24. "Even so, maharajah, if one should try to define the Tathagata by his bodily form, that bodily form of the Tathagata is abandoned, cut down at the root, made like a palm-tree stump, made some thing that is not, made of a nature not to spring up again in future time. Set free from reckoning as body, maharajah, is the Tathagata. He is deep, boundless, unfathomable, just like the mighty ocean. To say, 'The Tathagata exists after death' does not apply. To say, 'The Tathagata exists not after death,' does not apply. To say, 'The Tathagata both exists and exists not, neither exists nor not exists after death,' does not apply.

25. "If one should try to define the Tathagata by feeling,—that feeling of the Tathagata is abandoned, cut down at the root . . . Yet free from reckoning as feeling is the Tathagata, maharajah, deep, boundless, unfathomable like the mighty ocean. To say, 'The Tathagata exists after death . . . exists not after death,' does not apply.

26. "So also if one should try to define the Tathagata by perception, by the activities, by consciousness ... set free from reckoning by consciousness is the Tathagata, deep, boundless, unfathomable as the mighty ocean. To say, 'The Tathagata exists after death . . . exists not after death,' does not apply."

27. Then the Rajah Pasenadi of Kosala was delighted with the words of the sister Khema, and took pleasure therein. And he rose from his seat, saluted her by the right and went away.

28. Now on another occasion the Rajah went to visit the Exalted One, and on coming to him saluted him and sat down at one side. So seated he said to the Exalted One :

29. "Pray, Lord, does the Tathagata exist after death ?"

30. "Not revealed by me, maharajah, is this matter."

31. "Then Lord, the Tathagata does not exist after death."

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32. "That also, maharajah, is not revealed by me."

33. He then asks the other questions and gets the same reply.

34. "How then, Lord ? When I ask the question, 'Does the Tathagata exist ? . . . does he not exist after death ?' you reply, 'It is not revealed by me.' Pray, Lord, what is the reason, what is the cause why this thing is not revealed by the Exalted One ?"

35. "Now, maharajah, I will question you. Do you reply as you think fit. Now what say you, maharajah ? Have you some accountant . . . (the rest is exactly as before).'

36. "Wonderful, Lord ! Strange it is, Lord, how the explanation both of Master and disciple, both in spirit and in letter, will agree, will harmonize, will not be inconsistent, that is, in any word about the highest.

37. "On a certain occasion, Lord, I went to visit the sister Khema, and asked her the meaning of this matter, and she gave me the meaning in the very words, in the very syllables used by the Exalted One. Wonderful, Lord ! Strange it is, Lord, how the explanation both of Master and disciple will agree, will harmonize, in spirit and in letter, how they will not be inconsistent,—that is, in any word about the highest.

38. "Well, Lord, now we must be going. We are busy folk. We have many things to do.

39. "Do now what you think it is time for, maharajah."

40. Thereupon the Rajah Pasenadi of Kosala was delighted with the words of the Exalted One and welcomed them. And he rose from his seat, saluted the Exalted One by the right and went away.

SECTION II

KARMA

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§ *1. Is the Buddhist Doctrine of Karma the same as the Brahminic Doctrine?*

1. There is no doctrine in the Buddha's Dhamma which has created so much confusion as this doctrine of Karma.

2. What is its place in the Buddha's Dhamma and what is its significance which has already been told.

3. Ignorant Hindus out of sheer want of understanding say by comparing merely the similarity of words that Buddhism is the same as Brahmanism or Hinduism.

4. The educated and orthodox section of the Brahmins also do the same. They do so deliberately to mislead the ignorant masses.

5. The educated Brahmins know full well that the Buddhist Law of Karma is quite different from the Brahminic Law of Karma. Yet they keep on saying that Buddhism is the same as Brahmanism and Hinduism.

6. The similarity in terminology gives them an easy handle for their false and malicious propaganda.

7. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the position closely.

8. The Buddha's Law of Karma, however much may be similarity of words cannot be the same in its connotation as the Brahminic Law of Karma.

9. The premises of the two are so widely different, indeed so widely opposed that the result of the two cannot be the same. They must be different.

