

Chapter 1 : Maurya Empire - Wikipedia

Ashok K. Banker's 'Ashoka' published by Westland, is the first of a series about the great emperor. Good cover, paper, font and layout, with British spellings and sentence construction, the narration is mesmerizing, pulling the reader into that era and sequels are eagerly awaited.

Art History through millennia and beyond Tag: It was he who founded the first unifying empire: Megasthenes wrote that the army of the Maurya Empire had After a bloody start, he converted to Buddhism, and to preach his people the new morality of tolerance, he had his edicts engraved on high stone pillars that were distributed throughout the empire. The capital features four Asiatic lions standing back to back. The whole group sits upon a bell-shaped lotus. This capital, which is 2. To the Maurya period belong the first monuments of Hindu art: A stupa is a hemispherical construction made to contain relics, probably derived from ancient burial mounds. The most well preserved stupas are those of Sanchi three of them , the largest of which is 32 meters in diameter by 36 in height and dates back to the time of Ashoka. The sculptures of Sanchi translate the exaltation and the innocent and spontaneous joy of living, especially in the youth bodies of the yakshi suspended in the air while hanging from the branches of the Sacred Tree. Older than the stupas of Sanchi was the stupa of Bharhut, today destroyed, but whose sculpted balustrades are partly preserved in the Museum of Calcutta. These balustrades have other yakshi, more rigid and less gracious than those of Sanchi, but with the same taste for the jeweled nude and for their ambiguous character of beings united to the fertility of the vegetation, embracing the trees. Carved decoration of the Northern gateway torana to the Great Stupa of Sanchi. Some types of load-bearing pillar capitals in the Toranas of Sanchi: Yakshas the male counterpart of the Yakshis capital. All three capitals from the 1st century BCE. A panel from the balustrade representing the adoration of the Diamond Throne and the Bodhi Tree Bharhut: The other two typically Buddhist constructions are the chaitya or sanctuary and the vihara or monastery. In fact, in India there is no signs of built architecture until the fifth and sixth centuries, under the Gupta dynasty. For that reason, the sanctuaries and monasteries previous to the Gupta period are usually designated as caves or grottos, because it is a rock architecture that imitates the old wooden structures by sculpting them in the rock. This is what happens with the chaityas a nave with columns that ends in an apse where there is a small stupa surrounded by an ambulatory for the circulation of the faithful and with the viharas a square room supported by columns that serves as a vestibule to a series of cells excavated around it. The valley of Ajanta is constituted by a high volcanic curved rock wall, in which during near thousand years the Buddhist monks that fled from the agitated life of the cities excavated more than thirty chaityas and viharas. In the surroundings of Bombay there are other wonders of rock architecture made during pre-Gupta times: Bhaja where the oldest chaitya is located , Kanheri where there are three important chaityas among a total of small caves , Nasik with 23 caves including a chaitya and three large viharas of outstanding artistic value and, above all, Karla, with the great chaitya that is considered the masterpiece of the series. Excavated in the rock between and AD. In contrast, the exterior porch is filled with ornamental elements kudu, etc. The caves were built in two phases, the first phase starting around the 2nd century BCE, while the second phase built around to roughly AD. The Ajanta Caves constitute ancient monasteries and worship halls of different Buddhist traditions carved into a feet wall of rock. Textual records suggest that these caves served as a monsoon retreat for monks, as well as a resting site for merchants and pilgrims in ancient India. Exterior porch of Cave 24 ca. Worship hall of the Chaitya of Cave 26 5th century AD , at the center of the apse is a rock-cut stupa. Cave 4 is a Vihara dated from the 6th century AD. These fables embed ancient morals and cultural lores. The Jataka tales are exemplified through the life example and sacrifices that the Buddha made in hundreds of his past incarnations, where he is depicted as having been reborn as an animal or human. A painting depicting an Apsara in Cave The entrance to the main Chaitya, Cave 12, the most prominent excavation in the Bhaja complex, with a vaulted horseshoe ceiling. It is perhaps the earliest surviving chaitya hall, dated from the second century BCE. A large horseshoe-shaped window, the chaitya-window, was set above the arched doorway and the whole portico-area was carved to imitate a multi-storeyed building with balconies and windows and sculptured men and women who observed the scene

