



Ashoka: Lion of Maurya

Ashok K. Banker

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Young prince Ashoka accidentally overhears two men in a city tavern: a band of assassins have infiltrated Pataliputra, capitol of the great Mauryavansh empire. Their target—the entire imperial family.

The prince makes it his mission to root out the assassins with the help of the Chandikas—the female military order instituted by Samrat Chandragupta Maurya. But when his own lover, a Chandika, confesses a terrible secret, he realizes that the threat lies within his own family!

Meanwhile, the palace is not without its own intrigues. Queen Khorasan and her mother are playing their own game of thrones. Dowager Queen Apama is secretly working for her father, Seleucus Nicator, who still has ambitions of invading the sub-continent. King Bindusara's harsh methods are turning the marbled floors of the imperial palace awash with blood.

Will Prince Ashoka be able to save his family —and Mauryavansh—before it's too late?

India's epic storyteller turns his masterful hand to the life of ancient India's greatest ruler, Ashoka in a thrilling trilogy packed with non-stop action, adventure, battles and lusty no-holds-barred storytelling.

Ashoka: Lion of Maurya Details

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Author : Ashok K. Banker

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From Reader Review Ashoka: Lion of Maurya for online ebook

Chris says

Enjoyable start to a series about Ashoka. The action and the sex scenes are at times a bit over the top, but the book is entertaining enough and the characters well drawn.

Kaushik NP says

?;Received the book in a Giveaway!

RATINGS : 4.7

I have read a **lot** of books by "promising" Indian Authors but was quite disappointed .. 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!! From the moment I started I was a bit skeptical but the pace of the story kept on increasing and it came to such a point that I couldn't sleep without knowing what happened next..

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...

This book opened up a whole new genre for me and I am ever so happy that there are people like *ASHOK K.BANTER* to keep us Indians on the very edge of our seats..

THANK YOU!!!

Gopal says

The revised first part of the Ashoka Series of books from India's mythology man - Ashok Banker. This one provides a prequel of sorts to the Ashoka Lion of Maurya Book 2 which was previously the Book 1 of the series.

Much about the Chandragupta Maruya and Ashoka is lost to Indians. The history taught in schools cover only the very basics of the first Indian empire which laid the foundation of a united India. The architects of this great empire are lost to the common Indian due to almost 200 years of rule under the British empire the remanants of which is still felt today in modern India where we are taught more about the recent history than the ancient history. India still looks outwards for its role models than inwards towards the Icons that moulded it into what it is today. Names like Chanakya, Chandragupta, Ashoka, Radhagupta, Bimbisara have just become footnotes in the pages of history.

Ashok Banker seeks to revive the interest in these ancient figures with his retelling of Itihasa - History. Ashoka is the medium he has chosen to start his mighty effort. Much of knowledge about how Ashoka

became the 3rd emperor of the Mauryavansha Dynasty is shrouded in mystery. There are some anecdotes about him propagating Buddhism throughout India after being enlightened post the bloody Kalinga War. But not much information is available about his rise to the throne. Bimbisara was known to have had 100 children and close to 500 queens. From this murky, back stabbing and politically charged environment Ashoka rose to prominence.

The first 2 books in the series lay the foundation for Ashoka's ascendance to the top. The politics and the backstabbing happening in the ruling elite is repulsive and intriguing at the same time. Banker seeks to keep the mystery going by throwing Ashoka in 1 perilous situation after another. The Book 1 & 2 end with Ashoka in a very perilous state - betrayed by those close to him and hanging onto his life by a thread.

There is enough facts blended with fiction in tale to allow for the liberties that Banker takes while depicting the courtroom dramas and the palace sex life. The books are spaced easily and make for a breezy read. Mythology has traditionally been Ashok Banker's forte and by blending history with his impeccable story telling skills, the interest is held as you turn page after page to find out how Ashoka triumphs over his trials.

We know Ashoka became the 3rd emperor of Mauryavansh, but if you did not know Indian history and are reading the books for the first time, you would be at the edge of your seat to find out just how the hero survives through a unliveable trial. Book 2 ends in a cliff hanger leaving you gasping for more, wanting Banker to have written just 1 more page to satisfy you that Ashoka has survived, instead you are left pining for Book 3 to release ASAP so that you can continue into this riveting journey with arguably India's most powerful emperor.