10. The principles of the Hindu Law of Karma may be stated seriatim for convenience.

11. The Hindu Law of Karma is based on the soul. The Buddhist is not. In fact there is no soul in Buddhism.

12. The Brahminic Law of Karma is hereditary.

13. It goes on from life to life. This is so because of the transmigration of the soul.

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14. This cannot be true of the Buddhist Law of Karma. This is also because there is no soul.

15. The Hindu Law of Karma is based on the existence of a soul which is distinct from the body. When the body dies the soul does not die. The soul flies away.

16. This is not true of the Buddhist Law of Karma.

17. According to the Hindu Law of Karma what happens when a man does a karma is this. His act produces two-fold results. It affects the doer and secondly it produces an impress upon his soul.

18. Each act he does produces an impress upon his soul.

19. When a man dies and when his soul escapes, the soul is full of such impressions.

20. It is these impressions which determine his birth and status in his future life.

21. This Hindu theory is inconsistent with the Buddhist theory of no-soul.

22. For these reasons the Buddhist doctrine of Karma cannot be and is not the same as the Hindu doctrine of Karma.

23. It is therefore simply foolish to talk about the Buddhist doctrine of Karma being the same as the Brahminic doctrine of Karma.

24. All that one can say is beware of this jugglery.

§ 2. *Did the Buddha believe in Past Karma having effect on Future Life?*

1. The Law of Karma was enunciated by the Buddha. He was the first to say : "Reap as you sow."

2. He was so emphatic about the Law of Karma that he maintained that there could be no moral order unless there was a stern observance of the Law of Karma.

3. The Buddha's Law of Karma applied only to Karma and its effect on present life.

4. There is, however, an extended doctrine of Karma. According to it Karma includes Karma done in past life or lives.

5. If a man is born in a poor family it is because of his past bad karma. If a man is born in a rich family it is because of his past good karma.

6. If a man is born with a congenital defect it is because of his past bad karma.

7. This is a very pernicious doctrine. For in this interpretation of karma there is no room left for human effort. Everything is predetermined for him by his past karma.

8. This extended doctrine is often found to be attributed to the Buddha.

9. Did the Buddha believe in such a doctrine?

10. To examine this extended doctrine properly it is better to change the language in which it is usually expressed.

11. Instead of saying that past karma is transmitted it should be better if it was said that past karma is inherited.

12. This change of language enables us to test it by the law of heredity. At the same time it does no harm to the doctrine either to its *de jure* or *de facto* connotation.

13. This restatement makes it possible to pose the two questions which could not otherwise be posed and without answering which the matter could not be made clear.

14. The first question is how is past karma inherited ? What is the process ?

15. The second question is what is the nature of past karma in terms of heredity ? Is it an inherent characteristic or acquired characteristic ?

16. What do we inherit from our parents ?

17. Starting with science the new individual begins when a sperm enters the egg. Fertilization consists in fusion of the head of the sperm with the nucleus of the egg.

18. Each human being takes its origin from the union of two bits of living matter, an egg from the

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mother which has been fertilized by a single sperm from the father.

19. That human birth is genetic is told by the Buddha to a Yakkha who came to discuss the matter with him.

20. The Exalted One was then staying near Rajagraha, on the hill called Indra's Peak.

21. Now that Yakkha drew near to the Exalted One and addressed him as follows :

'Material form is not the living soul'

So says th' Enlightened One. Then how doth soul possess this body ?

Whence to soul doth come

Our bunch of bones and bowels ?

How doth soul within the mother-cave suspended bide?

22. To this the Exalted One replied :

At first the *Kalala* takes birth, and thence the *abudde.*

Therefrom the *pesi* grows,

Developing as *ghana* in its turn.

Now in the *ghana* doth appear the hair,

The down, the nails.

And whatsoever food and drink the mother of him takes, thereby the man in mother's womb doth live and grow.

23. But the Hindu doctrine differs.

24. It says that the body is genetic. But the soul is not. It is implanted into the body from outside—the doctrine is unable to specify the source.

25. Turning to the second question as to what is the nature of past karma, it must be determined whether it is an inherent characteristic or an acquired characteristic.

26. Unless an answer to this question is forthcoming it cannot be tested by the scientific theory of heredity.

27. But assuming there is an answer one way or the other to this question how is it possible to get any help from science whether it is a sensible theory or senseless theory.

