King Priyadarsi (Ashoka), Beloved of the Gods, honors men of all religious communities with gifts and with honors of various kinds, irrespective of whether they are ascetics or householders … This indeed is the desire of the Beloved of the Gods, that persons of all sects become well informed about the doctrines of different religions and acquire pure knowledge. But the Beloved of the Gods does not value either the offering of gifts or the honoring of people so highly as … that there should be a growth of the essentials of Dharma among men of all sects.

And the growth of the essentials of Dharma is possible in many ways. But its root lies in restraint in regard to speech, which means that there should be no exultation of one’s own sect or disparagement of other sects on inappropriate occasions and that it should be moderate in every case even on appropriate occasions. On the contrary, other sects should be duly honored in every way on all occasions; if a person acts in this way, he not only promotes his own sect but also benefits other sects.

All men are my children. Just as, in regard to my own children, I desire that they shall be provided with all kinds of welfare and happiness in this world and the next, the same as I also desire in regard to all men.

Everywhere King Priyadarsi Beloved of the Gods, has arranged for two kinds of medical treatment, viz., medical treatment for men and medical treatment for animals. And where there were no roots and fruits, they have been caused to be imported and planted. On the roads, wells have been caused to be dug and trees have been caused to be planted for the enjoyment of animals and men.

\textit{Ashoka’s Rock Edicts}

How would you describe Ashoka’s ‘philosophy’ of state?

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How did Ashoka change state policies & practices?

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What practical reasons why he might have adopted these policies? Did he entirely abandon the use of harsher measures?

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