below. This created the appearance of an ancient Indian mansion. The columns slope inwards in the imitation of wooden columns. Outside stupas at the Bhaja caves. The cave complex comprises caves. Entrance to the Great Chaitya cave No. A panorama of the interior of the Great Chaitya at Kanheri. Detail of a carved capital at the Great Chaitya of Kanheri. The dining hall at the Kanheri caves. A Buddha statue at the entrance of cave 3. It is the largest cave of the Nasik caves complex. Detail of a capital in Cave 3. A diagram showing a section in perspective of the Grand Chaitya of Karla. The reliefs of the left panel at the entrance of the Grand Chaitya. View of the interior hall of the Grand Chaitya. View of a column and its richly ornamented capital at the interior hall of the Grand Chaitya. The interior of the Grand Chaitya contains 15 pillars on each side, each one of these pillars has a tall base, an octagonal shaft, and an ornamented capital. The inner side of these capitals towards the hall were decorated with the figures of two kneel elephants, each bearing two figures generally a man and a woman, but sometimes two females and the exterior side towards the walls have figures of horses and tigers, each also bearing a single figure. A panorama of the Grand Chaitya hall. Elephants carved at the right panel of the veranda. Elephants carved at the left panel of the veranda. A view of a capital from the Grand Chaitya. Strictly, the chaitya is actually the stupa itself, and the Indian buildings are chaitya halls, but this distinction is often not observed. It refers to the practice of creating a structure by carving it out of solid natural rock. Rock that is not part of the structure is removed until the only rock left is the architectural elements of the excavated interior. Indian rock-cut architecture is mostly religious in nature. These ancient and medieval structures represent significant achievements of structural engineering and craftsmanship. In India, caves have long been regarded as places of sanctity. This bodhisattva is variably depicted, described and is portrayed in different cultures as either female or male. Its typical form is a projecting cross-piece resting on two uprights or posts. The functions of all three are similar, but they generally differ based on their respective architectural styles. The Korean gateway is also related to the Japanese torii, and similar structures exist in Thailand. Two words from Sanskrit were combined and changed in Bengali and then borrowed by English. It means something that is outdoors but inside a room or covered area. The architectural concept refers to living quarters for monks with an open shared space or courtyard, particularly in Buddhism. The term is also found in Ajivika, Hindu and Jain monastic literature, usually referring to temporary refuge for wandering monks or nuns during the annual Indian monsoons.

Chapter 2 : Book Review: Ashoka: Lion of Maurya by Ashok K. Banker – The Tales of Fugitive Biker

This time he delves into ancient Indian history and recreates the Mauryan era in his latest, Lion of Maurya, with Bindusara on the throne and Ashoka, the reluctant second-in-line, waiting in the wings.

It covered the entire Indian subcontinent except for parts of present-day Tamil Nadu , Karnataka and Kerala. Ashoka waged a destructive war against the state of Kalinga modern Odisha ,[9] which he conquered in about BCE. In The Outline of History , H. Wells wrote, "Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Ashoka shines, and shines, almost alone, a star. According to the Ashokavadana , she was the daughter of a Brahmin from the city of Champa. Ashoka was given royal military training. Following this, Ashoka was stationed at Ujain , the capital of Malwa , as governor. The king, who now after consecration is called "Piyadasi", once came to this place for a pleasure tour while still a ruling prince, living together with his unwedded consort. Ashoka later got rid of the legitimate heir to the throne by tricking him into entering a pit filled with live coals. Radhagupta, according to the Ashokavadana, would later be appointed prime minister by Ashoka once he had gained the throne. The coronation happened in BCE, four years after his succession to the throne. Sanghamitta , and another daughter named Charumati. She was called Devi and later gave Ashoka two sons, Ujjeniya and Mahendra , and a daughter Sanghamitta. Several modern maps depict it as covering nearly all of the Indian subcontinent, except the southern tip. 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 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 , soldiers and many civilians who rose up in defence; over , were deported. Thence arises the remorse of His Sacred Majesty for having conquered the Kalingas, because the conquest of a country previously unconquered involves the slaughter, death, and carrying away captive of the people. That is a matter of profound sorrow and regret to His Sacred Majesty. The lethal war with Kalinga transformed the vengeful Emperor Ashoka to a stable and peaceful emperor and he became a patron of Buddhism. According to the prominent Indologist , A. However, according to Basham, the Dharma officially propagated by Ashoka was not Buddhism at all. Ashoka ruled for an estimated 36 years and died in BCE. Ashoka had many wives and children, but many of their names are lost to time. His chief consort agramahisi for the majority of his reign was his wife, Asandhimitra , who apparently bore him no children. The official executioners spared Kunala and he became a wandering singer accompanied by his favourite wife Kanchanmala. He condemned Tishyaraksha to death, restoring Kunala to the court. In the Ashokavadana, Kunala is portrayed as forgiving Tishyaraksha, having obtained enlightenment through Buddhist practice. While he urges Ashoka to forgive her as well, Ashoka does not respond with the same forgiveness. The reign of Ashoka Maurya might have disappeared into history as the ages passed by, had he not left behind records of his reign. These records are in the form of sculpted pillars and rocks inscribed with a variety of actions and teachings he wished to be published under his name. The language used for inscription was in one of the Prakrit "common" languages etched in a Brahmi script. King Ashoka, the third monarch of the Indian Mauryan dynasty, is also considered as one of the most exemplary rulers who ever lived. One of the more enduring legacies of Ashoka was the model that he provided for the relationship between Buddhism and the state. Emperor Ashoka was seen as a role model to leaders within the Buddhist community. He not only provided guidance and strength, but he also created personal relationships with his supporters. Many rulers also took an active role in resolving disputes over the status and regulation of the sangha, as Ashoka had in calling a conclave to settle a number of contentious issues during his reign. This development ultimately led to a close association in many Southeast Asian countries between the monarchy and the religious hierarchy, an association that can still be seen today in the state-supported Buddhism of Thailand and the traditional role of the Thai king as both a religious and secular leader. Ashoka also said that all his courtiers always governed the people in a moral manner.