My Rating - 4.5/5

Harini Nayak says

Score : 4.5/5

I'm so sorry my review was so late ; so many weeks after having received the book Ashok K. Banker . My only excuse is my exams were nearing and I had to read bits of the book slowly . But threw it out the window and got into fully completing the book though my exams just started today .

The book starts of with the introduction of the Grand city that Mauryas had made their capital . I was amazed by the descriptions of the city and river that tried ruthlessly to erode the city walls as it has everything else . I must admit the historical places were well described with a reality like presentation of how it must have been to live in the ancient world .

The book started out as incredibly descriptive, as mentioned above , and basically -to me- descriptive means something boring waits ahead . But guess what ? I was totally wrong there . The book was anything but boring . **It had me hanging on the plots like I was hanging on a cliff** . I love it when a book does that . Which book lover doesn't ? And being a sucker for historical anything , I must say it was definitely one of the best historical fictions .

I would also claim that this book was what actually told me of Ashoka in detail . Yeah we have all read those

textbooks . But all that I honestly knew was Ashoka brought peace upon his country bc he saw that many innocents died in wars . Yep . Pretty much . *Heck , I didn't even know that his father was Bindusara lol .* So yeah , anyone wants basics on Ashoka ? Might as well look here . Want directions of old Mauriyan capital geographical features ? Sure . Look in here . You'll find something .

But first things first , what hit me the most was *how he made the ancient city look like what it really must've been* . Unlike , ofcourse , so many authors who write thinking the ancient people were stupid . I respect him for that insight alone . I'm a believer that we're not the most developed intelligence ever . Bite me .

Maybe you're thinking , then why did it lose the half star if you loved it that much ???

Reason :

I know the complaint is silly . And yes I do understand it is fiction and all , but why was Ashoka so unbeatable ...at everything ? Okay so at the starting itself , what made me wary was , *how Ashoka killed two trained seasoned assassins though he was too young and not well seasoned ?* I understand he supposedly was sneaking of , getting into street fights ..but even with all that , the character 's strength looked so..incomparable that really sounded fake . Yep . That's all the complaint I've got .

Ahh....anyway . The book was definitely worth reading . Believe me you're not gonna be wasting your money . And if you're anything like me , you'd enjoy every bit of it . Do tell me if you pick this book and say whatever you feel . I love ranting about books myself lol . I would love to have someone talking about mutual books :)

Aishwary Mehta (The_Fugitive_Biker) says

Quote from the Book I Liked - **No matter how tempestuous or destructive, a storm always passed. It was the way of things.**

Starts - 3/5

The book was a one time read with the Author leaving a lot of Suspense to be covered in the following 2 Books. The story takes you in the deeps of the life of Ashoka, with her mother Rani Subhadra and his Guru the Great Chanakya himself. From the Battles to the Ugly Politics, the book is a Full Pack which can't be stayed Put. But the whole Plot for the future books seems to be portrayed in this book. I wish the author to surprise me in The Future 2 books with some totally Unexpected Twist and Turns. Will be waiting for the next 2 Books.

Review on My Blog 'The Fugitive Biker'

Rajesh CNB says

The first ever novel of Ashok K. 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. At that time, it became a favorite of mine and Ashok's writing was lucid and expressive. Years later, I saw the name of Ashok Banker on a series of

Ramayana while browsing books in Crossword, but didn't recall his novel Vertigo, till I checked him out on the Internet. I admit that I didn't buy and read the Ramayana series, but Ashok had already become a matured author in my view. Wow! I thought.

It's the same wow feeling with this book. I enjoy reading historical fiction. I have read and thoroughly enjoyed several of James A. Michener. 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..." in my classes to refer to distant past events. I was aware of Ashoka's life and the famous Kalinga war and his conversion to Buddhism later on. I have admired Chanakya and have loved Ashwin Sanghi's portrayal of his in modern times in the book Chankya's Chant. I have also read Kautilya's Arthashastra and Chanakya Neeti. As a child, I had read about Chanakya in Amar Chitra Katha. 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 vividness 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. The Greek angle is highlighted adequately and Bindusara's short fall as against Ashoka's sharp intellect and compassion is shown. 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. It happened. The people are real and historical. One of the most intense and emotional moments for me in the story was Ashoka's interlude with the Lion. 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.