28. According to science a child inherits the characteristics of his parents.

29. In the Hindu doctrine of karma a child inherits nothing from its parents except the body. The past karma in the Hindu doctrine is the inheritance of the child by the child and for the child.

30. The parents contributes nothing. The child brings everything.

31. Such a doctrine is nothing short of an absurdity.

32. As shown above the Buddha did not believe in such an absurdity.

33. "Yes, if it were not reborn; but if it were, no."

34. "Give me an illustration."

35. "Suppose, O king, a man were to steal another man's mangoes, would the thief deserve punishment?"

36. "Yes."

37. "But he would not have stolen the mangoes the other set in the ground. Why would he deserve punishment ?"

38. "Because those he stole were the result of those that were planted."

39. "Just so, great king, this name-and-form commits deeds, either pure or impure, and by that karma another name-and-form is reborn. And therefore is it not set free from its evil deeds ?"

40. "Very good, Nagasena !"

41. The king said : "When deeds are committed, Nagasena by one name-and-form, what becomes of those deeds ?"

42. "The deeds would follow it, O king, like a shadow that never leaves it."

43. "Can any one point out those deeds, saying : 'Here are those deeds or there ?'

44. "No."

45. "Give me an illustration."

46. "Now what do you think, O king ? Can any one point out the fruits which a tree has not yet produced, saying :

47. 'Here they are, or there ?' "

48. "Certainly not, sir,"

49. "Just so, great king, so long as the continuity of life is not cut off, it is impossible to point out the deeds that are done."

50. "Very good, Nagasena."

§ 3. *Did the Buddha believe in Past Karma having effect on Future Life?* —concluded

1. The Buddha's doctrine of Past Karma is thus in keeping with science.

2. He did not believe in the inheritance of Past Karma.

3. How can he, having held to the view that birth is genetic and whatever inheritance comes to the child it comes through its parents ?

4. Apart from logic there is more direct evidence on the point contained in a sutta called the Cula—Dukkha—Khanda—Sutta which contains a dialogue between the Buddha and the Jains.

5. In this dialogue this is what the Buddha says :—"Niganthas, you have done evil in the past ; extirpate it by these severe austerities. Every present restraint on body, speech and mind will hereafter undo the evil doings of the past. Hence, by expelling through penance all past misdeeds, and by not committing fresh misdeeds, the future becomes cleared; with the future cleared, the past is wiped out ; with the past wiped out, Ill is no more ; with Ill no more (Painful) feelings are no more ; and, with painful feelings now no more, all Ill will be outworn.—This teaching commends and approves itself to us, and we rejoice in it."

6. Thereupon, I said to those Niganthas :— "Do you know, reverend sirs, whether you had an existence before this or you were not non-existent ?"

7. "No, Sir."

8. "Do you know that, in a former existence, you were guilty, and not guiltless, of misdeeds ?"

9. "No."

10. "Do you know that (in that former existence) you were guilty, and not guiltless, of this or that specific misdeed ?"

11. "No."

12. Secondly the Buddha asserts that the status of a man may be governed not so much by heredity as by his environment.

13. In the Devadaha—Sutta this is what the Buddha says : Some recluses and Brahmins there are who affirm and hold the view that, whatsoever the individual experiences—be it pleasant or unpleasant or neither—all comes from former actions. Hence, by expiation and purge of former misdeeds and by not committing fresh misdeeds, nothing accrues for the future, the misdeeds die away ; as misdeeds die away, Ill dies away ; as Ill dies away, feelings die away ; and as feelings die away, all Ill will wear out and pass. This is what the Niganthas affirm.

14. If it is because of their birth's environment that creatures experience pleasure and pain, the Niganthas are blameworthy, and they are also blameworthy, if environment is not the cause.

15. Now these statements of the Buddha are very relevant. How could the Buddha throw doubt on past karma if he believed in it ? How could the Buddha maintain pain and pleasure in present life being due to environment if he believed that it was due to past karma ?

16. The doctrine of past karma is a purely Brahminic doctrine. Past karma taking effect in present life is quite consistent with the Brahminic doctrine of soul, the effect of karma on soul. But it is quite inconsistent with the Buddhist doctrine of non-soul.

17. It has been bodily introduced into Buddhism by some one who wanted to make Buddhism akin to Hinduism or who did not know what the Buddhist doctrine was.

