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**Source:** Historian Michael Wood, as quoted in the 2009 PBS documentary *The Story of India*.

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When the war in Kalinga was over...and the people [were] conquered, he [Asoka] felt inside him a great crisis, a stirring for meaning and a remorse. Asoka goes on a pilgrimage seeking a guru, a teacher. And by the riverbank he met a Buddhist monk and the monk told him to sit beneath the Bodhi tree where the Buddha had found enlightenment. And there the power of ideas and the power of the state came together in a uniquely Indian way. [It was] a rejection of the path of violence [and] of a whole way of understanding history. While he was here, Asoka gave rich gifts to the poor. He consulted with local communities about proper governance, about good conduct...forming in his mind now was a political order the sort of which had never been conceived of before in the history of the world.