

## Ashoka the Great: The Kind-Hearted King

A long time ago in India, there was a powerful king named Ashoka. He belonged to the Maurya dynasty and ruled a huge empire more than 2,000 years ago. His grandfather was Chandragupta Maurya, who started the Mauryan Empire. Ashoka became king after his father, Bindusara.

At first, Ashoka was a strong and fearless warrior. He wanted to make his empire even bigger. So, he fought many wars. One of the most famous wars he fought was the Kalinga War. Kalinga was a kingdom near the sea, and Ashoka wanted it to be part of his empire.

The war was very big and very sad. Thousands of soldiers died, and many families were left heartbroken. After the war, Ashoka went to the battlefield and saw all the destruction. He saw wounded soldiers, people crying for their loved ones, and villages that were burnt down. It made him feel very sorry and ashamed. He began to think, "Why should I cause so much pain to others?"

From that moment, Ashoka changed his life. He decided he would never fight a war again. Instead of using violence, he chose the path of peace and kindness. He started following the teachings of Lord Buddha, which focused on love, non-violence, and respect for all living beings.

Ashoka became one of the most caring rulers in Indian history. He built hospitals, roads, and wells for people. He even made shelters for animals and planted trees along roads to give shade to travelers. He wanted everyone in his kingdom to live happily and peacefully.

Ashoka also made sure that his messages of peace were spread across his empire. He built stone pillars called Ashoka Pillars. These pillars had messages carved in them in simple language so people could understand them easily. They told people to be honest, kind to others, and to treat all religions with respect.

Ashoka sent messengers to other countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal, and even Egypt to share the teachings of peace and the ideas of Buddhism. Because of Ashoka, Buddhism spread to many places in the world.

He was not just a king; he became a teacher of peace. Even today, we remember him for his wisdom, kindness, and the courage it took to change from a fierce warrior to a gentle ruler.

You can still see the Ashoka Pillars in India today. In fact, the lion capital on top of one of his pillars in Sarnath became the national emblem of India!

Let me know if you'd like this written as a worksheet or illustrated with some activities too!