ANTONY says

We are not makers of history. We are made by history
Martin Luther King Jr.

My review

History is being always my favorite genre as it evokes all the emotions in me and the past events would enthrall me I prefer to read historical fictions. Especially if it deals with Maurya Era, it talks about the iconic personalities like Alexander.

Asoka Lion of Maurya is an adventurous and action-packed novel. It talks about the bravery and wisdom of Ashoka, the great warrior.

Ashok k Banker , an Indian writer has woven a beautiful tale equipped with a well versed scholarly craftsmanship .The language is superb and the stylish prose is full of rhyme and rhythm to make the reading a pleasant experience on the historical hero, Ashoka.

The plot.

The story starts with the entry of Kavaala, a citizen of Lichchavi camouflaged as a dancer in to Pataliputra. She was sent by Lichchavi Confederacy to carry out the task of assassination of Emperor Bindusara. Ashoka overheard two persons whom he believed to be Confectionery assassins, talking about the plan and he fought with them in the pit where there would be fights to decide the fate of the fighters.Ashoka killed them and found the truth.

Why the Licchavi Confederacy hatches such a plan?

What is the role of Ashoka in unraveling the truth behind it and safeguarding the Emperor and his family?
Such sort of questions arise and to find out the answers you have to read the book .

My favorite.

I adore Ashoka , the protagonist for his valour and wisdom. Other characters describe him as follows:
He is a cactus in the field of roses and a child of the jungle.He has a sharp ear and sharper mind. He sees goodness and hope in all humanity and does not see the ugliness and cruelty and pain that lies beneath it all. He is part-general, part -spy,part-soldier. He is almost ugly ,in fact short and slender,unimposing and unimpressive to look at. He is a role model to all our youngsters as he display wit and wisdom by his thoughts , words and actions.

Also I like the episode involving the mature lioness called the Vyag and Ashoka. In the Hauned Forest the Vyag dragged away Sushim , his brother and there ensued a fight between the Vyag and Ashoka. The author has depicted this incident so nicely that it melts my heart.

Golden wisdom gems from the book

Where there is a throne , there is always a conspiracy.

Thrones are thrones . Ambition is ambition.The colour or race doesn't change basic human nature.

“Do what you can with what you have where you are.”said Alexander.

Violence is a two -edged blade.

We do not always get what we desire , and what we desire is not always what comes to pass.

There is nothing to be gained from arguing the inarguable.

Because there is darkness we desire light . Injustice is the norm , it is dharma that is the exception.

My verdict.

This period social drama carries all the element of a historical novel like treachery, blasphemy, love, lust , sex , humour, eavesdropping, spying ,protocol assassination and coup.The author has portrayed the characters in a grand manner and they are realistic and gender- sensitive.Women are bold and assertive .The book holds a great message and moral on virtues and vices.

I recommend this book to all young and old who have got a liking for historical fiction.

The cover design by Ermisenda Alvarez and cover illustration by Deepak S.V. are fantastic.

My rating : 3.5/5

Divya Mahajan says

Beautiful fictionalised account of those times that really makes you believe its true
Never a dull moment in the story
only the end seemed incomplete
otherwise I would have rated it 5 stars

Satish Nagarajan says

Nicely done

I loved way Ashoka is described as animal lover and way he sought forgiveness after killing lioness to save his step brother.

Ahdev says

Rating: 3.5/5

I hardly knew about Emperor Ashoka and this one is a historical fiction, I started reading keeping that fact in mind and was pleasantly surprised by the way the book kept going. It was faced paced with action and keeps you engrossed totally. And it brought about the good human nature of Emperor Ashoka throughout the story.

The ending of the book will definitely make you await for the next one in the series, and as such the trilogy itself to know the complete story.