According to the legends mentioned in the 2nd-century CE text Ashokavadana , Ashoka was not non-violent after adopting Buddhism. In one instance, a non-Buddhist in Pundravardhana drew a picture showing the Buddha bowing at the feet of Nirgrantha Jnatiputra identified with Mahavira , 24th Tirthankara of Jainism. On complaint from a Buddhist devotee, Ashoka issued an order to arrest him, and subsequently, another order to kill all the Ajivikas in Pundravardhana. Around 18, followers of the Ajivika sect were executed as a result of this order. Ashoka burnt him and his entire family alive in their house. According to Ashokavadana, as a result of this order, his own brother was mistaken for a heretic and killed by a cowherd. Ashoka had almost been forgotten, but in the 19th century James Prinsep contributed in the revelation of historical sources. After deciphering the Brahmi script , Prinsep had originally identified the " Priyadasi " of the inscriptions he found with the King of Ceylon Devanampiya Tissa. Since then, the association of "Devanampriya Priyadarsin" with Ashoka was confirmed through various inscriptions, and especially confirmed in the Minor Rock Edict inscription discovered in Maski , directly associating Ashoka with his regnal title Devanampriya "Beloved-of-the-Gods": Two and a half years [and somewhat more] have passed since I am a Buddha - Sakya. Those gods who formerly had been unmingled with men in Jambudvipa , have now become mingled with them. This object can be reached even by a lowly person who is devoted to morality. One must not think thus, viz. Both the lowly and the exalted must be told: His main interests were Sanchi and Sarnath , in addition to Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Sir Alexander Cunningham , a British archaeologist and army engineer, and often known as the father of the Archaeological Survey of India , unveiled heritage sites like the Bharhut Stupa, Sarnath, Sanchi, and the Mahabodhi Temple. Mortimer Wheeler , a British archaeologist, also exposed Ashokan historical sources, especially the Taxila. Information about the life and reign of Ashoka primarily comes from a relatively small number of Buddhist sources. Architectural remains of his period have been found at Kumhrar , Patna , which include an pillar hypostyle hall. Edicts of Ashoka -The Edicts of Ashoka are a collection of 33 inscriptions on the Pillars of Ashoka , as well as boulders and cave walls, made by Ashoka during his reign. These inscriptions are dispersed throughout modern-day Pakistan and India, and represent the first tangible evidence of Buddhism. It is essentially a Hinayana text, and its world is that of Mathura and North-west India. The emphasis of this little known text is on exploring the relationship between the king and the community of monks the Sangha and setting up an ideal of religious life for the laity the common man by telling appealing stories about religious exploits. Equally surprising is the record of his use of state power to spread Buddhism in an uncompromising fashion. Symbols including a sun and an animal Rev: As it often refers to the royal dynasties of India, the Mahavamsa is also valuable for historians who wish to date and relate contemporary royal dynasties in the Indian subcontinent. It is very important in dating the consecration of Ashoka. Dwipavamsa -The Dwipavamsa, or "Dweepavamsa", i. The chronicle is believed to be compiled from Atthakatha and other sources around the 3rd or 4th century CE. King Dhatusena 4th century had ordered that the Dipavamsa be recited at the Mahinda festival held annually in Anuradhapura. Numismatic research suggests that this symbol was the symbol of king Ashoka, his personal " Mudra ". Building on traditional accounts, early scholars regarded Ashoka as a primarily Buddhist monarch who underwent a conversion to Buddhism and was actively engaged in sponsoring and supporting the Buddhist monastic institution. Some scholars have tended to question this assessment. Romila Thappar writes about Ashoka that "We need to see him both as a statesman in the context of inheriting and sustaining an empire in a particular historical period, and as a person with a strong commitment to changing society through what might be called the propagation of social ethics. In his edicts, Ashoka expresses support for all the major religions of his time: Buddhism , Brahmanism , Jainism , and Ajivikaism , and his edicts addressed to the population at large there are some addressed specifically to Buddhists; this is not the case for the other religions generally focus on moral themes members of all the religions would accept. For example, Amartya Sen writes, "The Indian Emperor Ashoka in the third century BCE presented many political inscriptions in favor of tolerance and individual freedom, both as a part of state policy and in the relation of different people to each other". In one edict he belittles rituals, and he banned Vedic animal sacrifices; these strongly suggest that he at least did not look to the Vedic tradition for guidance. Furthermore, many edicts are expressed to Buddhists alone; in one, Ashoka declares himself to be an " upasaka ", and in another he demonstrates a close familiarity with Buddhist texts. He

