

Nayanjot Lahiri bags prize for book on Ashoka

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Nayanjot Lahiri, Professor of History at the Ashoka University, has been awarded the 2016 John F. Richards Prize for her book *Ashoka in Ancient India*. The book has been critically acclaimed for its riveting account of an emperor who spoke to his people through his edicts; his victories and loss that left a legacy that surpassed him.

The Richards Prize is awarded annually by the American Historical Association (AHA) to the best book in South Asian history. The prize will be awarded at the Association's 131st Annual Meeting in January in Denver, Colorado.

Ms. Lahiri said, "I'm delighted that the prize committee, in its citation, has recognised that it is the innovative interface of Emperor Ashoka's words which invite and enable a biographical narrative, with the archaeological landscapes where they can still be read, which makes my narrative different from anything else written around this great Indian of antiquity."

The academic also said she was delighted that the committee has specially mentioned the curious case of a sovereign who sees a



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The John F. Richards Prize recognises the most distinguished work on South Asian history in English

successful war as a major defeat. The prize committee said, "Reversing all conventions of kingship, the Emperor Ashoka recorded his greatest military triumph as tragedy, proclaiming an order of non-violence... Lahiri deftly adjudicates between archaeological, textual, and geographical evidence to offer a dazzling interpretation of a remarkable figure of the ancient world and a deep history of ancient society. Her innovative linking of archaeology and biography recasts our understanding of historical methods and ancient worlds alike."