18. This is one reason why it must be held that the Buddha could not have preached such a doctrine.

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19. There is another and a more general reason why it must be held that the Buddha could not have preached such a doctrine.

20. The basis of the Hindu doctrine of past karma as the regulator of future life is an iniquitous doctrine. What could have been the purpose of inventing such a doctrine ?

21. The only purpose one can think of is to enable the state or the society to escape responsibility for the condition of the poor and the lowly.

22. Otherwise such an inhuman and absurd doctrine could never have been invented.

23. It is impossible to imagine that the Buddha who was known as the Maha Karunika could have supported such a doctrine.

SECTION III

AHIMSA

§ *1. The different ways in which it was interpreted and followed*

1. Ahimsa or non-killing forms a very important part of the Buddha's teachings.

2. It is intimately connected with Karuna and Maitri.

3. The question has, however, been raised whether His Ahimsa was absolute in its obligation or only relative. Was it only a principle? Or was it a rule?

4. People who accept the Buddha's teachings find it difficult to accept Ahimsa as an absolute obligation. They say that such a definition of Ahimsa involves the sacrifice of good for evil, the sacrifice of virtue for vice.

5. This question requires to be clarified. There is no subject which is a matter of greater confusion than this subject of Ahimsa.

6. How have the people of Buddhist countries understood and practised Ahimsa ?

7. This is an important question which must be taken into account.

8. The monks of Ceylon fought against and asked the people of Ceylon to fight against the foreign invaders.

9. On the other hand the monks of Burma refused to fight against the foreign invaders and asked the Burmese people not to fight.

10. The Burmese people eat eggs but not fish.

11. This is how Ahimsa is understood and followed.

12. Recently the German Buddhist Association passed a resolution by which they accepted all the Panch Silas except the first which deals with Ahimsa.

13. This is the position about the Doctrine of Ahimsa.

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§ 2. *True Meaning of Ahimsa.*

1. What does Ahimsa mean?

2. The Buddha has nowhere given any definition of Ahimsa. In fact he has very seldom, if at all, referred to the subject in specific terms.

3. One has, therefore to spell out his intention from circumstantial evidence.

4. The first circumstantial evidence on the point is that the Buddha had no objection to eating meat if it was offered to him as part of his alms.

5. The monk can eat meat offered to him provided he was not a party to the killing of it.

6. He resisted the opposition of Devadatta who insisted that the monks should be prohibited from eating meat given to them by way of alms.

7. The next piece of evidence on the point is that he was only opposed to the killing of animals in yajna (sacrifice). This he has himself said.

8. Ahimsa Permo Dharma is an extreme Doctrine. It is a Jain Doctrine. It is not a Buddhist Doctrine.

9. There is another piece of evidence which is more direct than circumstantial which almost amounts to a definition of Ahimsa. He has said: "Love all so that you may not wish to kill any." This is a positive way of stating the principle of Ahimsa.

10. From this it appears that the doctrine of Ahimsa does not say "Kill not. It says love all."

11. In the light of these statements it is quite easy to have a clear understanding of what the Buddha meant by Ahimsa.

12. It is quite clear that Buddha meant to make a distinction between will to kill and need to kill.

13. He did not ban killing where there was need to kill.

14. What he banned was killing where there was nothing but the will to kill.

15. So understood there is no confusion in the Buddhist doctrine of Ahimsa.

16. It is a perfectly sound or moral doctrine which everyone must respect.

17. No doubt he leaves it to every individual to decide whether the need to kill is there. But with whom else could it be left. Man has Pradnya and he must use it.

18. A moral man may be trusted to draw the line at the right point.

19. Brahminism has in it the will to kill.

20. Jainism has in it the will never to kill.

21. The Buddha's Ahimsa is quite in keeping with his middle path.

22. To put it differently the Buddha made a distinction between Principle and Rule. He did not make Ahimsa a matter of Rule. He enunciated it as a matter of Principle or way of life.

23. In this he no doubt acted very wisely.

24. A principle leaves you freedom to act. A rule does not. Rule either breaks you or you break the rule.

SECTION IV
TRANSMIGRATION

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1. The Blessed Lord preached that there was rebirth. But the Blessed Lord also preached that there was no transmigration.

2. There were not wanting people who criticized the Lord for preaching what they regarded as two such contradictory doctrines.