erected rock pillars at Buddhist holy sites, but did not do so for the sites of other religions. He also used the word "dhamma" to refer to qualities of the heart that underlie moral action; this was an exclusively Buddhist use of the word. However, he used the word more in the spirit than as a strict code of conduct. Romila Thapar writes, "His dhamma did not derive from divine inspiration, even if its observance promised heaven. It was more in keeping with the ethic conditioned by the logic of given situations. His logic of Dhamma was intended to influence the conduct of categories of people, in relation to each other. Especially where they involved unequal relationships. It thereby illuminates Ashoka as more humanly ambitious and passionate, with both greatness and flaws. This Ashoka is very different from the "shadowy do-gooder" of later Pali chronicles. All his inscriptions present him as compassionate and loving. In the Kalinga rock edicts, he addresses his people as his "children" and mentions that as a father he desires their good. The Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath is the most notable of the relics left by Ashoka. Made of sandstone, this pillar records the visit of the emperor to Sarnath, in the 3rd century BCE. It has a four-lion capital four lions standing back to back, which was adopted as the emblem of the modern Indian republic. In translating these monuments, historians learn the bulk of what is assumed to have been true fact of the Mauryan Empire. It is difficult to determine whether or not some events ever actually happened, but the stone etchings clearly depict how Ashoka wanted to be thought of and remembered. The dhamma of the Edicts has been understood as concurrently a Buddhist lay ethic, a set of politico-moral ideas, a "sort of universal religion", or as an Ashokan innovation. On the other hand, it has also been interpreted as an essentially political ideology that sought to knit together a vast and diverse empire. Scholars are still attempting to analyse both the expressed and implied political ideas of the Edicts particularly in regard to imperial vision, and make inferences pertaining to how that vision was grappling with problems and political realities of a "virtually subcontinental, and culturally and economically highly variegated, 3rd century BCE Indian empire.

Chapter 3 : Lion Capital, Ashokan Pillar at Sarnath (article) | Khan Academy

Ashoka: Lion of Maurya and millions of other books are available for Amazon Kindle. Learn more Enter your mobile number or email address below and we'll send you a link to download the free Kindle App.

Ashoka pillar at Vaishali. As a young prince, Ashoka r. Ashoka used Kalinga to project power over a large region by building a fortification there and securing it as a possession. Hundreds of thousands of people were adversely affected by the destruction and fallout of war. When he personally witnessed the devastation, Ashoka began feeling remorse. Although the annexation of Kalinga was completed, Ashoka embraced the teachings of Buddhism , and renounced war and violence. He sent out missionaries to travel around Asia and spread Buddhism to other countries. While he maintained a large and powerful army, to keep the peace and maintain authority, Ashoka expanded friendly relations with states across Asia and Europe, and he sponsored Buddhist missions. He undertook a massive public works building campaign across the country. He remains an idealized figure of inspiration in modern India. Although predominantly written in Prakrit, two of them were written in Greek , and one in both Greek and Aramaic. Brihadratha , the last ruler of the Mauryan dynasty , held territories that had shrunk considerably from the time of emperor Ashoka. According to Sir John Marshall , [62] Pushyamitra may have been the main author of the persecutions, although later Shunga kings seem to have been more supportive of Buddhism. Other historians, such as Etienne Lamotte [63] and Romila Thapar , [64] among others, have argued that archaeological evidence in favour of the allegations of persecution of Buddhists are lacking, and that the extent and magnitude of the atrocities have been exaggerated. The Indo-Greeks would maintain holdings on the trans-Indus region, and make forays into central India, for about a century. Under them, Buddhism flourished, and one of their kings, Menander , became a famous figure of Buddhism; he was to establish a new capital of Sagala, the modern city of Sialkot. However, the extent of their domains and the lengths of their rule are subject to much debate. Numismatic evidence indicates that they retained holdings in the subcontinent right up to the birth of Christ. From Ashokan edicts, the names of the four provincial capitals are Tosali in the east , Ujjain in the west , Suvarnagiri in the south , and Taxila in the north. The kumara was assisted by Mahamatyas and council of ministers. This organizational structure was reflected at the imperial level with the Emperor and his Mantriparishad Council of Ministers. The expansion and defense of the empire was made possible by what appears to have been one of the largest armies in the world during the Iron Age. Having renounced offensive warfare and expansionism, Ashoka nevertheless continued to maintain this large army, to protect the Empire and instil stability and peace across West and South Asia. For the first time in South Asia , political unity and military security allowed for a common economic system and enhanced trade and commerce, with increased agricultural productivity. The previous situation involving hundreds of kingdoms, many small armies, powerful regional chieftains, and internecine warfare, gave way to a disciplined central authority. Farmers were freed of tax and crop collection burdens from regional kings, paying instead to a nationally administered and strict-but-fair system of taxation as advised by the principles in the Arthashastra. Chandragupta Maurya established a single currency across India, and a network of regional governors and administrators and a civil service provided justice and security for merchants, farmers and traders. The Mauryan army wiped out many gangs of bandits, regional private armies, and powerful chieftains who sought to impose their own supremacy in small areas. Although regimental in revenue collection, Maurya also sponsored many public works and waterways to enhance productivity, while internal trade in India expanded greatly due to new-found political unity and internal peace. The Khyber Pass , on the modern boundary of Pakistan and Afghanistan , became a strategically important port of trade and intercourse with the outside world. Greek states and Hellenic kingdoms in West Asia became important trade partners of India. Trade also extended through the Malay peninsula into Southeast Asia. The external world came across new scientific knowledge and technology with expanding trade with the Mauryan Empire. Ashoka also sponsored the construction of thousands of roads, waterways, canals, hospitals, rest-houses and other public works. The easing of many over-rigorous administrative practices, including those regarding taxation and crop collection, helped increase productivity and economic

