachings of different faiths. Those satisfied with their own faith should be informed of this: Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, places greater importance on the development of the core principles of all religions than on gifts and accolades. To achieve this goal, numerous individuals are engaged—DhammaMahāmātras, Mahāmātras overseeing the women's quarters, officials responsible for remote areas, and other similar officers. As a result, an individual's faith strengthens and the Dhamma becomes clearer as well.

**Rock edicts XIII** :Details the impact of the Kalinga War and Ashoka's subsequent regret, as well as his efforts to spread Dhamma to contemporary Hellenistic kingdoms.

**Location**: Dhauli and Jaugada in Odisha, Girnar in Gujarat, Kalsi in Dehradun, Yerragudi in Andhra Pradesh, Mansehra and Shahbazgarhi in Pakistan, and Sopara in Maharashtra. A version in Greek can be found in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, triumphed over the Kāliṅgas eight years following his ascension to the throne. One hundred fifty thousand were displaced, one hundred thousand were slain, and numerous others perished (from different reasons). Once the Kāliṅgas were defeated, Beloved-of-the-Gods developed a deep affection for the Dhamma, as well as a passion for learning about the Dhamma. Beloved-of-the-Gods now experiences profound regret for having defeated the Kāliṅgas. Certainly, Beloved-of-the-Gods experiences profound sorrow from the killings, deaths, and displacements that occur during the conquest of an unconquered nation. Yet the Beloved-of-the-Gods feels greater sorrow over the suffering of Brahmans, ascetics, and householders of various faiths in those regions, who show respect to their superiors, to parents, to the elderly, and who conduct themselves well, maintaining deep loyalty to friends, acquaintances, companions, relatives, servants, and employees—who are harmed, slain, or parted from their dear ones. Those who aren't directly impacted still feel the pain when witnessing friends, acquaintances, companions, and family in distress. These calamities affect everyone (due to war), and this causes distress for Beloved-of-the-Gods. No nation, aside from those of the Greeks, lacks these two groups, Brahmans and ascetics, and no nation exists where individuals are not devoted to one religion or another. Thus, the slaughter, demise, or expulsion of a small fraction, even one-hundredth or one-thousandth of those who perished in the Kāliṅga conquest now causes sorrow to Beloved-of-the-Gods

Now Beloved-of-the-Gods believes that even those who commit wrongs deserve forgiveness when it can be granted. Even the forest dwellers, residing in Beloved-of-the Gods' territory, are persuaded and advised to behave appropriately. They are informed that even though Beloved-of-the-Gods feels remorse, he possesses the authority to punish them if needed, thus they should feel regret for their misdeeds and avoid being killed. Indeed, Beloved-of-the-Gods wishes for no harm, self-control, and fairness toward all creatures, even in the face of wrongdoing. At present, it is the victory through Dhamma that the Beloved-of-the Gods regards as the greatest victory. And it (victory through Dhamma) has been achieved here, at the frontiers, even six hundred yojanas distant, where the Greek monarch Antiochos governs, further beyond where the four kings called Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas, and Alexander reign, similarly in the south among the Coḷas, the Pāṇḍyas, and to the extent of Tāmraparṇi. Within the King's realm among the Greeks, the Kāmbojas, the Nābhakas, the Nābhapanktis, the Bhoja-paitryānikas, the Andhras, and the Paulindas, individuals are adhering to the Beloved-of-the-Gods'

teachings in Dhamma. Even in places where Beloved-of-the-Gods' envoys have not arrived, these individuals, having learned about the Dhamma and the regulations and teachings from Beloved-of-the-Gods, are adhering to it and will persist in doing so. This victory has been achieved universally, bringing immense happiness—the happiness that can only come from victory through Dhamma. Yet, even this happiness holds little importance. Beloved-of-the-Gods views the significant rewards to be encountered in the afterlife as more valuable. I have had this Dhamma edict inscribed so that my sons and great-grandsons do not think of pursuing new conquests, or if they engage in military conquests, they should exercise restraint and impose minor punishments, or ideally, they should aim to achieve conquest through Dhamma alone, as this yields results in this life and the next. May all their fervent dedication be directed toward that which yields outcomes in this life and the afterlife.

**Rock edicts XIV** :A concluding edict, which varies slightly from other versions, but generally reinforces the themes of Dhamma and the Emperor's efforts to spread it.

