

5. What are the author's views on the 'spirit' of a historian?
6. 'I can plead two circumstances in justification of myself.' What are the two circumstances listed by the author?
7. According to the author, why is respect for the sacred text natural for a Brahmin and unnatural for a non-Brahmin?
8. In the context of the text, what bias could creep into the thought process of a Brahmin historian vis-a-vis a non-Brahmin historian?
9. Why does the author say that his book is 'not a work of art'?
10. Discuss other instances when a biased account of history has had serious impact on future generations. Write a short paragraph about at least one other such instance.

## Text II: Dhauli

*Jayanta Mahapatra*

### About the poet

Jayanta Mahapatra (born 1928) is one of the most well-known Indian English poets and considered one of the founders of Indian English poetry. He was awarded the Padmashri in 2009 for his immense contribution to literature and is the first Indian English poet to have received the Sahitya Akademi Award. As a poet, his works portray diverse emotions like love, pain, sadness, faith and death. His identification with Odisha and his deep commitment to social change is prevalent in his works like 'Hunger and Dawn at Puri'. He returned the Padmashri in 2015 as a mark of protest against the 'growing moral asymmetry' in the country.

### About the poem

This historical poem by Mahapatra describes the aftermath of the Kalinga war. Mahapatra describes in vivid detail the massacre of thousands of soldiers on the banks of the river Daya. The place Dhauli becomes a witness to King Asoka's repentance on the immense destruction brought about by the war.

## Dhauri

Afterwards when the wars of Kalinga were over,  
the fallow fields of Dhauri  
hid the blood-spilt butchered bodies. [originally 'red-smeared voiceless bodies']

As the earth  
burrowed into their dead hunger  
with its merciless worms, [was 'tortured worms']  
guided the foxes to their limp genitals.

Years later, the evening wind,  
trembling the glazed waters of the River Daya,  
keens in the rock edicts the vain word,  
like the voiceless cicadas of night: [was 'shuttered silence, an air:']

the measure of Ashoka's suffering  
does not appear enough.  
The place of his pain peers lamentably  
from among the pains of the dead.

### Reading comprehension II

1. How is the Kalinga war portrayed in the poem?
2. Why does the poet state 'fallow fields of Dhauri'?
3. What do you think is the 'vain world'?
4. How does the intensity of Ashoka's suffering get portrayed in the poem?
5. The poem begins with the end of the war. What do you think is the poet's intention?