

Some his capital a
council of buddhist
monks



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Some eight years after his coronation, Ashoka went to war with Kalinga. After hard fighting he overcame all resistance and conquered that kingdom. But he was horrified at the suffering caused by his ambition, and has recorded his "remorse on account of the conquest of the Kalingas, because, during the subjugation of a previously unconquered country, slaughter, death, and taking away captive of the people necessarily occur, whereat His Majesty feels profound sorrow and regret." Ashoka's first war was his last; and for the rest of his life he devoted himself to winning "the chiefest conquest, the conquest by the Law of Piety.

"This sudden change in his feelings seems to have been due to his acceptance of the teachings of Buddhism, to which, as the years went on, he became more and more devoted, even to the extent of assuming the robes and vows of a monk. Ashoka is said to have convened at his capital a council of Buddhist monks to reform the church and revise the scriptures. He engraved a series of edicts on rocks and stone pillars throughout his dominions, which have been deciphered by European scholars during the last seventy years. These records, which are found in Orissa, Karnatka, the Punjab, on the Maharashtra coast, and in other places, prove that Ashoka ruled all India, except the extreme south below the fourteenth parallel of latitude.

One of these inscriptions gives a summary of his moral teaching. It runs: "Father and mother must be obeyed; respect for living creatures must be enforced; truth must be spoken; the teacher must be revered by the pupil, and proper courtesy shown to relations." Censors were appointed to enforce obedience to these rules with all the power of the government. Ashoka

organized a system of missions to carry his teaching to all the protected states on the frontiers of the empire, including the Himalayan regions, the South, Ceylon, Egypt and Macedonia.

In this way, Buddhism became one of the chief religions of the world. This result is the work of Ashoka alone, and entitles him to rank for all time in that small body of men who may be said to have changed the faiths of the world.