

Chapter Notes for Chapter 7: The Kingdom of the Law

“Even so have I, bhikkhus, seen an ancient path...” Samyutta Nikaya, chapter 12, “Causes,” 65. [SN ii, 105–6].

“An island that you cannot go beyond...” Sutta Nipata (Vuttugatha, Kappa’s Question), 1094. [Sn 1094].

“Volition is action (kamma). Having willed, we create kamma through...” Anguttara Nikaya, Sixes, 63. [AN iii, 414].

The Ashokan Inscriptions (“Beloved of the Gods speaks thus:...”) come from the translation by Hultzsch (1925). There are three columns in northern Bihar on the old pilgrimage route to Lumbini: Lauriya Nandangarh, Lauriya Areraj, and Rampuria, as well as one at Lumbini. We also saw columns at Sarnath, Bodh Gaya, and the remnants of one at Savatthi. It is likely that all the pilgrimage places associated with the life of the Buddha once had them. One still stands at Kosambi, where the Buddha spent his ninth rains retreat. In one of his inscriptions Ashoka tells us that he had given up royal pleasure trips and instead went on “Dhamma tours,” his name for a pilgrimage, to the holy places.

The twenty-eight Buddhas are referred to in the *Buddhavamsa*, a text composed centuries after the life of Gotama. The historical Buddha who appears in the old texts occasionally mentions six preceding Buddhas. It is a tenet of the Theravada teachings that only one Buddha can appear in the world at any time, because a Buddha is someone who reveals a truth that has been lost—so that can only occur when a previous Buddha and his teachings have died away. Mahayana gets over this scarcity by extending the cosmic panorama to include many world systems, each with their own Buddhas.

Mr. Chaudry. This was the name he gave, but as chaudhury means “clerk of works,” it is possible he was referring to himself by his occupation.

After crossing the River Gandak we were passing through the Champaran district of Bihar. It was here that Mahatma Ghandi led his

first act of civil disobedience in India when supporting the claims of the indigo sharecroppers against the British plantation landlords in 1917. The landlords had been forcing the sharecroppers to buy their land at inflated prices because the indigo market was collapsing due to the invention in Germany of an artificial means of producing indigo (Fischer 1951). It could be that all of the higher land with the modern water pumps we passed through after crossing the border had originally been cleared by the British for indigo.

References:

Fischer, Louis. *The Life of Mahatama Gandhi*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1951.

Hultzsch, E. *Inscriptions of Ashoka, vol. I*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925.