3. How can there be rebirth unless there is transmigration ? asked the critics.

4. There is here a case of rebirth without transmigration, they said. Can this be?

5. There is no contradiction. There can be rebirth although there is no transmigration.

6. This has been well explained by Nagasena in his replies to the questions of King Milinda.

7. Milinda, King of Bactria, asked Nagasena— "Did the Buddha believe in Rebirth (Transmigration) ?"

8. His reply was "Yes."

9. "Is this not a contradiction?"

10. Nagasena replied, "No."

11. "Can there be rebirth without a soul ?"

12. Nagasena said, "Of course, yes, there can be."

13. "Explain how it can be."

14. The king said : "Where there is no transmigration, Nagasena, can there be rebirth ?"

15. "Yes, there can."

16. "But how can that be ? Give me an illustration."

17. "Suppose a man, O king, were to light a lamp from another lamp, can it be said that the one transmigrates from, or to, the other?"

18. "Certainly not."

19. "Just so, great king, is rebirth without transmigration."

20. "Give me a further illustration."

21. "Do you recollect, great king, having learnt, when you were a boy, some verse or other from your teacher ?"

22. "Yes, I recollect that."

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23. "Well then, did that verse transmigrate from your teacher ?"

24. "Certainly not."

25. "Just so, great king, is rebirth without transmigration."

26. "Very good, Nagasena !"

27. The king said : "Is there such a thing, Nagasena, as the soul ?"

28. "In the highest sense, O king, there is no such thing."

29. "Very good, Nagasena !"

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SECTION V

CAUSES OF THIS MISUNDERSTANDING

1. What the Buddha preached was heard by his audience, which largely consisted of the Bhikkus.

2. It is the Bhikkus who reported to the people at large what the Buddha had said on any particular matter.

3. The art of writing had not yet developed. The Bhikkus had therefore to memorize what they had heard. Not every Bhikku cared to memorize what he heard. But there were some who had made it their profession to memorize. They were called Bhanakas.

4. The Buddhist canonical literature is as vast as ocean. To memorize all this was indeed a great feat.

5. In reporting the Buddha it has often been found that he has been misreported.

6. Many cases of misreporting had been brought to the knowledge of the Buddha while he was alive.

7. Reference may be made by way of illustration to five such cases. One is mentioned in the Alagaddupama Sutta and the other in the Maha-Kamma-Vibhanga Sutta, a third in the Kannakatthala Sutta, fourth in the Maha-Tanha-Sankhya Sutta and fifth in the Jivaka Sutta.

8. There were perhaps many more such cases of misreporting. For we find that even the Bhikkus going to the Buddha asking him to tell them what they should do in such contingencies.

9. The cases of misreporting are common with regard to karma and rebirth.

10. These doctrines have also a place in the Brahminic religion consequently it was easy for the Bhanakas to incorporate the Brahminic tenets into the Buddhist Religion.

11. One has therefore to be very careful in accepting what is said in the Buddhist canonical literature as being the word of the Buddha.

12. There is however one test which is available.

13. If there is anything which could be said with confidence it is : He was nothing if not rational,

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if not logical. Anything therefore which is rational and logical, other things being equal, may be taken to be the word of the Buddha.

14. The second thing is that the Buddha never cared to enter into a discussion which was not profitable for man's welfare. Therefore anything attributed to the Buddha which did not relate to man's welfare cannot be accepted to be the word of the Buddha.

15. There is a third test. It is that the Buddha divided all matters into two classes. Those about which he was certain and those about which he was not certain. On matters which fell into class I, he has stated his views definitely and conclusively. On matters which fell into class II, he has expressed his views. But they are only tentative views.

16. In discussing the three questions about which there is doubt and difference it is necessary to bear these tests in mind before deciding what the view of the Buddha was thereon.

PART III

The Buddhist Way of Life

1. On good, evil and sin.
2. On craving and lust.
3. On hurt and ill-will.
4. On anger and enmity.
5. On man, mind and impurities.
6. On self and self-conquest.
7. On wisdom, justice and good company.
8. On thoughtfulness and mindfulness.
9. On vigilance, earnestness and boldness.
10. On sorrow and happiness; On Charity and Kindness.
11. On hypocrisy.
12. On following the Right Way.
13. Mix not true Dhamma with false Dhamma.