Good writing by the author. But he could have definitely avoided many of the sexual tensions and descriptions which arose in the story- for the sake of character justification, I felt that to be wrong in many ways (and his character descriptions were as such good and enough).

A nice read of fiction!

Pankaj Goyal says

I chanced upon this book accidentally and decided to read a couple of chapters to know the nature and tone of the book. I wasn't planning to read the whole book but, after a few pages, I was sort of drawn in. And soon enough was keep turning pages. If you are planning to start reading historical fiction, start with this one.

If you are a long-time fan of Mauryan history, read this book. If you love reading historical fiction, this is a must for you. You will immediately fall in love with this brilliantly written book.

Read my detailed review on:

<https://pgalmora.wordpress.com/2017/0...>

Akshansh Upadhyay says

The author Ashok Banker is India's mythology man. Now add history or as Banker likes to say Itihasa to his cap. Ashok Banker seeks to revive the interest in these ancient figures with his retelling of Itihasa - History. Ashoka is the medium he has chosen to start his mighty effort. Much of knowledge about how Ashoka became the 3rd emperor of the Mauryavansha Dynasty is shrouded in mystery. There are some anecdotes about him propagating Buddhism throughout India after being enlightened post the bloody Kalinga War. But not much information is available about his rise to the throne. Bimbisara was known to have had 100 children and close to 500 queens. From this murky, back stabbing and politically charged environment Ashoka rose to prominence.

Much about the Chandragupta Maruya and Ashoka is lost to Indians. The history taught in schools cover only the very basics of the first Indian empire which laid the foundation of a united India. The architects of this great empire are lost to the common Indian due to almost 200 years of rule under the British empire the remnants of which is still felt today in modern India where we are taught more about the recent history than the ancient history. India still looks outwards for its role models than inwards towards the Icons that moulded it into what it is today. Names like Chanakya, Chandragupta, Ashoka, Radhagupta, Bimbisara have just become footnotes in the pages of history.

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 India.

The Lion of Maurya is a bloody tale, it is a tale of war and the emergence of a single power through fratricide and bloodshed. History is witness, the empires of great men have been build on the blood of the people they have spilled to conquer and retain the throne. Nobody knows this better than the greatest modern day preceptor to have ever lived Chanakya, a man whose treatise and policies known as Chankyaneeeti and Arthasashtra form the foundations of modern politics and economics. A man comparable to Aristotle, Socrates and Sun Tzu. Now living in his old age Chanakya is seeing the very empire he forged for Chandragupta Maurya being torn apart by relentless machinations and greed of Samrat Bhindusara's chief queen and step-mother.

The heir apparent Prince Sushim is too indulgent in living a life of debauchery and wine. The only person capable of assuming the reins of the throne has vowed to keep himself away from it to protect his mother from the machinations of the palace politics. What will happen when enemies of the empire strike from within.

There is enough facts blended with fiction in tale to allow for the liberties that Banker takes while depicting the courtroom dramas and the palace sex life. The books are spaced easily and make for a breezy read. Mythology has traditionally been Ashok Banker's forte and by blending history with his impeccable story telling skills, the interest is held as you turn page after page to find out how Ashoka triumphs over his trials. We know Ashoka became the 3rd emperor of Mauryavansh, but if you did not know Indian history and are reading the books for the first time, you would be at the edge of your seat to find out just how the hero survives through a unliveable trial. Book 2 ends in a cliff hanger leaving you gasping for more, wanting

Banker to have written just 1 more page to satisfy you that Ashoka has survived, instead you are left pining for Book 3 to release ASAP so that you can continue into this riveting journey with arguably India's most powerful emperor.

Every man has his limits and Ashoka's limits lay with his mother's well-being. When the same mother is imprisoned and tortured by the chief queen with the tacit approval of the King himself and when the King allows for his own son to be broken and left for dead what will Ashoka do?

This is where the Banker leaves us at the end of the Lions of Maurya, more questions unanswered than ever and the long tantalizing wait for the next book in the series.

Veena says

Ashok K. Banker is one of the pioneers that made mythological fiction popular amongst the young readers in India. This Ramayana and Mahabharata series is read and adored by plenty. Now that Ashok K. Banker has delved into historical fiction and what better subject to write about than the lion of Maurya itself?