**Location**: Found at multiple locations including Kalsi in Uttarakhand, the only site with a complete set of the fourteen rock edicts, and also in Sannati (Karnataka), Yerragudi (Andhra Pradesh), and Dhauli and Jaugada (Odisha)

The King Piyadasi, Beloved-of-the-Gods, has had these Dhamma edicts inscribed in concise, moderate, and detailed versions. Not all of them are found in every place, as my realm is extensive, yet a great deal has been documented, and I will have even more documented. Additionally, there are certain topics mentioned repeatedly due to their appeal, ensuring that people align their actions with them. If certain aspects noted are unfinished, this is due to location, regard for the subject, or the error of the writer

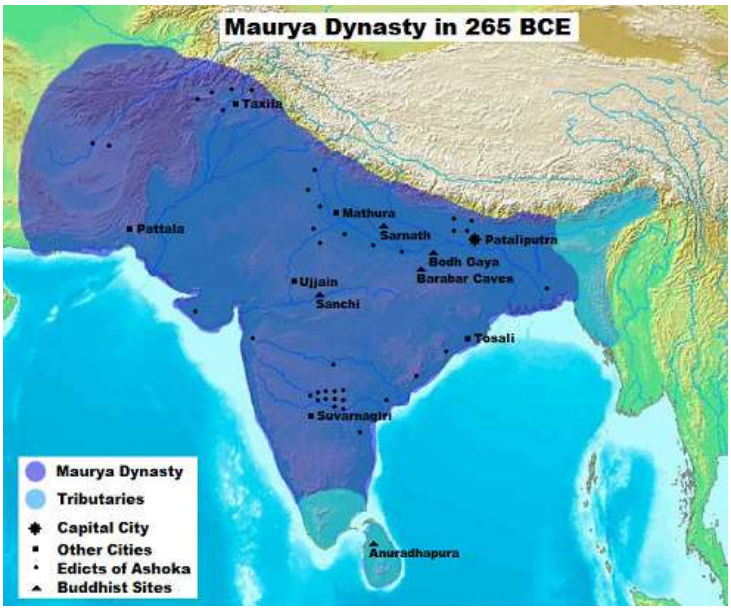


**Fig. 5: Maurya dynasty (Sourse: NCERT)**

**The Kāliṅga Rock Edicts:** All men are my offspring. What I wish for my own children, and I want their well-being and joy in both this life and the next, that I wish for all people. You cannot comprehend how deeply I long for this, and if any of you do grasp it, you still fail to see the complete depth of my longing. Thus, by acting in this manner, you ought to fulfill your responsibilities and reassure them (the people beyond the borders) that: "The king resembles a father." He regards us in the same way he regards himself. We resemble his own children to him.

**Fig. 6: Ashokan scripts clockwise from top left: Brahmi, Kharosthi, Aramaic, Greek**
(Source: https://storytrails.in/history/the-truth-behind-the-ashokan-edicts)

**Minor Rock Edicts:** The Beloved-of-the-Gods states: Parents and elders deserve respect, compassion towards all living creatures must be fostered, and one must speak the truth. The Dhamma ought to be advanced in these manners. Similarly, a teacher ought to be respected by their student, and appropriate behavior should be exhibited towards family members. This is an old principle that leads to longevity. Piyadasi, the ruler of Magadha, greets the Sangha and expresses his wishes for their well-being and joy, stating: You are aware, esteemed teachers, of the depth of my faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. Anything that has been articulated by Lord Buddha is spoken with great wisdom. I believe it is appropriate, esteemed sirs, to provide guidance on how the noble Dhamma should endure over time.