activity across the Empire. Both had extensive trade connections and both had organizations similar to corporations. While Rome had organizational entities which were largely used for public state-driven projects, Mauryan India had numerous private commercial entities. These existed purely for private commerce and developed before the Mauryan Empire itself. Silver punch mark coin of the Maurya empire, with symbols of wheel and elephant. Circa late 4th-2nd century BCE. Chandragupta was a disciple of the Jain monk Bhadrabahu. It is said that in his last days, he observed the rigorous but self-purifying Jain ritual of santhara fast unto death , at Shravana Belgola in Karnataka. Samprati was influenced by the teachings of Jain monks and he is said to have built , derasars across India. It is also said that just like Ashoka, Samprati sent messengers and preachers to Greece , Persia and the Middle East for the spread of Jainism, but, to date, no research has been done in this area. Chandragupta and Samprati are credited for the spread of Jainism in South India. Hundreds of thousands of temples and stupas are said to have been erected during their reigns. Buddhism[edit] The stupa , which contained the relics of Buddha, at the center of the Sanchi complex was originally built by the Maurya Empire, but the balustrade around it is Sunga , and the decorative gateways are from the later Satavahana period. The Dharmarajika stupa in Taxila , modern Pakistan , is also thought to have been established by Emperor Asoka. Magadha , the centre of the empire, was also the birthplace of Buddhism. Ashoka initially practised Hinduism but later embraced Buddhism; following the Kalinga War , he renounced expansionism and aggression, and the harsher injunctions of the Arthashastra on the use of force, intensive policing, and ruthless measures for tax collection and against rebels. Ashoka sent a mission led by his son Mahinda.

Chapter 4 : Gopal's Bookshelf: My Review: Ashoka - The Lion of Maurya by Ashok K. Banker

In his lifetime, Ashoka fought a lot many wars and came to be known as the Lion of Maurya. The cover page exploits the legendary battles, and the figure of lion dramatizes the cover page. The cover page exploits the legendary battles, and the figure of lion dramatizes the cover page.

He issued a large number of edicts,â€¦ In order to gain wide publicity for his teachings and his work, Ashoka made them known by means of oral announcements and by engravings on rocks and pillars at suitable sites. These inscriptionsâ€”the rock edicts and pillar edicts e. His utterances rang of frankness and sincerity. According to his own accounts, Ashoka conquered the Kalinga country modern Orissa state in the eighth year of his reign. The sufferings that the war inflicted on the defeated people moved him to such remorse that he renounced armed conquests. It was at this time that he came in touch with Buddhism and adopted it. Under its influence and prompted by his own dynamic temperament, he resolved to live according to, and preach, the dharma and to serve his subjects and all humanity. He spoke of no particular mode of religious creed or worship, nor of any philosophical doctrines. He spoke of Buddhism only to his coreligionists and not to others. To practice the dharma actively, Ashoka went out on periodic tours preaching the dharma to the rural people and relieving their sufferings. He ordered his high officials to do the same, in addition to attending to their normal duties; he exhorted administrative officers to be constantly aware of the joys and sorrows of the common folk and to be prompt and impartial in dispensing justice. It was ordered that matters concerning public welfare were to be reported to him at all times. The only glory he sought, he said, was for having led his people along the path of dharma. No doubts are left in the minds of readers of his inscriptions regarding his earnest zeal for serving his subjects. More success was attained in his work, he said, by reasoning with people than by issuing commands. Among his works of public utility were the founding of hospitals for men and animals and the supplying of medicines, and the planting of roadside trees and groves, digging of wells, and construction of watering sheds and rest houses. Orders were also issued for curbing public laxities and preventing cruelty to animals. With the death of Ashoka, the Mauryan empire disintegrated and his work was discontinued. His memory survives for what he attempted to achieve and the high ideals he held before himself. He built a number of stupas commemorative burial mounds and monasteries and erected pillars on which he ordered inscribed his understanding of religious doctrines. He took strong measures to suppress schisms within the sangha the Buddhist religious community and prescribed a course of scriptural studies for adherents. The Sinhalese chronicle Mahavamsa says that when the order decided to send preaching missions abroad, Ashoka helped them enthusiastically and sent his own son and daughter as missionaries to Sri Lanka. A sample quotation that illustrates the spirit that guided Ashoka is: All men are my children. As for my own children I desire that they may be provided with all the welfare and happiness of this world and of the next, so do I desire for all men as well.

Ashoka - The Lion of Maurya is the first of the series of books based on the greatest Indian Emperor ever - Ashoka Maurya. The 3rd in the Mauryan Dynasty, the man who laid the foundations of modern day India, a man whose deeds are still seen in various facets of Modern calendrierdelascience.com Lion of Maurya is a bloody tale, it is a tale of war and the.

