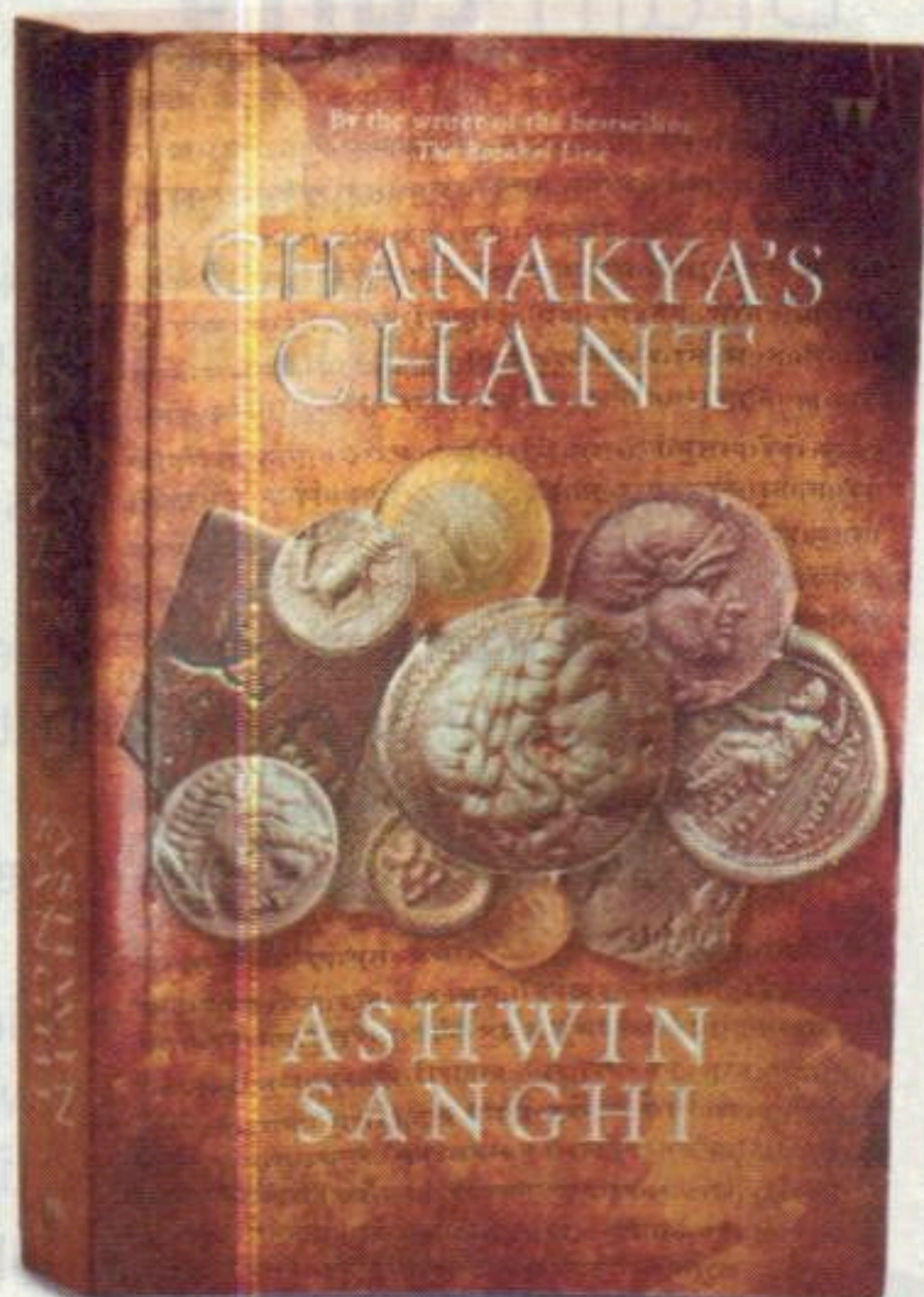


Some things never change

A *di Shakti, Namō Namah; Sarab Shakti, Namō Namah; Prithum Bhagvati, Namō Namah; Kundalini Mata Shakti, Mata Shakti, Namō Namah.* This *Shakti Mantra* is the leitmotif of **CHANAKYA'S CHANT** (Westland; ₹ 195; 448 pages), a gripping thriller on political lust by **Ashwin Sanghi**. As demonstrated by his debut novel *The Rozabal Line*, in which Jesus survived the crucifixion and settled down in India, Sanghi doesn't shy away from taking a few liberties with recorded history for the sake of telling a story. This book is no exception. The reader flits between two eras and two men: Chankaya and his efforts to establish a unified state under the leadership of his protégée Chandragupta; and Pandit Gangasagar Mishra, who schemes to make slum child Chandni Gupta the next prime minister of India. Both men are Machiavellian in their method; natural leaders with a penchant for playing puppeteer, masters of guile and strategy. In the process of telling their intriguing stories, Sanghi shows us how the game of politics with its dirty tricks, blackmail and manipulation has



BONUS

The *Shakti Mantra* at the heart of this novel has been set to music by composer Ameya Naik—the four-minute track is divided into two segments, ancient and modern. You can download it free at www.chanakyaschant.com

changed very little over the centuries; it's just the nomenclature that's different—while Chanakya used *Vishkanya* and tantrics to do his dirty bidding, Gangasagar takes recourse to B-grade starlets and godmen. Simply written; thoroughly enjoyable.

—Arati Rajan Menon