

Sheril A Hall

Prof: Lyndell O`Hara

HIS 113

March 6, 2023

### What if Ashoka did not convert to Buddhism?

Alexander's influence left a gap in the nations that he conquered creating power hungry societies. With his death India rebelled from its leader and established its own Government, through forced labor. Ashoka Grandfather Chandragupta Maurya rose to power, and created his own manifesto of governance, which included force labor and constant spying on each other; breeding mistrust and manipulation to gain control. Something similar to the Vedic system which is divided into four classes; Priests, Warrior, Herders or Merchant and the farmers or laborers. The basic structure would evolve into many other subgroups creating a blending of religion.

As each succeeding leader died from the Mauryan family and another rose to power, they continued to build on the legacy of violence and military might, until Ashoka who himself led a bloody rebellion, cease control and became the new King aided by his military might. With the conversion of Ashoka to Buddhism power and network or even evolutionary impact was not at first his paramount quest. His desire was to have a sense of peace and stability after so many years of war and bloodshed. This change in the leader birthed a new world order, which focuses on one religion, becoming the model for change in the environment. Buddhism provided the

model that they needed. It became the catalyst for environmental change bringing a revolution making it the dominant religion of the nation.

If Ashoka had not converted to Buddhism the old Agean model would permeate the society. Buddhism brought the nation together and shifted the dynamics of the structure. Creating order and advancement, using the Buddha's creed. Had he not done this the constant fighting for power and control would still be going on. The multicultural religion would still be in effect. And chances are the nation would not rise out of obscurity.

Countries like India would have a high rate of infant mortality and poverty, with less life being birthed into the workforce . There would not be an increase in production which would impact their GDP and affect the country's development, giving way to major crimes and violence over the nil creation of jobs and resources. The masses would be so divided ,that the inequalities would have no starting or ending place, just an endless cycle.

The path taken by Ashoka is closely parallel to that which we have already followed, because of its similarity to Christianity. We can look at the ten commandments and compare some aspects of the structure to the Buddha's pillars and enlightenment. We are taught from our commandments not to kill, steal, engage in sexual immorality etc and some of this is viewed in the Buddha's creed, which Ashoka sent out in the form of edict to the surrounding nation.

“Ashoka forbids his subjects from harming all living things’.

However, Buddhism does not pay homage or reverence to deities. It is more humanistic than Monotheistic. Unlike Hinduism which was the birthplace of religion in India. They had many Gods, rituals and practices that they must do to appease the many Gods they serve.

With the birth of Buddhism the doctrine matters most, which became the leading religion. There were no two entities, they coexist for the good of all. The religion's specific doctrine was the pillar that gave it root or legs to the evolutionary development of the nation.

I can say that these many religions brought their idiosyncrasies to the table that often breed anarchy among the masses, regardless of the system that was implemented. But with Buddhism aside from the obvious fact that they don't ascribe to a deity the practices would seem to be better suited for the nation of India, but there would always be the void in asking what if there is a God.

## Bibliography

Mauryan Empire- National Geographic Society

<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/mauryan-empire/>

[Hinduism and Buddhism Ancient India gave birth to two ...](#)

<https://www.dentonisd.org> › lib › Centricity › Domain

Ashoka—facts and information - National Geographic

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com> › culture › article/

Emperor Ashoka and the expansion of the Buddhism in the Greco-Indian Kingdom

<https://greekcitytimes.com/2022/09/26/emperor-ashoka-buddhism/>