Banker that I read was Vertigo. I was just out of my b-school and it intrigued me to read the story set in the advertising industry. Years later, I saw the name of Ashok Banker on a series of Ramayana while browsing books in Crossword, but didnt recall his novel Vertigo, till I checked him out on the Internet. I admit that I didnt buy and read the Ramayana series, but Ashok had already become a matured author in my view. I enjoy reading historical fiction. I have read and thoroghly enjoyed several of James A. When I picked this book up, I was looking forward to know the history of my own country a bit more. Also, I have frequently used the term "When Ashoka was ruling the country I remember wondering about the "Visha Kanyas" and the episode where the great guru foils an assassination plan on Chandragupta Maurya by seeing ants in an unlikely place and burning down the place with the assassins inside. With this vividity and background I set out to read this tome with gusto and energy. It was a brilliant read right from the first sentence to the last. It was an intense and involving read that showcased the hard and soft aspects of Ashoka the Great. Ashoka is portrayed as a reluctant second Prince-in-the-waiting, who belongs more on the streets rather than to the royalty. The excesses of the Palatial life are portrayed vividly. As the plot thickens one becomes intensely aware of the odds against Ashoka. Even though one knows that Ashoka is the winner in the end, one begins to wonder how he would surmount the odds, celebrating his victory every time he pulls it off. The book is a far cry from boring history. It is as intriguing as any crime thriller and as intense. Yet, it is history. The people are real and historical. His commitment to protect his brother on the one hand and his compassion towards the Lioness on the other is so amazingly portrayed that these paragraphs alone are worth paying the money I paid for the book and more. The way Ashoka balances both is just brilliant. It would take a screenwriter worth his salt quite an effort to visually make it as much effective. A book that makes you flow with the emotions expressed in its paragraphs, is a book worth preserving and coming back to again and again. That is what this book has now become. I have already purchased the second in this series and intend to purchase the whole series and lap it up. Thank you Ashok K. Banker, you have just made James A. Michener, the Ashok Banker of America. Well what can I say; when I started this book I thought it was going to be another bland old book retelling the story of Ashoka But boy was i wrong!! The day I finished the book I was the happiest and the saddest person as the joy I got from the whole experience was enthralling but at the same time I realized that there was no sequel to the book yet , which rotted my brains for days not knowing what the hell happens further

Chapter 6 : ashoka pillar | Handcrafts of India

'Ashoka: Lion of Maurya' by Ashok K. Banker (C)Aishwary Mehta Genre - Historical, Asian Literature, Fiction. Quote from the book I Liked - 'No matter how tempestuous or destructive, a storm always passed.

Art history[edit] The horse motif on the capital. Currently seven animal sculptures from Ashoka pillars survive. There has been much discussion of the extent of influence from Achaemenid Persia , where the column capitals supporting the roofs at Persepolis have similarities, and the "rather cold, hieratic style" of the Sarnath sculptures especially shows "obvious Achaemenid and Sargonid influence". Like other Ashoka pillars, the one at Sarnath was probably erected to commemorate a visit by the emperor. Rediscovery[edit] The Lion Capital on the ground at Sarnath, probably There were no surviving traces above ground of the Sarnath pillar, mentioned in the accounts of medieval Chinese pilgrims, when the Indian Civil Service engineer F. Oertel , with no real experience in archaeology, was allowed to excavate there in the winter of He first uncovered the remains of a Gupta shrine west of the main stupa , overlying an Ashokan structure. To the west of that he found the lowest section of the pillar, upright but broken off near ground level. Most of the rest of the pillar was found in three sections nearby, and then, since the Sanchi capital had been excavated in , the search for an equivalent was continued, and it was found close by. It was both finer in execution and in much better condition than that at Sanchi. The pillar appeared to have been deliberately destroyed at some point. The finds were recognised as so important that the first onsite museum in India and one of the few then in the world was set up to house them. A group of four lions joined back to back symbolizes a group of four things of equal importance. The lion is frequently used as a symbol of the Buddha , as at Sanchi, and the animals on the abacus below also have symbolic meaning in Buddhism. On the wall of the cylinder the bull, the horse, the Lion and the Elephant all in the moving position are being placed in between the Chakras. A study of the ancient coins and other archaeological finds of India and Sri Lanka reveals the fact that Buddha had been symbolized with a Horse, Lion, Bull, Elephant and a pair of feet. The Tamil epic Manimekalai mentions worship of a pair of feet. Pairs of feet made of stone had been discovered in Jaffna Peninsula , Anuradhapura and in a number of places of Tamil Nadu. In a number of Buddhist inscriptions of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, a pair of feet had been symbolized with a pair of fish or a pair of conch shells. In this way the symbols sculpted in the cylindrical portion of the Lion Capital represents Buddha rolling the Dhamma Chakra; that is, Preaching the Dhamma. As Theravada Buddhism rejects symbolization of Buddha and Buddhism, the Lion Capital may be claimed as one of the finest sculptures of the main tradition that developed into Mahayana Buddhism several centuries later. Pillars of Ashoka A pillar of finely polished sandstone, one of the Pillars of Ashoka , was also erected on the side of the main Torana gateway at Sanchi. The bell-shaped capital consists of four lions, which probably supported a Wheel of Law. The capital is rather similar to the Sarnath capital, except that it is surmounted by an abacus and a crowning ornament of four lions, set back to back, the whole finely finished and polished to a remarkable luster from top to bottom. The lions from the summit, though now quite disfigured, still testify to the skills of the sculptors. Retrieved 2 October Retrieved 26 November A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture.