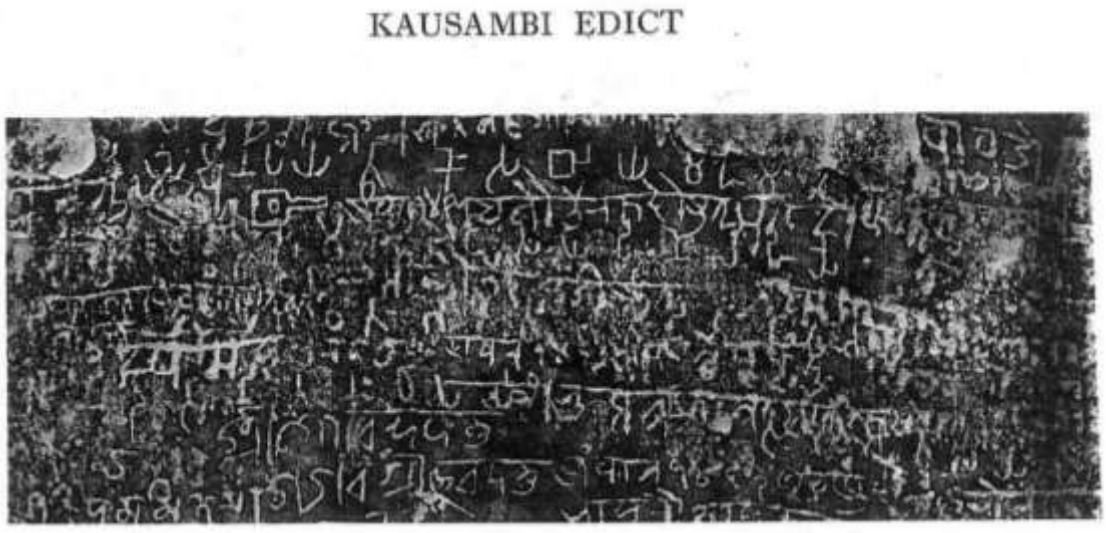


**Fig. 7: The Kausambi edict by King Ashoka, Uttar Pradesh**
(Source: https://storytrails.in/history/the-truth-behind-the-ashokan-edicts)

**The Seven Pillar Edicts:** Achieving happiness in this world and the next is challenging without deep love for the Dhamma, significant self-reflection, great respect, a strong fear of wrongdoing, and considerable enthusiasm. However, through my teaching, this respect for Dhamma and affection for Dhamma has increased daily and will keep on expanding. My officers, regardless of rank, are following and adhering to Dhamma, and they have the ability to encourage others to do likewise. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, states: Dhamma is commendable, but what defines Dhamma? (It comprises) minor malice, plenty of goodness, compassion, selflessness, honesty, and innocence. This Dhamma edict has been composed so that individuals may observe it and it may last for an extended period. The person who adheres to it correctly will accomplish something positive. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, proclaims: This advancement among the people via Dhamma has occurred through two methods, through Dhamma regulations and through encouragement. Among these, Dhamma regulation has minimal impact, whereas persuasion proves to be significantly more effective. The Dhamma rules I have shared state that different animals should be safeguarded. I have also provided numerous other Dhamma guidelines. Yet, it is through persuasion that advancements among the populace via Dhamma have significantly impacted harmlessness towards living beings and the practice of non-killing.

**Fig.: 8: Pillar Edict (Delhi-Topra pillar)** **Fig. 9: Pillar Edict in Lauriya Araraj, Bihar**

## CONCLUSION

King Asoka was a remarkable ruler who lived in the 3rd century B.C. and made significant contributions to society and the spread of Buddhism throughout Asia. The rule of King Asoka showcases a distinctive blend of political tactics and ethical guidance. He spread humanitarian principles via his decrees, benevolent leadership, and empathetic strategies. He governed the nation relying on a moral and ethical framework, while also advocating his approach to the populace. By issuing his edicts in various locations, he aimed to instill a sense of morality, compassion, and reverence for life in the people by adhering to Dhamma principles, including non-violence, respect for parents, appropriate conduct towards elders and relatives, and honouring Brahmins, ascetics, and all religious groups.

Ashoka the Great is regarded as one of the most extraordinary leaders in Indian history, celebrated not just for his military victories but also for his significant evolution into a symbol of peace and kindness.

His rule, characterized by the expansion of Buddhism and the dissemination of the Dhamma, made a lasting impact on Indian culture and the globe. Ashoka's dedication to ethical leadership, community well-being, and religious acceptance is a legacy that continues to motivate individuals worldwide. His adoption of non-violence after the Kalinga War illustrates the strength of self-reflection and the ability to transform amidst significant devastation. Ashoka's Edicts showcased policies that advocated a vision of harmony and unity, surpassing the material aspirations of empire expansion.

Today, Ashoka's narrative stands as an enduring reminder of the value of compassion, moral leadership, and the quest for justice. His legacy as the "Pride of India" endures, not only in historical accounts but also in the principles that keep influencing the ethical foundation of communities globally

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