Ashoka is a historical figure about whom there's more unknown than known. It was a pleasure to hold the book on a historical icon by the author. Although somehow the book failed to meet my expectations, it has in no way questioned the credibility of the author.

Cover page

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 colours are dull but the temperament is seen precisely. The cover page overall is decent. Not the best of works, but not horrific either.

Characters

Ashoka is a prince like no other. He likes to fight in akhada to test himself. He is attentive, has lightning fast reflexes, measures two steps ahead, is extremely emotional, and loves his family like any man should. Ashoka's disinterest in the throne sets him apart from his other brothers who would not hesitate to slaughter their own kin to keep the throne for themselves.

There are other characters in the book such as King Bindusara, Queen Shubhadra, Queen Mother, and Kautilya.

Each character has a part to play, but they are not delved deep into. It is the story of Ashoka.

Content

The story begins with a Lacchavi assassin entering the city of Pataliputra with a plan to execute the king. Ashoka enters an akhada to fight like a common man. During the course of time it is revealed that they had set their feet in the state to assassinate the king.

It is the story of Ashoka, his love for his family, and the country. It is his journey of bringing the offenders to their fate. His multiple faces are revealed throughout the book. The author describes the boy unlike how we have been told about before. He is not only a loyal student and a loving son, but also a passionate lover who

goes through a heartbreak quite early in life.

There are many aspects of his life explored in the book which have not been talked about earlier, such as incest and polygamy, the result of multiples marriages of the king in the family, etc.

The story can be challenged by many as more fictional than historical. And to justify himself, the author begins with a dialogue where he calls 'history' a sexist phrase. History is not static and his attempt to write Ashoka's story is to explore possible happenings. It may not be what a historical reader may like, but those who enjoy a bit of drama with history are going to like the tale.

Language

Narration is the strong arm of the book. The storytelling makes the book more bearable. Sentences such as 'more gold in a Pataliputra's merchant's arse than in the vaults of any other city' to describe the city keep the readers engaged. Those who adore Ashoka as a ruler are going to love the descriptions of him by the author.

Good points

The cover page is interesting. Ashoka as a character is interesting to read about. And so is Kautilya. The content is engaging. The narration is powerful.

Bad points

The book is short. Right when the story starts getting interesting the book ends. It is probably far from actual history and it may annoy those who picked up the book looking for an interesting history book by their favourite mythology writer.

Overall

Overall it is a good book, but not as good as expected.

Whom do I recommend this to

This is for those who have not read anything on Ashoka before. Those who have may want to stay clear of this one.

Swathi Kiranmayee Manchili says

This is my first of Ashok K Banker's works. It was interesting to read about Ashoka, the prince.

Arjun Iyer says

3.5/5

The 0.5 would seem unnecessary, but in that 0.5 lies my hope for the next installment of the Ashoka Series. I must confess, I did not enjoy the beginning of the book. My lack of enjoyment did not stem from any lack in Banker's writing, far from it, Banker's eloquence was (as it always is) a pleasure to witness. I was, however, slightly miffed at the things he was writing about.

A sizable portion of the beginning of the book reads like a culmination of the Kamasutra and Chanakya-neti.

Politics and Sexual liaisons have always gone hand-in-hand, but in Banker's case it was more akin to feeling like your parent suddenly trying to become your closest friend. While it's well-intentioned it's quite awkward. In my opinion, Banker could have handled the sexual imagery in a much more subtle manner as he did with most things in the Ramayana series. Thankfully, the sex is greatly muted in the later half of the book where things are being set-up for the second book.

With regards to the characters themselves, I shall attribute the bulk of the credit to the historical personae of Chanakya and Ashoka. We know very little about them and they are our answer to the stories of King Arthur and Merlin. So at this point any and all adventures are attributable. Banker in many ways is playing the role of Ganesha taking dictation from Vyas. The story of these legendary and intriguing men was always there, he just happened to be sitting in front of a pen and paper when the story wanted to present itself.

I look forward to the next book in the series with great anticipation, and I hope that it shall retain the pace of this book, along with the subtlety and eloquence from Banker's previous works.