Chapter 7 : Lion capital of Ashoka – ArS Artistic Adventure of Mankind

Maurya Period (c. c. B.C.E.) The Lion Capital of Ashoka was originally placed atop the Ashoka pillar at the Buddhist site of Sarnath by the Emperor Ashoka, in about BCE. Though the pillar (or Ashoka Column) is still in its original location, the Lion Capital is now in the Sarnath Museum (state of Uttar Pradesh, India).

Emperor Ashoka was seen as a role model to leaders within the Buddhist community. He not only provided guidance and strength, but he also created personal relationships with his supporters. Many rulers also took an active role in resolving disputes over the status and regulation of the sangha, as Ashoka had in calling a conclave to settle a number of contentious issues during his reign. This development ultimately led to a close association in many Southeast Asian countries between the monarchy and the religious hierarchy, an association that can still be seen today in the state-supported Buddhism of Thailand and the traditional role of the Thai king as both a religious and secular leader. Ashoka also said that all his courtiers always governed the people in a moral manner. In one instance, a non-Buddhist in Pundravardhana drew a picture showing the Buddha bowing at the feet of Nirgrantha Jnatiputra identified with Mahavira, 24th Tirthankara of Jainism. On complaint from a Buddhist devotee, Ashoka issued an order to arrest him, and subsequently, another order to kill all the Ajivikas in Pundravardhana. Around 18, followers of the Ajivika sect were executed as a result of this order. Ashoka burnt him and his entire family alive in their house. According to Ashokavadana, as a result of this order, his own brother was mistaken for a heretic and killed by a cowherd. Edicts of Ashoka, Ashokavadana, Mahavamsa, and Dipavamsa Ashoka had almost been forgotten, but in the 19th century James Prinsep contributed in the revelation of historical sources. After deciphering the Brahmi script, Prinsep had originally identified the "Priyadasi" of the inscriptions he found with the King of Ceylon Devanampiya Tissa. Since then, the association of "Devanampriya Priyadarasin" with Ashoka was confirmed through various inscriptions, and especially confirmed in the Minor Rock Edict inscription discovered in Maski, directly associating Ashoka with his regnal title Devanampriya "Beloved-of-the-Gods": Two and a half years [and somewhat more] have passed since I am a Buddha - Sakya. Those gods who formerly had been unmingled with men in Jambudvīpa, have now become mingled with them. This object can be reached even by a lowly person who is devoted to morality. One must not think thus, viz. Both the lowly and the exalted must be told: His main interests were Sanchi and Sarnath, in addition to Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Sir Alexander Cunningham, a British archaeologist and army engineer, and often known as the father of the Archaeological Survey of India, unveiled heritage sites like the Bharhut Stupa, Sarnath, Sanchi, and the Mahabodhi Temple. Mortimer Wheeler, a British archaeologist, also exposed Ashokan historical sources, especially the Taxila. Information about the life and reign of Ashoka primarily comes from a relatively small number of Buddhist sources. Architectural remains of his period have been found at Kumhrar, Patna, which include an pillar hypostyle hall. These inscriptions are dispersed throughout modern-day Pakistan and India, and represent the first tangible evidence of Buddhism. It is essentially a Hinayana text, and its world is that of Mathura and North-west India. The emphasis of this little known text is on exploring the relationship between the king and the community of monks the Sangha and setting up an ideal of religious life for the laity the common man by telling appealing stories about religious exploits. Equally surprising is the record of his use of state power to spread Buddhism in an uncompromising fashion. Symbols including a sun and an animal Rev: As it often refers to the royal dynasties of India, the Mahavamsa is also valuable for historians who wish to date and relate contemporary royal dynasties in the Indian subcontinent. It is very important in dating the consecration of Ashoka. The chronicle is believed to be compiled from Atthakatha and other sources around the 3rd or 4th century CE. King Dhatusena 4th century had ordered that the Dipavamsa be recited at the Mahinda festival held annually in Anuradhapura. Numismatic research suggests that this symbol was the symbol of king Ashoka, his personal "Mudra". Building on traditional accounts, early scholars regarded Ashoka as a primarily Buddhist monarch who underwent a conversion to Buddhism and was actively engaged in sponsoring and supporting the Buddhist monastic institution. Some scholars have tended to question this assessment. Romila Thappar writes about Ashoka that "We need to see him both as a statesman in the context

of inheriting and sustaining an empire in a particular historical period, and as a person with a strong commitment to changing society through what might be called the propagation of social ethics. In his edicts, Ashoka expresses support for all the major religions of his time: Buddhism, Brahmanism, Jainism, and Ajivikaism, and his edicts addressed to the population at large there are some addressed specifically to Buddhists; this is not the case for the other religions generally focus on moral themes members of all the religions would accept. For example, Amartya Sen writes, "The Indian Emperor Ashoka in the third century BCE presented many political inscriptions in favor of tolerance and individual freedom, both as a part of state policy and in the relation of different people to each other". In one edict he belittles rituals, and he banned Vedic animal sacrifices; these strongly suggest that he at least did not look to the Vedic tradition for guidance. Furthermore, many edicts are expressed to Buddhists alone; in one, Ashoka declares himself to be an "upasaka", and in another he demonstrates a close familiarity with Buddhist texts. He erected rock pillars at Buddhist holy sites, but did not do so for the sites of other religions. He also used the word "dhamma" to refer to qualities of the heart that underlie moral action; this was an exclusively Buddhist use of the word. However, he used the word more in the spirit than as a strict code of conduct. Romila Thappar writes, "His dhamma did not derive from divine inspiration, even if its observance promised heaven. It was more in keeping with the ethic conditioned by the logic of given situations. His logic of Dhamma was intended to influence the conduct of categories of people, in relation to each other. Especially where they involved unequal relationships. It thereby illuminates Ashoka as more humanly ambitious and passionate, with both greatness and flaws. This Ashoka is very different from the "shadowy do-gooder" of later Pali chronicles. All his inscriptions present him as compassionate and loving. In the Kalinga rock edicts, he addresses his people as his "children" and mentions that as a father he desires their good. The Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath is the most notable of the relics left by Ashoka. Made of sandstone, this pillar records the visit of the emperor to Sarnath, in the 3rd century BCE. It has a four-lion capital four lions standing back to back, which was adopted as the emblem of the modern Indian republic. In translating these monuments, historians learn the bulk of what is assumed to have been true fact of the Mauryan Empire. It is difficult to determine whether or not some events ever actually happened, but the stone etchings clearly depict how Ashoka wanted to be thought of and remembered. The dhamma of the Edicts has been understood as concurrently a Buddhist lay ethic, a set of politico-moral ideas, a "sort of universal religion", or as an Ashokan innovation. On the other hand, it has also been interpreted as an essentially political ideology that sought to knit together a vast and diverse empire. Scholars are still attempting to analyse both the expressed and implied political ideas of the Edicts particularly in regard to imperial vision, and make inferences pertaining to how that vision was grappling with problems and political realities of a "virtually subcontinental, and culturally and economically highly variegated, 3rd century BCE Indian empire. The identification with Ashoka is confirmed by the similar relief from Kanaganahalli inscribed "Raya Asoka". These legends were found in Buddhist textual sources such as the text of Ashokavadana. The Ashokavadana is a subset of a larger set of legends in the Divyavadana, though it could have existed independently as well. Following are some of the legends narrated in the Ashokavadana about Ashoka: Once when Jaya was playing on the roadside, the Buddha came by. Ashoka wanted to become king and so he got rid of the heir by tricking him into entering a pit filled with live coals. He is said to have subjected his ministers to a test of loyalty and then have of them killed for failing it. He is said to have burnt his entire harem to death when certain women insulted him. He is supposed to have derived sadistic pleasure from watching other people suffer. And for this he built himself an elaborate and horrific torture chamber where he amused himself by torturing other people. A Chinese traveler who visited India in the 7th century CE, Xuan Zang recorded in his memoirs that he visited the place where the supposed torture chamber stood. Ashoka is said to have started gifting away the contents of his treasury to the Buddhist sangha. His ministers however were scared that his eccentricity would be the downfall of the empire and so denied him access to the treasury. As a result, Ashoka started giving away his personal possessions and was eventually left with nothing and so died peacefully. Devotion to the Buddha and loyalty to the sangha are stressed. Such texts added to the perception that Ashoka was essentially the ideal Buddhist monarch who deserved both admiration and emulation. This story is amply depicted in the reliefs of Sanchi and Bharhut. This scene is depicted on the transversal portion of the southern

gateway at Sanchi. King Ashoka visits Ramagrama, to take relics of the Buddha from the Nagas , but in vain. Southern gateway, Stupa 1, Sanchi. According to Indian historian Romila Thapar, Ashoka emphasized respect for all religious teachers, and harmonious relationship between parents and children, teachers and pupils, and employers and employees.

Chapter 8 : Ashoka Biography - Childhood, Life Achievements & Timeline

The Lion Capital of Ashoka is a sculpture of four Asiatic lions standing back to back, on an elaborate base that includes other animals. A graphic representation of it was adopted as the official Emblem of India in

Chapter 9 : Ashoka | Revolvy

Ashoka was born to the Mauryan emperor, Bindusara and Subhadrangā (or Dharmā). He was the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, founder of the Maurya dynasty, who was born in a humble family, and with the counsel of Chanakya ultimately built one of the largest empires in ancient India.